



1. Explore your career options with a trained career counsellor

Career counsellors are equipped with the information, resources, and tools to help you. Most secondary and post-secondary schools and colleges have counsellors available to meet with students.

- Assess your transferable skills, interests, personality, strengths, aptitude, weaknesses and abilities
- Match these important key areas with a suitable career

Self-understanding is essential to making wise career choices. Skilled trades are not for everyone – each trade requires specific aptitudes, skills, and interests. Learn about yourself and discover which trade or trades are most suitable for you.

Skilled trades are made up of four sectors:

- Construction
- Service
- Industrial
- Motive Power

Search out what types of trades exist in each!

2. Research! Research! Research!

Gather timely and relevant information about the trade or trades that interest you before pursuing an actual apprenticeship. It's vital to your success to do some background research.

The following are some techniques to help you with your research:

Information Interviews

An information interview involves speaking to someone working in a trade, company or career of interest. The purpose is to gain current information from an “insider” point of view. The goal is not to obtain an apprenticeship but to receive information and advice about the trade and the tradesperson’s experience.

Things to consider about specific apprenticeships:

- Educational requirements
- Training
- Pre-apprenticeship courses
- Time required to complete an apprenticeship
- Wages
- Educational costs
- Cost of tools
- Present and future employability outlook
- Work environment
- Challenges of the trade
- Unionized vs. non-unionized work environments
- Life-long learning opportunities.

Who to Contact

Ask family, friends, neighbours, instructors, career counsellors, and anyone else for the names of people to contact. You can also create your own contacts through information interviews. Use the following sources for leads:

- Yellow pages
- Business directories
- Unions/associations: their publications and websites
- Articles in the newspapers
- Trade magazines

What to Say

Follow the general guidelines for making a cold call. Speak to a career counsellor if you are unfamiliar with these guidelines. The text box on page four provides further suggestions. You simply need to alter your script to suit your request for an information interview.

How to Prepare

Treat an information interview like you would a regular job interview.



3. Set out a plan of action

A plan is like a map, getting you from point A to point B. Those individuals who set specific, realistic, and attainable goals generally experience greater success than those who do not.

Consider having the following to assist you in your job search:

- **Cover letter**
- **Resume**
- **Business/Networking card** – This is a great tool to use when networking or when you are unable to carry your resume with you.
- **Portfolio** – A portfolio is like an expanded resume, showcasing your strengths, achievements, and abilities in a visual format. It should include information that is relevant only to your trade of interest.
- **Letters of recommendation**
- **Transcripts from courses**
- **Pictures of work you have done** – They could come from hobbies, volunteering or actual paid work experience including before, during, and after photos to demonstrate your abilities.
- **Anything** else that demonstrates your abilities – be creative!

Job shadow

Job shadowing allows you the opportunity to accompany a tradesperson during a typical workday. This can help clarify whether you would enjoy this particular trade.

Co-operative Education and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs (OYAP)

These programs offer secondary school students an opportunity to gain practical, on-the-job experience while they are still in school (and receive credit at the same time).

Surf the internet

The internet can provide up-to-date information right at your finger tips. Make sure you check out www.apprenticesearch.com!

Here are some factors you may need to consider while creating your plan:

- Training timelines
- Upgrading current education, i.e. obtaining a high school diploma
- Cost of tools and training
- Financial and family situation
- Time to complete apprenticeship

4. Search for an employer to sponsor you

A well-rounded search for an apprenticeship involves many methods and techniques. The following are some strategies to assist in helping you seek out opportunities:

- **www.apprenticesearch.com**

A free website that helps match people looking for apprenticeship training and employers offering apprenticeship training and jobs. You can create a profile, post your resume, and apply for positions.

- **Cold Calling**

Newspaper job ads generally create a flood of resumes for employers to sort through. Cold calling helps you avoid this steep competition and tap into the many positions that go unadvertised. The call, by telephone or in person, is usually made to a person who is not expecting to hear from you and doesn't know who you are. A career counsellor can help you learn and practise this technique.

- **Networking**

The term networking means making connections. By talking and connecting with people you will be able to hear about unadvertised opportunities. It's a valuable method to find an apprenticeship. Well over half of all job opportunities are filled via word of mouth rather than through advertising. If you have made a contact, leave a business/networking card to increase your chances of being contacted in the future.

