

# THE EDGE

on finding a job  
or creating your own  
and making  
the most of it

The **toll-free telephone number**  
for the

# **T**Training **H**Hotline is

**1-800-387-5656 or (416) 326-5656.**

The Training Hotline is a central point of access to information on Ontario government training and employment programs. Information counsellors assess your situation to determine appropriate programs and services for you. They provide detailed program information over the phone, mail out printed resource materials, connect callers with organizations delivering programs, and recommend other related services and programs in your community.

Counsellors are available between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. from Monday to Friday. You can also get information 24 hours a day from our interactive phone system and our fax back service.

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Cette publication est également offerte en français sous le titre suivant : *Bien positionné pour décrocher ou se créer un emploi et en tirer le maximum.*

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This publication is available on the Ministry of  
Education and Training's World Wide Web site at  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca>

# Introduction

Looking for employment is  
**a full-time job** in itself.

This booklet will help prepare you  
for the highly competitive task of  
finding work in today's job market.

# Finding **a** Job

The first step toward finding a job is to take a long, hard look at yourself and the job market. Be as honest and objective as you can.

## *Assessing Yourself*

Take the time to answer the following questions. Put your answers in writing. Doing so may help you to express your thoughts, give you a more objective view of yourself, and focus your attention on what you want.

- What things am I most interested in?
- What do I like to spend my time doing?
- What am I good at? (Include leisure activities, school subjects, interactions with other people, volunteer work, part-time jobs, etc.)
- What would I like to be good at?
- What skills would I like to learn or develop further?
- What are some of my strengths?
- What strengths do I wish I had?
- What topics do I have the most knowledge about?
- What topics would I be most interested in learning more about and spending time researching?
- What are some of my weaknesses?
- What types of jobs could I see myself working at and enjoying?
- What are the specific things about those jobs that I would enjoy?

- What specific strengths or knowledge do I have that would make me good at those jobs?
- What strengths or knowledge do I need to develop to become good (or better) at those jobs?
- How can I go about developing the strengths and knowledge I need?
- Are the types of work that interest me in demand now or will they be soon? (See the upcoming section The Labour Market.)

If you have answered these questions in an honest and confident way, you will have a head start when you are being interviewed for jobs. These questions will certainly be asked by people who are in a position to hire you.

### **Don't Limit Yourself**

When you are looking for a job, make sure you do the following:

- Remember that most people will have several careers in their lifetime, so let your interests guide you at first no matter how varied they are. If you're not sure about your interests, then start thinking and work at pinpointing at least one or two subjects or areas of interest that appeal to you.
- Research occupations that relate to your interests.
- Ask guidance counsellors, employment counsellors, or librarians to direct you to resources that will outline a wide variety of occupations.
- Consider doing volunteer work.
- Investigate classes and training opportunities at local community centres and through continuing education departments. Talk to counsellors, teachers, company owners, neighbours, friends, and family for other suggestions.

## **Set Goals**

When you focus on your immediate goal of earning a living, try to keep sight of your long-term goals. What work would you really like to be doing and what skills and experience might help you get such work? Setting immediate goals can help you reach long-term goals.

Many entry-level or unskilled jobs may seem totally unrelated to your career goals, but most of them will help you build skills and strengths that you'll need and can transfer to almost any middle- or high-level job.

## **Know What Makes You Employable**

The Conference Board of Canada has developed an Employability Skills Profile.

Employability skills are the generic skills, attitudes, and behaviours that employers look for in people they consider employing and develop in current employees through training programs. You develop such skills in school and through a variety of life experiences outside of school. In the workplace, as in school, these skills are integrated and used in varying conditions, depending on the nature of the particular job activities.

The following chart outlines these skills. Try to focus on building your employability skills.

## EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS PROFILE: The Critical Skills Required of the Canadian Workforce

### Academic Skills

Those skills that provide the basic foundation to get, keep, and progress on a job and to achieve the best results

Canadian employers need a person who can:

#### Communicate

- Understand and speak the language in which business is conducted
- Listen to understand and learn
- Read, comprehend, and use written materials, including graphs, charts, and displays
- Write effectively in the language in which business is conducted

#### Think

- Think critically and act logically to evaluate situations, solve problems, and make decisions
- Understand and solve problems involving mathematics and use the results
- Use technology, instruments, tools, and information systems effectively
- Access and apply specialized knowledge from various fields (e.g., skilled trades, technology, physical sciences, arts, and social sciences)

#### Learn

- Continue to learn for life

### Personal Management Skills

The combination of skills, attitudes, and behaviours required to get, keep, and progress on a job and to achieve the best results

Canadian employers need a person who can demonstrate:

#### Positive Attitudes and Behaviours

- Self-esteem and confidence
- Honesty, integrity, and personal ethics
- A positive attitude toward learning, growth, and personal health
- Initiative, energy, and persistence to get the job done

#### Responsibility

- The ability to set goals and priorities in work and personal life
- The ability to plan and manage time, money, and other resources to achieve goals
- Accountability for actions taken

#### Adaptability

- A positive attitude toward change
- Recognition of and respect for people's diversity and individual differences
- The ability to identify and suggest new ideas to get the job done – creativity

### Teamwork Skills

Those skills needed to work with others on a job and to achieve the best results

Canadian employers need a person who can:

#### Work with Others

- Understand and contribute to the organization's goals
- Understand and work within the culture of the group
- Plan and make decisions with others and support the outcomes
- Respect the thoughts and opinions of others in the group
- Exercise "give and take" to achieve group results
- Seek a team approach as appropriate
- Lead when appropriate, mobilizing the group for high performance

This document was developed by the Corporate Council on Education, a program of the National Business and Education Centre, The Conference Board of Canada, 255 Smyth Road, Ottawa, Ontario K1H 8M7 Telephone: (613) 526-3280, Fax: (613) 526-4857.

## *The Labour Market*

It is crucial that you find out what types of jobs are in demand in the labour market now and will be in the future. What skills are employers looking for? What jobs are out there and will continue to exist? What new industries are growing and developing? What jobs are being created or will be created as a result of these new industries? What skills will you need in the future? What opportunities for self-employment exist in your community? What skills and strengths can you build on to create your own job?

This type of information will be extremely useful in guiding you in your job planning. Evaluate this information in relation to your goals. Do your goals tie in with the labour market demand, or do you need to adjust them?

### **Labour Market Information Resources**

Use the resources available to you:

- Ask guidance counsellors, employment counsellors, or librarians to direct you to resources that outline local and broader labour market surveys and projections.
- Visit your local Job Connect centre to inquire about labour market information resources. Call the Training Hotline for the telephone number and address of the centre closest to you.
- Visit your local Human Resource Centre (HRC) of Canada (listed in the Blue Pages of your telephone book under “Government of Canada, Human Resources Development Canada”); use the computer information kiosk to look up labour market information.
- Check the classified ads section in several newspapers to see what types of jobs are advertised the most.

## *Researching the Job*

Contact employers in your field of interest and explain that you are researching occupations in their industry. Ask if they would be willing to meet with you for 10 to 15 minutes, at a time convenient to them, so that you can ask them some questions relating to the occupation and the industry. Consider taking a course in entrepreneurship. Learn the attitudes and skills of people who are self-employed. Talk to an employment or guidance counsellor for other suggestions.

## *The Job Search*

Looking for a job is demanding and time-consuming. In many cases, it takes weeks, even months to get an offer.

### **Don't Take Rejection to Heart**

While you're reading job ads, sending letters, and going to interviews, keep in mind that if someone cannot give you a job, you shouldn't take it personally. Instead, believe in yourself. Keep your spirits high. Be persistent. Write letters and ask for interviews even when you think your chances are slim. Even if there aren't any openings right now, communicate with the employer to ensure he or she remembers your perseverance and positive attitude when a job does become available. If you want to start your own business, set your objectives, keep your self-motivation on track, and remember you can take responsibility for your own career. At the very least, you will have the satisfaction of knowing you are doing everything possible to find a job.

