

## **BEYOND GRADUATE RECRUITMENT – BY BRENDA BOON**



MONSEACS Interns 2003 L-R Back Brenda, Rachana, Michael, Front L-R Iris, Sarah, Kate, Nino, Mai (absent Boris)

Picture this: 3000 graduates competing for 40 positions in a Graduate Employment Program offered by a major international company. Where will the other 2960 graduates go? It almost seems as though you are entering a lottery, doesn't it? Whilst some may feel that this is the only way that a fresh graduate can get a decent job in a reputable company, what if you: are uncertain that this is the career you really want, have unimpressive results, lack working experience, or are just not confident of getting an offer? Do not be discouraged; on the contrary, it is an opportunity to reassess your situation and career path, and consider other options out there that can get you where you finally want to be in your career.

### **Postgraduate Studies**

Further study after completing an undergraduate degree has been a popular option for many students these days, where an honours or postgraduate degree can give you a better understanding and more training in your field, improving your job prospects. Or in the case where you have

re-assessed your goals and wish to pursue a different interest, a post-graduate certification in a new discipline can help you broaden your career options. A good site to visit if you are considering further studies is [www.thegoodguides.com.au](http://www.thegoodguides.com.au) which includes information about postgraduate and career upgrade courses.

### **International Opportunities**

Ever wanted to travel the world and still gain working experience? Consider working in an exchange program overseas in your field of interest: by broadening your horizons and knowledge of different cultures and economies, and perhaps even picking up a new language, you will be making yourself more marketable to future employers, particularly those with an international focus. MONSEACS' website 'Global Job Surfing' [www.monseacs.com](http://www.monseacs.com) offers a comprehensive list of links to jobsites such as [www.overseasjobs.com](http://www.overseasjobs.com) that advertise a variety of jobs from all over the world, and provide visa and travel information for the major countries.

### **Small to Medium Sized Businesses**

Instead of just focusing on the big corporations, graduates should also bear in mind that smaller businesses employ approximately 95% of the private sector. They can provide a stimulating work environment for intelligent and innovative graduates, with a work culture that may be completely different to that of large business but still maintain professionalism. Here, communication and interpersonal skills, and the ability to multi-task and be flexible are more important than academic results. Whilst there may not be as many opportunities for career advancement, in the close-knit environment provided by smaller companies, one can expect greater responsibility and assistance in a more supportive surrounding compared to a big corporation.

If you are looking for positions in a smaller business, apart from searching online job databases such as MyCareer [www.mycareer.com.au](http://www.mycareer.com.au), and Australian Job Search [www.jobsearch.gov.au](http://www.jobsearch.gov.au), also keep a lookout for opportunities in local newspapers such as 'The Leader' in Victoria and neighbourhood businesses. The MONSEACS Online Job System [www.monseacs.com](http://www.monseacs.com) also offers over 25,000 job opportunities yearly, with new jobs added on daily basis. Last but not least, ask people you know, which brings us to the next section, Networking.

### **Networking**

Networking is one of the most useful and effective ways you can use to achieve your career goals. Keep in mind that many jobs are "hidden" and not advertised; these businesses often place great emphasis on referrals. Your closest networks will probably be through your friends and family who know you well and will be more likely to help you than others, followed by people you met during your employment or volunteer experiences and trade or professional associations that may arrange informal information sessions for employer to meet potential employees. Take a moment to have a serious chat with them about your career goals and qualifications, and about the industries you are interested in - perhaps they or someone they know might be able to give you some good advice or even offer you a job.

### **Temporary Work**

Another alternative for graduates still searching for that perfect job, temp work allows you to gain practical working experience in different environments and some income, and may even provide you with a career opportunity. To be considered for temp work, register and search jobs at reliable temp agencies, such as TMP/Hudson Global Resources

[www.hudsonresourcing.com.au](http://www.hudsonresourcing.com.au) and Kelly Services [www.kellyservices.com.au](http://www.kellyservices.com.au).

### **Volunteering**

Volunteering is a useful way to gain valuable work experience and overcome the "chicken and egg cycle": without experience, you cannot get a job, and without a job, you cannot get experience. By volunteering your services to an organization, you will have the opportunity to network, practice your communication and interpersonal skills and increase your work experience in the real world, not to mention get a good reference. Some good sites to check out for volunteer opportunities include Australian Volunteer Search [www.volunteersearch.gov.au](http://www.volunteersearch.gov.au) and GoVolunteer [www.govolunteer.com.au](http://www.govolunteer.com.au), and also contact your local council for openings.

Job searching is never an easy task, which is why keeping a positive attitude is so important. Having looked at the various other paths that graduates can take apart from the graduate recruitment programs offered by big companies, we can see that opportunities are abundant for graduates; it is up to you to make the choice. Talking to someone who understands the job market and can assist you in your career dilemmas helps; take a moment to make an appointment to see one of the career counsellors on campus. As for those die hard fans of graduate programs in their dream company, you can always try again next year, with some programs accepting graduate applications up to 3 years after completing your degree, and boost your resume with some relevant work experience to give you that extra edge.