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## Canada's Magazine for Career Development Professionals



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**W**orking in the career development sector, we face an odd situation. Our clients with post-secondary education have a lower unemployment rate and they tend to earn more over the span of their careers. However, we also know people rarely stay their whole life in the same kind of work, and often end up in careers that have little connection with their degree. So why do their degrees matter?

I went to university thinking that grasping complex abstract theories was an end in itself. Now I understand that the process of learning was the part that mattered most. I learned to do research and communicate my results clearly. I learned to adapt and keep a positive attitude in classes I found difficult. In the end, it didn't matter what topic I studied. The important thing is that I studied.

The same applies to all the odd jobs I got along the way. I will never have to make cappuccinos again (hopefully!), and I'll probably never have to repair sunglasses or operate a commercial washing machine either. However, I will keep on benefitting from all the transferable customer service, teamwork and problem-solving skills that I picked up in all of these jobs.

This is a recurrent theme in this issue of *Careering*, which takes an in-depth look at soft skills. Yes, knowledge is valuable, but it's only part of the story. What about leadership, initiative, work ethic? What about essential skills such as reading comprehension or basic arithmetic? What about the capacity to work well with others in a multi-generational workplace? According to a recent Environics survey commissioned by CERIC, 62% of employers Canada-wide said they would hire someone with the right soft skills and train them to get the technical skills necessary. Soft skills are that critical.

I was hired for four weeks at CERIC and stayed for four years, because it was great work for a great organization. My years here have given me so much learning and experience of both the soft and technical kind, but now I am passing the torch on to Karolina Grzeszczuk, who will take over as Editor of *Careering* magazine starting with the next issue. I wish Karolina the best of luck, and wish you happy learning as you dive into your magazine.

It's been a pleasure!

**Catherine Ducharme**

**D**ans le secteur du développement de carrière, nous vivons avec une étrange réalité. Le taux de chômage est plus bas, et le salaire souvent plus élevé, pour nos clients qui ont obtenu un diplôme d'études postsecondaire. Par contre, nous savons aussi que peu de gens passent leur vie dans la même carrière, et occupent souvent des postes qui n'ont pas grand-chose à voir avec leur domaine d'études. Dans ce cas, pourquoi le diplôme est-il si important?

À l'université, je croyais que de comprendre des théories complexes était une fin en soi. Maintenant je réalise que le processus d'apprentissage requis pour comprendre ces théories était ce qui importait le plus. J'ai appris à communiquer clairement mes résultats de recherche. J'ai appris à m'adapter et à garder une attitude positive dans les cours que je trouvais difficiles. Au final, ce que j'ai étudié n'importe pas autant que le fait que j'aie étudié.

Le même raisonnement peut être appliqué aux emplois de survivance que j'ai occupés. Je n'aurai jamais plus (en tout cas j'espère) à préparer des cappuccinos, réparer des lunettes ou opérer une laveuse commerciale, mais je vais continuer à bénéficier des compétences transférables en service à la clientèle, travail d'équipe et résolution de problèmes que j'ai acquis grâce à ces boulots.

C'est un thème qui revient souvent dans ce numéro de *Careering* qui porte sur les compétences dites générales. Oui, les connaissances sont importantes, mais qu'en est-il du leadership, du sens de l'initiative, de l'éthique du travail? Qu'en est-il des compétences essentielles telles que la compréhension de lecture ou l'arithmétique de base? Qu'en est-il de la capacité de travailler avec les autres dans un lieu de travail multigénérationnel? Selon un récent sondage d'Environics, commandé par le CERIC, 62 % des employeurs canadiens disent qu'ils engageraient quelqu'un qui possède les bonnes compétences générales, même s'ils devaient ensuite le former sur les aspects techniques du travail.

J'ai été embauchée par le CERIC pour un contrat de quatre semaines et je suis restée quatre ans, parce que c'est un travail enrichissant pour un organisme intéressant. Mes années au CERIC m'ont beaucoup donné en termes d'apprentissage et d'expérience, mais je dois maintenant passer le flambeau à Karolina Grzeszczuk, qui me remplacera en tant qu'éditrice de *Careering* à partir du prochain numéro. Je souhaite la meilleure des chances à Karolina, et à vous, je souhaite bon apprentissage.

Ce fut un plaisir!

**Catherine Ducharme**

CERIC (Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling) is a charitable organization that advances education and research in career counselling and career development.