### **Always Project a Positive and Enthusiastic Attitude**

A positive, enthusiastic attitude can dramatically improve your chances of getting a job. Don't forget that when many people with essentially the same skills and qualifications are applying, your attitude could give you an advantage over the other applicants.

When you are looking for a job, keep the following in mind:

- If you are offered a job that is not related to your career goals, consider it carefully! It could be the only offer you will get at this time.
- Remember that, in at least two ways, all jobs are related. Every job will not only put money in your pocket, but also will give you one of the most valuable commodities in the job market: experience. Any job can work for you if you want it to.
- When you look for a job again, it's an advantage to be able to show that you have held a responsible position at least once before. Your job experience could be the deciding factor that finally gets you the job that you think is ideal for you.

### **Be Determined**

When looking for work, be determined, optimistic, and flexible. Be firm in your commitment to do everything possible to get what you want, rather than sit around hoping someone will come by and offer you a job.

### **Remember These Important Points**

Remembering the following points will help you in your job search:

- Be determined, optimistic, and flexible.
- Study the job market: compare your interests and aspirations to what's out there.
- Be persistent and always demonstrate a positive and enthusiastic attitude.

# Getting Organized

## *Social Insurance Card*

If you don't already have a social insurance card (SIN card), visit your local Human Resource Centre of Canada and fill out an application form for one. The nearest Human Resource Centre of Canada can be found by looking in the Blue Pages of your telephone book under "Human Resources Development Canada".

When you go to apply for your SIN card, bring your birth certificate. If you were born in Quebec, a baptismal certificate is acceptable. If you were born in Newfoundland, either a baptismal or dedication certificate will do.

You will need a second piece of identification with your name on it, such as a driver's licence, library card, or age of majority card.

If you were born outside of Canada, you will need your Canadian citizenship card, your Immigration 1000 form, or your passport with a landed immigrant stamp.

You should receive your SIN card by mail about four weeks after you fill out the application form. Apply for your card as soon as possible.

If you have any questions, phone your local Human Resource Centre of Canada.

## Résumé

Send a résumé with every job application letter you write, and bring a copy to every job interview.

When writing your résumé, keep it short and factual. Emphasize your strong points and accomplishments. Include the following information:

**Name**

**Address**

**Telephone Number**

**Education:**

- List all the secondary or postsecondary schools you have attended, beginning with the most recent, and give the dates when you finished attending each school. Mention your grades if they were above average. List any scholarships or awards you have won.

**Work Experience:**

- List all the jobs you have held and the start and finish dates of those jobs, beginning with the most recent. Outline what your responsibilities were in each job. If you received a raise or promotion, mention it.
- If you have never held a job, list any work you have done for other people, including volunteer work, no matter how insignificant it may seem to you.

**Interests:**

- List any clubs and sports or school organizations you belong to.
- Involvement in extracurricular activities and the ability to function as a member of a team can be a valuable asset. Mention your hobbies and leisure activities. An employer can gain an insight into a person's character based on his or her interests and pastimes.

### Goals:

- If you have any career or long-term goals, state them. Even if an employer cannot give you a job that is directly related, at least you have demonstrated that you are ambitious and determined.

### References:

- References are people who can vouch for your work performance and ability. Friends and family members should not be listed unless they were your employer. List three names and telephone numbers on a separate sheet of paper. Teachers and former employers are the best references. Always ask permission to use people as references before you write your résumé. Discuss with your references the type of job you are applying for and what the necessary qualifications are.

The following résumés are meant only as samples. There are other ways to set up a résumé, and you can find other samples at the library. When you write your résumé, begin with your most recent achievements, whether they are academic or work related.

If you would like help writing your résumé, visit a guidance counsellor, university or college student placement centre, or, if you are no longer in school, your local Job Connect centre. Call the Training Hotline at 1-800-387-5656 or (416) 326-5656 for a referral.

As you work through these instructions on writing your résumé, make some notes to take with you when you meet with a counsellor.

