





Around the Coffee Table with Dale Jodoin

Oshawa Once Helped Change Canada. Why Can't It Do It Again?

By Dale Jodoin
Columnist

Have you ever wondered how many inventions began with somebody sitting in a little workshop, scratching their head and saying, "There has to be a better way"? We tend to imagine inventions coming from expensive laboratories, universities or scientists with impressive degrees. But sometimes history tells a different story. Take Oshawa, Ontario. Most Canadians know Oshawa for General Motors. But long before the automobile assembly lines, this community was already making a name for itself through craftsmanship and innovation. In 1880, Robert McLaughlin patented an improved steering mechanism known as the McLaughlin Gear, helping establish his reputation as a carriage maker. Imagine Oshawa back then. Dirt roads, horses pulling wagons, blacksmiths hammering away and craftsmen building things by hand. Nobody was talking about electric vehicles or artificial intelligence. Yet the foundation of an automobile industry was taking shape. By 1907, the McLaughlin company was experimenting with automobiles. In 1908, Oshawa craftsmen were building bodies for McLaughlin Buick cars. One generation built transportation powered by horses. The next helped put Canadians behind steering wheels. Then there was the Pedlar company, manufacturing metal roofing, decorative building materials and prefabricated structures that travelled beyond Oshawa. Not everything was invented here. Sometimes innovation means taking an existing idea and making it better. But here's something we forget. We remember the wealthy industrialists. Their names appear on buildings, streets and historical plaques. What about the ordinary workers? The machinist who improved a piece of equipment. The carpenter who discovered a better way to build something. The factory worker who had an idea nobody bothered to listen to. How many inventions never saw daylight because somebody lacked the money or connections to develop them? And that brings me to Oshawa today. We hear plenty about economic development, innovation and attracting investment. City plans are filled with impressive language. But what does any of that mean to the ordinary person sitting at a kitchen table with an invention? Someone who has built something different but doesn't know where to take it? Are we helping that person, or simply waiting for another large corporation to arrive? Here's an idea for Oshawa's next city council. Why not hold regular public invention fairs? Not expensive conferences where everybody wears a suit and talks about millions of dollars. I'm talking about opening a community centre or public building and inviting ordinary people to bring their inventions. A retired mechanic with a new tool. A grandmother who designed something useful for the kitchen. A student with a simple mechanical idea. A tradesperson who figured out how to make a difficult job easier. Give them tables, demonstration space and an opportunity to show what they've created. Invite local manufacturers, machinists, business owners and people who understand patents and product development. Let inventors meet people who might help turn their ideas into something real. Universities and colleges could participate, but they shouldn't control the event. This should belong to the people. And participation should be affordable, preferably free. Perhaps one invention becomes a business employing five people. Another becomes a product manufactured locally. A third might never succeed, but its creator learns something valuable. Isn't that how innovation begins? Oshawa doesn't need another impressive report sitting on a shelf. It needs opportunities where ordinary people can walk through the door and be taken seriously. We cannot bring back yesterday, but we can give tomorrow's inventors a chance. And this isn't just about Oshawa. Every community across Canada has people with ideas, skills and imagination. So the next time you're sitting around the coffee table, ask yourself something. What did your little community invent or improve that helped change Canada? And perhaps the bigger question is this. How many inventions that could change Canada tomorrow are sitting in somebody's garage today, simply because nobody has opened the door?



Five Truths Job Seekers Keep Refusing to Accept

By Nick Kossovan

Punching a brick wall will fracture your hand. Yelling at the rainstorm you got caught in won't keep you from getting soaked. Fighting realities you can't change isn't a how-to-live-life strategy or a job-search strategy; it's self-sabotage. Yet many job seekers waste time and energy raging against ingrained hiring realities, growing bitter and angry when their expectations aren't met, which prolongs their job search. Job seekers who refrain from complaining about how employers hire and adopt the AAA approach land jobs faster than those who complain about hiring practices.

- Acknowledge the unyielding realities of hiring and the wisdom to know what you can't control.
- Accept that you can't change them and find serenity in letting go of what's beyond your control.
- Adapt your strategy and have the courage to change what's entirely within your control: your actions.

AAA mirrors Reinhold Niebuhr's Serenity Prayer, "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference," and acknowledges the fundamental truth that employers control their capital, workplace, and hiring process. Succeeding in today's job market requires letting go of misconceptions about "fairness" and any sense of entitlement you may have, and embracing the following five truisms:

1. The Law of Supply and Demand As a job seeker, you're offering labour, a commodity governed by supply and demand. When hundreds of job seekers have qualifications similar to yours, your market value declines. Expecting top-dollar compensation when employers are flooded with applications is like selling sand at the beach; no amount of self-importance can change the law of supply and demand. Positioning yourself as a rare commodity is how you overcome supply and demand. Generic qualifications in a job market full of them don't show what every employer wants: measurable results that boost profitability. Present yourself as a value proposition by quantifying past achievements in dollars, percentages, or time saved.
2. Job Searching Is a Winner-Take-All Competition A job search is a winner-take-all contest with one trophy: a job. Finishing second is no better than finishing last: no job. You don't win by regurgitating job descriptions; you win by treating every application like a title fight. Find where the company's bleeding, show performance metrics proving you've stopped that bleeding elsewhere, and make the hiring manager say, "I've got to meet this person!"
3. Hiring Is a Process of Elimination Recruiters and hiring managers don't scan resumes for reasons to hire you; they look for reasons to rule you out. Consider the math: 500 people apply, and only one gets the job. That means 499 were eliminated at some point in the hiring process. While there are countless reasons you could be eliminated, the four main ones are:
 - Mistakes and Errors: Typos, spelling and grammar errors, or a chaotic layout suggest you'll deliver low-quality work.
 - Lack of Alignment: Your resume and LinkedIn profile don't explicitly reflect the core skills the job posting requests.
 - Unexplained Employment Gaps: Employers view employment gaps as a red flag and can easily avoid candidates with gaps by not interviewing them.
 - Overqualification: Many employers see overqualified candidates as flight risks, expect higher compensation, and are harder to manage.You significantly increase your odds of avoiding elimination by ensuring your resume and LinkedIn profile are error-free, skimmable, and laser-focused on the position's required qualifications and experience, and by explaining any employment gaps.
4. Perception Is Reality In hiring, perception is the deciding factor. While your resume and LinkedIn profile create the initial impression that either compels the recruiter or hiring manager to reach out to you or eliminates you, the vetting phone call, video interview, and face-to-face interview are all important for shaping perceptions and, fingers crossed, preventing elimination. Every word you say, every shift in your tone, and every visual cue contribute to your interviewer's impression of you. For example, saying you want a "stable" environment often comes across as "can't handle change." (What workplace is stable these days?) How you dress, read the room, project confidence, and handle tough questions trumps your qualifications and experience. Show up underdressed or overdressed for their culture, and you signal that you don't fit in. If you get defensive or deflect blame when asked about a past failure, you'll be labelled arrogant and unmanageable. At the risk of sounding philosophical: you don't own how others interpret your actions; you only own the evidence of your choices.
5. Your Lifestyle Overhead Is Your Responsibility, Not the Employer's I've never known an employer who hires candidates to help fund the lifestyle they created. Your mortgage, car payments, and debts are irrelevant when a company sets a role's pay baseline. Employers determine your value by what you contribute to the bottom line. Show that contribution while taking personal responsibility: either shrink your lifestyle or expand your skill set. Getting angry at hiring realities won't change them; you'll only deplete your stamina and prolong your unemployment. You can't force employers to change how they hire. Accept what you can't change, use the AAA approach, and land your next job.



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