Le CERIC est un organisme caritatif voué à la progression de l'éducation et de la recherche en matière d'orientation professionnelle et de développement de carrière.

## INITIATIVES

### Project Partnerships Partenariats de projets

CERIC funds both research as well as learning and professional development projects that advance the body of knowledge in career counselling and career development in Canada. For more information about our current funding priorities and project partnership details, please visit [ceric.ca](http://ceric.ca).

Le CERIC finance à la fois des projets de recherche et des projets pédagogiques et de développement professionnel qui promeuvent l'ensemble des connaissances dans le domaine de l'orientation professionnelle et du développement de carrière au Canada. Pour de plus amples renseignements sur nos priorités de financement et nos partenariats de projets, visitez le site [ceric.ca](http://ceric.ca).



Canada's bilingual National Career Development Conference promoting the exchange of information and innovative approaches for career development and counselling. **Ottawa, January 25 - 27, 2016.**

Cannexus est un congrès national bilingue favorisant l'échange d'informations et d'initiatives novatrices dans le domaine de l'orientation professionnelle et du développement de carrière. **Ottawa, du 25 au 27 janvier 2016.**



ContactPoint is a Canadian online community providing career resources, learning and networking for practitioners.

OrientAction est une communauté en ligne destinée aux praticiens(iennes) en développement de carrière au Canada, leur fournissant des ressources sur le développement professionnel, l'acquisition de connaissances et le réseautage.



The CJCD is a peer-reviewed publication of career-related academic research and best practices. [cjcdonline.ca](http://cjcdonline.ca).

La RCDC est une publication évaluée par les pairs qui porte sur la recherche universitaire et les meilleures pratiques en développement de carrière. [rcdcenligne.ca](http://rcdcenligne.ca).

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**Glossary of Career Development**  
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### WATCH FOR THESE PROJECTS:

- \* Managing Successful Maternity Leave Career Transitions
- \* Hope-Centred Career Interventions
- \* Culturally Responsive Career Development to Meet the Needs of Newcomer and Refugee Children

### FUTURS PROJETS À SURVEILLER :

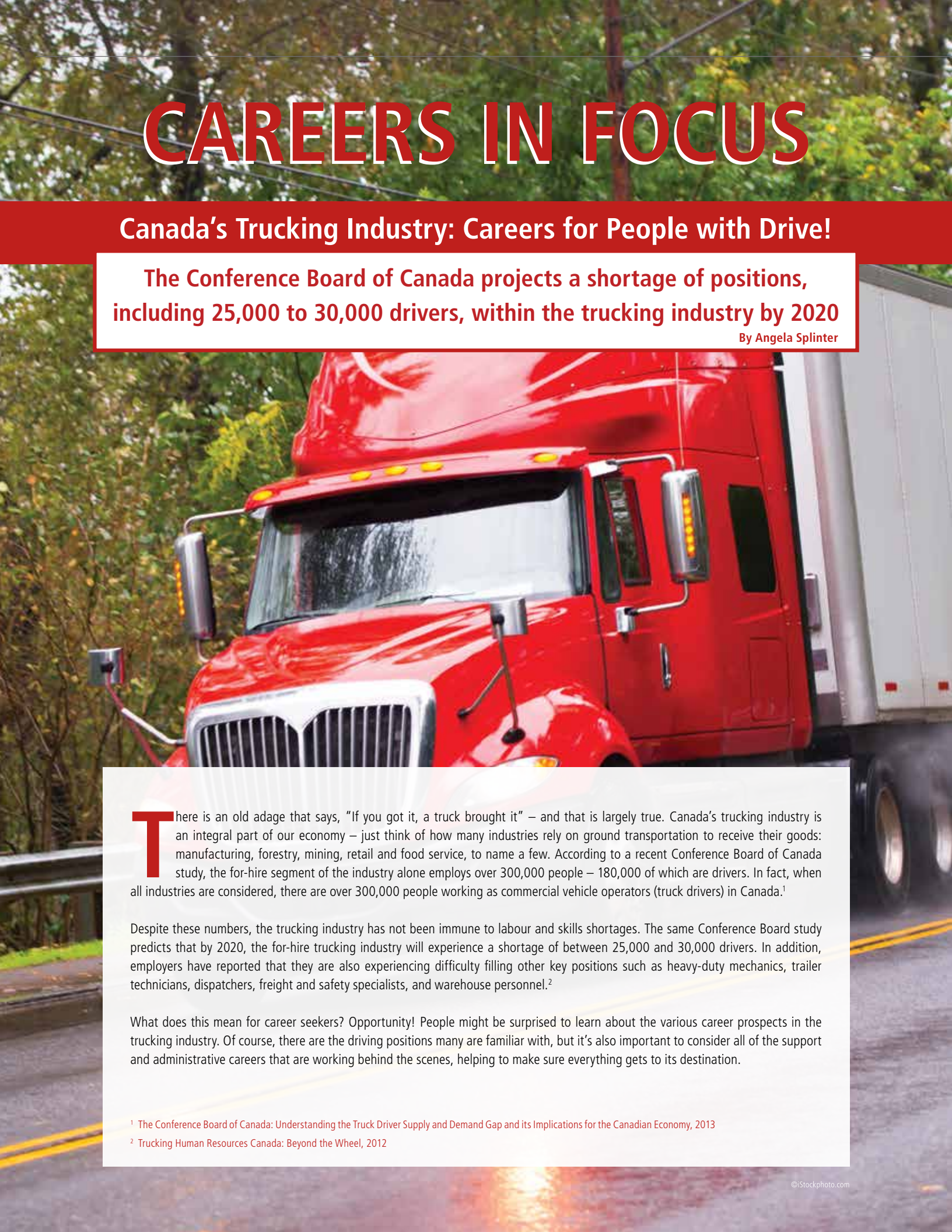
- \* Guide sur les congés de maternité et le développement de carrière
- \* Interventions axées sur l'espoir
- \* Développement de carrière adapté pour répondre aux besoins des enfants réfugiés ou immigrants