# Résumé Samples

John R. Grant  
23 Elm Street  
Anytown, ON M4R 2Z1  
Telephone: (900) 555-1234

## WORK EXPERIENCE

June–September 1998  
Baker's Department Store, Communications and Marketing Department, 10 Dawson Road,  
Anytown, ON M4T 6X7  
Position: Communications/marketing assistant. Responsibilities included writing and designing  
layout for internal company newsletter.

June–September 1997  
The Tower, 301 Front Street West, Anytown, ON M6N 1Y4  
Position: Marketing assistant. Assisted with marketing of Tower Tours.

December 1995–December 1996  
Linda's Book Shop, 36 Trevor Street, Anytown, ON M5K 3H1  
Position: Sales clerk. Worked 14 hours per week during the school year and full time during the  
summer. Responsibilities included sales and inventory.

## EDUCATION

1997–Present  
Caldwell Polytechnical Institute, pursuing three-year B.A. in Journalism. Completed first year.  
Average Grade B+.

## CERTIFICATES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Editor of the *Herald*, the Caldwell Polytechnical Institute newspaper.
- Winner of the Homer Mallow Award for highest standing, Grade 13 History.
- St. John Ambulance Certificate.
- Red Cross Life Saving Award.

## REFERENCES

Available upon request.

*The following are examples of references John Grant might provide at an interview:*

Professor Andrew White, Caldwell Polytechnical Institute  
Anytown, ON M9C 2K5. Telephone: (900) 555-2345

Mrs. Marion Grey, Manager, Housewares Department, Baker's Department Store  
10 Dawson Road, Anytown, ON M4T 6X7. Telephone: (900) 555-3456

Ms. Linda Tower, Proprietor, Linda's Book Shop  
36 Trevor Street, Anytown, ON M5K 3H1. Telephone: (900) 555-4567

Chantal Marie Martin  
123 Main Street  
Anothertown, ON P6B 1A1  
Telephone: (800) 555-7890

LANGUAGES SPOKEN: English and French  
LANGUAGES WRITTEN: English and limited French  
DRIVER'S LICENCE: Ontario Class "G"

### EDUCATION

1994-98

Diploma  
Sir John A. Macdonald Secondary School  
Completed four-year Business and Commercial Program  
Average Grade: B

### EMPLOYMENT

July-August 1994-1997

Counsellor. All Canada Sports Camp, Box 904, Anothertown, ON P0H 2G0  
Responsibilities: Coached, trained, and supervised girls 10 to 14 years of age.  
Invited to return as Senior Counsellor.

### INTERESTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Winner of the Olivia Canada Trophy for achievement in electronic equipment skills.
- Member of basketball, volleyball, and gymnastics teams.
- Athlete of the Year.
- President, Girls Athletic Committee.
- Sports, photography.

### REFERENCES

Available upon request.

*The following are examples of references Chantal Marie Martin might provide at an interview:*

Mr. J. Allen Johnson, Teacher, Computer Skills, Sir John A. Macdonald Secondary School  
42 Havestock Heights, Anothertown, ON P4N 2A2. Telephone: (800) 555-1341

Mrs. Marta Czonkawicz, Head, Department of Physical Education, Sir John A. Macdonald  
Secondary School, 42 Havestock Heights, Anothertown, ON P4N 2A2. Telephone: (800) 555-2861

Ms. Suzanne Demers, Director, All Canada Sports Camp, Box 904, Anothertown, ON P0H 2G0.  
Telephone: (800) 555-0953

# Looking Around



Now it's time to find out what jobs are available, and to let people know that you're in the market. The following activities and resources will be useful in your job search:

## **Networking:**

- Don't be shy about approaching friends and relatives who are working. Tell them what kind of job you're looking for, and ask them to let you know of any openings and to check with their own friends and fellow workers. Any of these people may know of jobs that have not been advertised yet. Ask permission to mention their names when you follow their leads.