- **Information Interviews**

Conducting an information interview will help to increase your network of contacts in a specific trade.

- **Classified Ads in the Newspaper**

Keep in mind only 3-5% of jobs are ever advertised. It is good to keep your eye on the classifieds, but definitely do not make them your sole focus.

- **Internet**

There are many internet based job search sites where employers post opportunities. Here are a few to try:

- www.jobbank.gc.ca
- www.workopolis.com
- www.monster.ca

Who to contact

Ask family, friends, neighbours, instructors, and anyone else who may be in the trade for the name of a person you can call. Also refer to:

- Yellow pages
- Business directories
- Unions/associations
- Articles in the newspapers
- Trade magazines



5. Ensure your interview skills and your resume are top-notch

Resumes and interviews create important first impressions. You need to set yourself apart and accurately market your positive skills, experience, abilities, and attitude. Request assistance from a career counsellor in writing your resume and preparing for interviews.

Some tips for creating a resume:

- Underline key words from the job description or want ad; underline words that match your skills.
- Group the related skills into categories.
- Prioritize the skills – decide which sets of skills are most important to the job being advertised.
- Use the top 35 words in a summary statement – pick the top skills from each category and write a summary statement that describes your experience and qualifications for the job. Put the statement at the top of your resume. Remember that the person screening a resume likely spends no more than 30 seconds with each. Don't make them search for relevant information!
- Use the underlined words you have identified when you describe your own experience in greater detail.

apprenticesearch.com

Cold Calls: What to say

Develop a short 30-40 second script for yourself to help organize your thoughts. General guidelines for your script:

- Introduce yourself
- Ask to speak to the person in charge of hiring; be sure to obtain their name
- Ask if they have time to speak with you; if not, ask when is a good time to call back
- Explain the reason for your call and be sure to market your skills and abilities
- If they are interested in what they hear, be prepared for questions

The objective is to get the employer to accept your resume and consider you for a future opportunity. You may also obtain other names to contact.

Some sample “starter scripts” for cold calls:

“Hi, my name is _____. I'm completing grade 12 this year at Eastdale Secondary School, and now I'm interested in finding out more about full-time jobs and apprenticeship positions. Would this be a good time for us to talk for a few minutes?”

“Good morning, Mr. Jones. My name is _____ and I'm currently job searching and looking into companies in the _____ sector. I was looking at your website yesterday and I had a few questions about your company. I wonder if you have a few minutes to give me some information.”

“Hi, it's _____ calling. _____ suggested I give you a call. I'm interested in becoming an apprentice in the _____ sector and he / she thought you would be a good person to talk with. Is there some time this week when I could come in and spend a few minutes with you?”

6. Follow-up

Following-up means remaining in touch with the employer either by phone, e-mail, or in person. It is a very important aspect of your job search and unfortunately, many people choose not to do so because they are afraid of being too forward. In reality, many employers welcome a follow-up from a job searcher as it displays interest, initiative, enthusiasm, and dedication. Consider a follow-up call after submitting your resume to ensure that the employer has received it. This call gives you an additional opportunity to market your skills and set yourself apart from the competition.



7. Keep positive and stay motivated!

The reality is, looking for an apprenticeship is hard work and can take months. It is important to keep yourself balanced and not become discouraged when things do not seem to be going the way you hoped. Surround yourself with people who are supportive and stay involved in activities you enjoy. Also, keep an open mind and re-evaluate your job search approach periodically.



8. An employer wants to sponsor you – what next?

Now that you have found an employer to take you on as an apprentice, you must follow the steps set out by the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (MTCU) to continue the process:

- You or the employer must contact the MTCU at the nearest office.
The Hamilton office covers some parts of Peel, Halton and Dufferin Region: 905-521-7764 or 1-800-668-4479; the Mississauga office covers the rest: 905-279-7333 or 1-800-736-5520.
 - Complete and sign the apprenticeship training agreement/contract of apprenticeship between you, the employer and the MTCU.
 - Achieve the required on-the-job competencies.
 - Complete your in-school training.
 - Challenge the Trade Exam.
- ❖ For more detail and links to community partners who can assist you, please visit our website at www.apprenticesearch.com
- ❖ Adapted from Steps to an Apprenticeship, IEC Hamilton publication



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