# CAREERS IN FOCUS

## Canada's Trucking Industry: Careers for People with Drive!

The Conference Board of Canada projects a shortage of positions, including 25,000 to 30,000 drivers, within the trucking industry by 2020

By Angela Splinter



**T**here is an old adage that says, "If you got it, a truck brought it" – and that is largely true. Canada's trucking industry is an integral part of our economy – just think of how many industries rely on ground transportation to receive their goods: manufacturing, forestry, mining, retail and food service, to name a few. According to a recent Conference Board of Canada study, the for-hire segment of the industry alone employs over 300,000 people – 180,000 of which are drivers. In fact, when all industries are considered, there are over 300,000 people working as commercial vehicle operators (truck drivers) in Canada.<sup>1</sup>

Despite these numbers, the trucking industry has not been immune to labour and skills shortages. The same Conference Board study predicts that by 2020, the for-hire trucking industry will experience a shortage of between 25,000 and 30,000 drivers. In addition, employers have reported that they are also experiencing difficulty filling other key positions such as heavy-duty mechanics, trailer technicians, dispatchers, freight and safety specialists, and warehouse personnel.<sup>2</sup>

What does this mean for career seekers? Opportunity! People might be surprised to learn about the various career prospects in the trucking industry. Of course, there are the driving positions many are familiar with, but it's also important to consider all of the support and administrative careers that are working behind the scenes, helping to make sure everything gets to its destination.

<sup>1</sup> The Conference Board of Canada: Understanding the Truck Driver Supply and Demand Gap and its Implications for the Canadian Economy, 2013

<sup>2</sup> Trucking Human Resources Canada: Beyond the Wheel, 2012

In addition, careers in Canada's trucking industry provide tremendous opportunities for career growth. Many of the people in upper management today started their career working in an entry-level job within the industry. A career in trucking can be made up of a series of lateral moves from one functional position to another, or an individual may decide to enhance their skills within a functional area and move up the ladder into a supervisory or management position. Let's take a look at some of these opportunities.

For people who feel that there is no better place than behind the wheel, a professional driving position would be a great choice. Those who prefer working close to home can find work as a local pick-up and delivery or short-haul driver. Individuals who are comfortable driving long-distances and being away from home could work as a domestic or international driver. Experienced truck drivers often are offered more senior positions such as driver trainers, fleet managers and operations managers.

If you are working with a career seeker who loves new technologies, a career in the truck repair sector could be a perfect place for them. For the person who prefers hands-on work, there are positions such as truck and transport mechanics, truck and trailer technician, parts technician, wheel and tire technician and welders. After some time working in these positions, these individuals could have the chance to manage and lead others as a shop supervisor or a maintenance manager.