## **Self-Marketing:**

- Remember that many jobs do not get advertised. Employers often don't need to advertise because they usually have people applying to them on a regular basis.
- Find out which companies have the kind of position(s) you're seeking. A counsellor can guide you in researching companies. Apply whether positions are advertised or not.
- Many employers choose to hire through employment agencies instead of through advertising. It is up to you to "advertise" yourself to employers, as well as to employment agencies.
- Make sure you maintain contact with the employer after you apply. As long as you are professional and polite, you will not be pestering; instead, you will be demonstrating persistence – a skill that most employers want in their staff.

### **Employment Centres:**

- Job Connect centres, Human Resource Centres of Canada, college and university placement offices, and private employment agencies all specialize in matching people with jobs. Use these resources. Keep in mind, however, that going to an employment office is like going to an interview. Follow the suggestions in the upcoming section Winning at Interviews.
- Contact your local Human Resource Centre of Canada or library for additional employment resources. You can find the location of your local library in the White Pages of your telephone book under “Public Libraries”.

### **Previous Employers:**

- Remind previous employers who you are and when you worked for them. Ask if there are any openings at their company. If there are none, ask for suggestions about who else you might phone for an interview. Ask your former employer for permission to use him or her as a reference.

### **Guidance or Placement Counsellors:**

- Guidance or placement counsellors can help you organize and plan your job search. You might also get some pointers on the best way to apply.

### **Newspapers/The Internet:**

- Make sure you read the want ads in the newspaper or on the Internet every day, including the “Seasonal Help Wanted” column. Don’t forget to check local weekly papers. Don’t be put off by ads that ask for experience. If you think you can do the job, go after it. Show that your enthusiasm can be more important than your lack of experience.

### **Pounding the Pavement:**

- One of the best methods of looking for a job is to get out and meet employers. Doing so gives you a chance to make an impression that cannot be made simply by sending a letter. A visit is a demonstration of your initiative and sincere desire to work. It also gives you the opportunity to ask for other leads. Invest the time. This method gets results.

# Cover Letters

If you hear of a job that's open, or read about one in the want ads, the best course of action is to phone the employer immediately for an interview. If you must respond to an ad in writing, however, send your résumé and a cover letter.

A cover letter serves as your introduction to an employer. First impressions count, so take some time to prepare a professional letter.

Type the letter neatly, or have someone else do it for you. Keep it short and follow the standard business letter format. Mention the ad you are replying to. List at least two qualifications you have that would make you suitable for the position. Include your telephone number and invite the reader to contact you for an interview.

If you're writing a more general letter to a company that has not advertised for help, follow the same format and state the kind of job you're looking for. Again, mention at least two qualifications you have that would be valuable to that particular firm.

Try to address your letter to a specific person. Phone to find out who is in a position to hire you. Ask for the proper spelling of that person's name and for his or her job title.

Although you can make copies of your résumé, for each job you apply for you must send a different cover letter. Don't consider saving time by writing cover letters by hand. A typewritten or computer-printed letter is neater and easier to read, and will make a professional impression.

The sample cover letters on the next pages are meant only as a guide.  
Don't copy them.

### *Important Points Regarding Your Cover Letter*

→ A well-written cover letter is essential:

- Spell the employer's name and address correctly.
- Use single-spaced text and set proper margins.
- Check for grammar and spelling errors.
- Have someone else proofread (check) your cover letter and any documents accompanying it.
- Include your name and telephone number in the cover letter.

# Sample Cover Letters

John R. Grant  
23 Elm Street  
Anytown, ON M4R 2Z1  
(900) 555-1234  
October 15, 1998

Ms. Helen Brown  
Supervisor  
Acme Paper Box Company  
500 Rossland Road  
Anytown, ON M1G 2W2

Dear Ms. Brown:

I would like to apply for the position of copy writer advertised in the October edition of the *Anytown Times*.

This past summer I was employed at Baker's Department Store. I was responsible for the writing, design, and layout of the store's internal newsletter. Previously, I worked for The Tower in the Marketing Department, where I assisted with the marketing of tours. I believe my willingness to work hard and the experience I have gained would prove to be valuable assets to your company.

My résumé is enclosed. Please phone me at your convenience to arrange an interview.

I look forward to your call.

