

Monetary Gain Career Opportunities within the North American Market

by Rohinton Ghandi



Rohinton Ghandi is presently employed with a major Canadian Bank in their Global Services Unit. Rohinton, or Ro for short, has had an extensive 26-year career in banking. The various positions held throughout his career have helped him acquire a clearer understanding of the North American Banking and Financial job markets. Ro was kind enough to share with us his personal insights into the opportunities awaiting students choosing to enter this highly competitive field. Read on as Ro gives AcademiX an in depth “account” (sorry for the pun) into the world of banking.

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When writing this, I thought to myself how appropriate an opportunity this is, as I am myself an immigrant to Canada.

My parents uprooted our small family of four from Bombay, India to Montreal, Canada in time to arrive for the opening of Expo '67. At the age of six, I knew this was not a temporary move and that I would need to leave my “old world” behind, at least for now. New friends were made as I adjusted to my new society's ways. Montreal's job markets were wide open for my dad, who was a chartered accountant by trade. He made out quite well in his private practice, obtaining his license almost before we got off the plane.

Throughout high school, college and my part-time university years, I learned three important things.

First, always make the time to have fun and enjoy yourself and never lose your sense of humor.

Second, continuously build your con-

tact “network.” Whether you know it or not, each person you meet today may be “the key” person you need to accomplish future unforeseen goals tomorrow.

Third, always be polite. Politeness shows not only your respect for others, it confirms your level of class.

Armed with the above guidelines, I started my first job in the world of banking, paying brokerage commissions for Foreign Exchange (FX) transactions. FX transactions are booked business deals where two parties have agreed on the exchanging of two different currencies at an agreed exchange rate and on a specific date (called a value date). The value date of any deal can be anywhere from today to any business date in the future, where both parties are speculating on the rate rising or falling on that date (called “Forwards”).

From there I went on to “FX Options,” which are basically “bets” placed on predicting future rates, based on market speculation. This led me into the Global Risk control world, where each of our corporate customers is assigned a credit limit by specific product type. Risk control is an always-fluctuating component of the financial world. As all corporate risk limits are market driven, they are inherently dynamic, from the more stable Government risk limits to the volatile New IPO startups.

Oddly enough, my days of stamp collecting as a young boy paid off years later, as my knowledge of world geography got my foot in the door!

In 1997, my career took another turn when my PC expertise landed me a position as Senior Analyst on the Domestic Banking side of the banking world (as opposed to the macro-economic view of International FX). Domestic provided a micro-economic view of the bank's Canadian operations and products from the branches up, across Canada. My experience grew as I gained knowledge of the bank's credit card operations, branch support network, internal payment services, and from the many investment products offered to its domestic (Canadian) market. At Domestic, each employee in each local branch played a key factor in marketing small to medium-sized investments to our clients, creating profit based on volume sales. In the international world, volume sales continue to be the profit drivers, yet the profits are based on larger-dollar government/corporate products, and on the ability to sell products more on a group knowledge and a service reliability basis.

I have recently returned to the international market, which has changed dramatically for several different reasons.

After the Enron and Worldcom collapses, stronger compliance policies were instilled within all North American corporate and bank regulations. Proper reporting of financial data became a requirement not only on a corporate-citizenship level, but also at a government level. The American and Canadian governments enacted legislation requiring all corporations/banks to be financially and ethically responsible for reporting their financial data correctly. Corporate governance and good business ethics have become a necessary cost of doing business within the global banking and financial industries.

After September 11, 2001, the focus shifted to security. We needed to provide investor confidence regarding our level of security so that each financial corporation would be able to continue market operations in the event of a national disaster. The American and Canadian governments again achieved this by enacting new laws on two key issues: a business continuity requirement and the implementation of anti-money laundering regulations on financial corporations and banks. These new requirements are today considered as necessary costs of doing business, and will continue to demand attention in job markets.

After this, the Canadian government deregulated the sale of specific financial products by specific financial companies. Prior to the deregulation, only banks could provide bank products and services such as savings bonds, investment products and credit card services; only insurance companies could sell insurance related products; and only stock brokerage companies could buy and sell stocks. After the deregulation, nearly everything changed. The Canadian financial institutions then demanded that they be able to compete on a global level, which meant that they be allowed to offer all financial products and services, regardless of their company type (i.e. bank, insurer, etc.). Deregulation granted the right to all Canadian-registered financial corporations to sell any financial product they deemed profitable.



This strengthened the position of Canadian banks and financial institutions worldwide, but it is still only seen as a short-term gain.

Chartered banks have recently focused their attention on the growth areas listed below:

Wealth Management. As the population of Canada ages, people will require extensive retirement financial services, including taxation consultation and investment advisory services.

A Wider US Presence. As Canadian banks continue to acquire/setup more US branches to serve their cross-border customers, this allows US and Canadian clients the convenience of dealing cross-border with only one bank and paying one overall fee to complete their financial services.

Maximizing Return/Minimizing Costs. Banks continue to invest in technology as a huge money-saving advantage. Banks strive to sustain a high service level, while reducing costs to meet shareholders' stock-performance expectations. Technology will always be an area of high investment, as it has the largest payoff as return on investment.

As with any of your career choices, make sure your selection of a major at university is one that appeals to you, and which you will enjoy. Remember that success is a subjective measurement that only we can make for ourselves. If you should decide that the Banking and Finance sector is the place for you, you will need an action plan before you set out to make your own monetary gain. Best of luck!

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are solely those of Rohinton Ghandi and in no way represent the views and opinions of Academix or any major Canadian financial institution. 🍀

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