Sincerely,

John R. Grant

July 2, 1998

123 Main Street  
Anothertown, ON P6B 1A1

Mr. Edward Taylor  
Manager, Human Resources  
Softalk EDP Ltd.  
1234 Oak Road  
Anytown, ON M1M 1M1

Dear Sir:

I have recently completed high school and am seeking a position in the data processing field.

In 1997, I achieved the highest mark of my graduating class in computer skills. Last year, I won the Olivia Canada Trophy for achievement in electronic equipment skills.

Mr. Jean-Guy Potvin of your Anothertown office suggested that I let you know about my availability. I am willing to relocate to Anytown or anywhere else in Canada.

My résumé is enclosed. I will be in Anytown from September 8 to September 12. Please telephone me at (800) 555-7890 if it would be possible to arrange an interview during that period.

Sincerely,

Chantal Marie Martin

# Application Forms

You will often be asked to fill out an application form when you attend an interview. Be prepared to provide information about the following:

- Legal eligibility to work in Canada
- SIN (social insurance number)
- Type of employment desired: full-time, part-time, temporary, summer, co-op
- Present or previous salary; salary desired
- Willingness to work shifts, overtime, weekends
- Willingness to work in other parts of Canada or other countries; geographic location(s) preferred
- Possession of a driver's licence; class of licence
- Possession of a car; willingness to use your car on company business
- Languages spoken or written
- Computer knowledge; software applications known; word processing proficiency; other business machines operated
- Possession of a provincial trade card or licence
- How you found out about the job: classified advertisement, employment agency, campus recruiting, referral, other
- Type of work or position desired, e.g., administrative assistant, accountant, computer programmer
- Previous employment with the company
- Date you could start working

# Winning at Interviews

An interview is your chance to shine. You can make up for your lack of experience and skills by showing that you will be a valuable employee.

- Look your best. First impressions are very important. Be neat and clean, and dress appropriately. Don't wear any clothing, make-up, cologne, or hair style that will distract the interviewer from what you are saying. Don't diminish yourself by appearing too casual. If you show up at a business office in jeans, it's like saying, "I didn't think you were important enough for me to change my clothes." Remember, your appearance says as much about you as your résumé.
- Be prompt. Find out beforehand where you have to go, how much time it takes to get there, and how much money you will need to get there and back.
- Try to learn about the organization before you arrive. You will make a better impression if you talk intelligently and ask informed questions. Your library may have information about large companies. To get information about a small company, ask anyone you know who knows about the company, or simply call the company's main telephone number and ask for information.
- Be polite to everyone you meet when you go for an interview. You never know who may be asked to give an opinion about you or who you may eventually work with if you get the job!

- When you meet the person who will be interviewing you, address that person by name. Say, “Thank you for seeing me [interviewer’s name],” and shake hands firmly. Maintain eye contact throughout the interview to show that you are sincere and interested.
- Be prepared for the question, “What skills, strengths, and knowledge do you possess that make you a qualified candidate for this position?” It’s just one way of saying, “Why should I hire you?” Have your résumé handy and refer to it if necessary. Impress upon the interviewer that you are eager and enthusiastic and have many attributes that would benefit the organization.
- Prepare yourself for another common question, “What interests you about this job?” The interviewer might also ask questions about your knowledge of the job, your communication and writing skills, and so on.
- When the interview is over, thank the interviewer once again for taking the time to see you, and shake hands. Chances are, you will not be offered a job on the spot, so it’s important to leave a good impression. It could mean being hired at a later date when a job is open.  
  
It’s also to your advantage to send a thank-you note. Doing so not only shows your interest and enthusiasm but also makes the interviewer remember you after the interview.  
  
A thank-you note should be brief and can be handwritten. Thank the interviewer once again for the opportunity to apply for a job. Summarize your qualifications. Close by saying you hope to hear from the interviewer soon. Mail the note immediately.
- Keep a journal and make notes about every interview. You should also keep a record of your application letters and the dates you sent them. Such information will be useful when checking where you’ve been, who you’ve seen, and who you should contact again.

# Checking Your Job Search



A thorough job search involves many steps. Make sure you complete all of them:

- ✓ Read this booklet cover to cover.
- ✓ Evaluate yourself and the job market.
- ✓ Research possible occupations.
- ✓ Decide what kind of job you want.
- ✓ Get a social insurance card.
- ✓ Type your résumé and have copies made.
- ✓ Let your friends and relatives know that you are looking for a job.
- ✓ Read the want ads.
- ✓ Send cover letters and résumés even to companies that have not advertised for help.
- ✓ Visit employment centres and check their bulletin boards.
- ✓ Phone employers you'd like to work for and ask for interviews.
- ✓ Visit employers to let them know you'd like to work for them.
- ✓ Prepare yourself thoroughly for interviews.
- ✓ Learn something about the company before you go there for an interview.

- ✓ Write thank-you notes to interviewers.
- ✓ Keep an up-to-date journal of your job search.
- ✓ Prepare yourself for rejection.
- ✓ Persevere.

More information can be found at these sources:

- ✓ Job Connect centres
- ✓ Human Resource Centres of Canada and Employment Resource Centres
- ✓ College and university student placement or career centres
- ✓ High school guidance offices
- ✓ Public libraries
- ✓ The business section of bookstores

# Making the Most of It

**Congratulations,** the job is yours! Now you must work hard to keep that job and make it work for you.

There are many adjustments to be made when shifting from school to work or from a part-time job to a full-time career. If you understand what will be expected of you and follow a few common sense guidelines, the transition will be easier.

**Accept Responsibility:**

Be sure that you can handle the job you were hired to do. Have a clear understanding of what your employer wants from you. Don't hesitate to ask questions. Go about your work in a conscientious, efficient manner.

**Be Punctual:**

Arrive on time and stay as long as you should. Your employer may think that you are immature, irresponsible, or incapable of handling your job if you are absent too often. If you cannot come to work, phone immediately. Schedule personal appointments (e.g., doctor, dentist) before or after work or during the lunch hour, and let your employer know where you'll be.

**Give 100 Percent:**

Get enough rest so that you're alert at work. Make personal phone calls only for very important matters.

**Dress Properly:**

Appropriate dress varies from job to job. Make sure you project an image that reflects well on you and your employer.

**Be Positive and Tolerant:**

Working with people can often be difficult. Try not to let touchy situations build into full-scale conflicts. Look at things from the point of view of your fellow workers and supervisors. Air any differences in a controlled, open-minded manner. Be prepared to accept criticism and to use other people's suggestions to improve your work habits. Keep in mind that you are part of a team in which each individual's success depends upon the efforts of everyone in that team.

**Show Initiative:**

Take an active interest in your job. Don't let it become a dull routine. Don't hesitate to work overtime or to lend a hand in an area where you don't normally work. Showing initiative and cooperative spirit are the best ways to get promoted. If you are passed over for promotion, however, accept gracefully that someone else had more seniority, was next in line, or deserved the promotion more than you.

**Keep Trying:**

Make yourself more valuable. Upgrade your skills through courses offered by your firm or elsewhere in your community (e.g., continuing education courses, college courses, etc.). In some cases, an employer will pay all or part of your fees. Take advantage of your employer's support.

### **Deal with Stress:**

Pressures at work affect each individual differently. If the strain of working starts to interfere with your performance, look for outlets for your stress. Lunch hour could be the perfect time for a walk, swim, or exercise class. Try to relax when you're not working. Read, go to the movies, listen to music, or take a hot bath. Take the time to analyse the causes of your stress, and find a way to channel your nervous energy and frustrations into constructive activities.

If, after a reasonable length of time, you feel your job is too much of a strain, confide in a friend, relative, or career counsellor and ask for advice. If you finally decide that your problems are insurmountable and start looking for another job, update your résumé.

### **Leave a Job Properly:**

No matter what your reason for leaving a job, give your employer two weeks' notice. Finish as much of your work as possible and inform your co-workers about what remains to be done. Leave a forwarding address and phone number. Before you go, ask your employer for a letter of reference – it will be useful in any future job searches.

Every job is an important phase in your career. There is always something valuable to learn from each of your job experiences. Try to maintain an objective outlook, and recognize the ways in which you've grown. Use what you've learned to move even closer to your ideal: the most fulfilling and rewarding job you can imagine for yourself.

# Creating a Job

## *Be Your Own Boss*

When you are surveying all your job options, you may want to consider the possibility of starting your own business. Although self-employment involves more difficulty and risk than does being an employee, the rewards and satisfaction can be far greater.

To be a good candidate for starting your own business, you will need dedication, strong organizational skills, a good idea for a product or service, and a good marketing plan. Being your own boss means being willing to work hard and being ready to take on the management of your business.

Here is a list of some tough questions that you should answer to evaluate your suitability for self-employment:

- Do you have an idea for a product or service?
- Is there a demand for your product or service?
- Do you have debts that may interfere with your business venture?
- Do you have the skills necessary to run the business?
- Who are your competitors?
- How does your idea meet a need not met by your competitors?
- Who are your clients and where are they located?
- What are your start-up costs?

- Is location important to your business?
- How are you going to market your business?
- How much of the work can you do yourself?
- Can you obtain adequate financing and credit with suppliers?
- Are your profit margins and sales projections realistic?
- Have you investigated appropriate insurance to protect your business?

### *Know Your Market*

→ Your idea is only good if people are willing to pay for the product or service your business will provide. Find out if there is a demand for your product or service. Evaluate your competition. Competition may be a factor in deciding whether to operate in your own neighbourhood or a different one.

### *Know the Laws*

→ Once you've chosen a project and a location, find out if there are any laws or zoning regulations that apply. You can get this information from your local municipal office or chamber of commerce. Remember, it's your responsibility to know the laws before you begin your business.

### *Know Your Costs*

→ Next, you must decide how much you need to spend on supplies and equipment. These costs will be the major factor in helping you decide how much to charge for your product or service. Keep your capital investment to a minimum. Initially, always try to borrow or rent the equipment you need. Once you begin to show a profit, you can consider investing in equipment. Keep your risks to a minimum. After all, the idea is to make money, not incur debts and losses.

## *Useful Resources*

- Job Connect centres
- Public libraries and public reference libraries
- Ontario Works offices
- The Internet
- Boards of trade and chambers of commerce
- Classified ad sections in newspapers
- Employment Resource Centres
- Canada/Ontario Business Call Centre, 1-800-567-2345 or (416) 954-4636

The federal government maintains the following centres:

- **Human Resource Centres (HRCs) of Canada (formerly Canada Employment Centres):** These year-round centres provide a variety of information through both computerized information kiosks and printed materials. The information includes the National Job Bank, regional labour market information, details on local employment programs, employment counselling services, and more. To find the location of your nearest Human Resource Centre of Canada, look in the Blue Pages of your telephone book, either in the index under “Human Resources Development Canada” or in the “Government of Canada” section.
- **Human Resource Centres for Students:** Most centres are open between April and August. They offer assistance to students seeking employment and to employers in need of help. Phone the Training Hotline in the spring, and ask about your local Human Resource Centre for Students.

## *Ensuring Success*

→ You will succeed if you do the following:

- Be prepared to work harder for yourself than for anyone else.
- Identify a marketable service or product.
- Canvass to make sure there is a demand for your product or service.
- Check at your municipal office, chamber of commerce, and board of trade to learn all the laws and restrictions that apply to your type of business.
- Obtain your equipment and supplies at the lowest possible cost.
- Borrow money only if it's absolutely necessary.
- Advertise.
- Be sure you're covered by insurance if you need it.
- Use written contracts.
- Promise only the work you are capable of delivering on time.
- Always use good customer service practices.
- Keep a ledger with accurate records.
- Open a bank account for your business.
- Continually seek advice from all the sources available to you.

We hope this booklet has been useful to you. If you require any further information, please telephone the Ministry of Education and Training, Training Hotline at 1-800-387-5656 or (416) 326-5656.