Those who enjoy handling, organizing, loading and unloading goods may find their best career fit working in the cargo sector of the industry. These positions support the warehousing and handling operations of a trucking business. Careers such as shunt drivers, forklift operators and dock workers are great opportunities to build a skill set and familiarize oneself with the industry. This experience could lead to more senior occupations such as dock supervisor or warehouse manager.

For problem solvers with excellent organizational skills, a career in operations is the place to be. Dispatchers, safety, loss prevention, licensing and permitting, freight claims and traffic management specialists are all examples of challenging, rewarding careers. In addition, number crunchers may want to consider a career in sales and fuel tax administration or as a pricing analyst. Besides these industry-specific positions, there are many other jobs that are not exclusive to trucking, such as customer service, bookkeeping, sales and marketing, human resources and information technology.

Whether it's in driving, maintenance, warehousing or operations, Canada's trucking industry is growing. Combine this growth with Canada's aging workforce and you have an industry that needs talented people with a wide variety of education and skills to take on a range of positions. So the next time you speak to a career seeker looking for a new opportunity, consider exploring the road they can travel with a career in trucking! ■

**Angela Splinter** is CEO of Trucking HR Canada, and was the Executive Director of the former Canadian Trucking Human Resource Council. Visit [truckinghr.com](http://truckinghr.com) or [truckingcareers.ca](http://truckingcareers.ca) for more information.

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(Cet article est disponible en français sur [orientation.ca/careering/](http://orientation.ca/careering/))



- **Canadian business etiquette:** To understand that every culture has their own unique social nuances and norms, and in Canada, eye contact, a firm handshake, appropriate use of personal space, a friendly smile and small talk are necessary social graces to establish rapport and build relationships.
- **Cross-cultural communication:** To be respectful, understanding and appreciative of cultural diversity and Canada's mosaic social landscape; to be culturally sensitive and aware that what may be perceived as socially acceptable behaviour in one culture may not be acceptable in another; and to be open to another perspective

that is different from your own and to find common ground to establish collaborative relationships.

- **Emotional intelligence:** To be self-aware of one's strengths and weaknesses; to be accountable and responsible for own actions; and to learn from one's mistakes and be open to feedback or constructive criticism. Making mistakes is how we learn and grow, and no one is perfect.
- **Adaptable and flexible:** The ability to assume multiple roles, to be able to cope with the stressors of changing circumstances and situations, and to be open to different ways of doing things and to other perspectives.
- **Team orientation:** Being a team player means being positive and able to work well with others, going the extra mile to help team members to meet task and project deadlines, and understanding that a positive attitude and outlook fosters an environment that helps the team meet the goals and vision of the organization.
- **Conflict resolution and negotiation:** The ability to resolve conflicts by being able to hear what is not said and to listen without prejudice; to be able to identify the issue and to understand the view point of another without one's ego or personal biases getting in the way; and to understand that the ultimate goal is to create a collaborative and trusting relationship, and it's not about being right or wrong.
- **Customer service:** The ability to anticipate and identify the needs of others with an attitude of helpfulness, accompanied by a friendly smile.
- **Leadership qualities:** To be a problem-solver who possesses the initiative to provide solutions or direction when needed, while making others feel supported and motivated; to have emotional control when facing conflict and adversity; and to understand that leadership qualities are not defined by having a formal job title of supervisor or manager.

These interpersonal and communication skills are weighed equally with academic credentials, technical competence and experience. Soft skills have become equally important if not more important than the hard skills within Canadian workplace cultures.

As a result of the importance of these skills, Canadian human resources professionals and employers have been using behaviour-based questions to determine the suitability of a candidate during employment interviews.

These types of questions are challenging as they tend to be open-ended, which allows the candidate a lot of flexibility in answering the question. Responses to these questions are not black or white. The premise behind these types of questions is that past behaviours will be an indication or reflection of one's future behaviour in similar situations.

Following are examples of behaviour-based questions:

- Could you tell me of a time when you had a conflict with a co-worker?
- Tell me about a time when you had to resolve an issue over the phone with an angry customer.
- Describe a time when you had to make a difficult decision that impacted your team.
- Give me an example of a time when you demonstrated good leadership and team-building skills.

New immigrants can find these behaviour-based questions perplexing and often do not understand the relevance of being asked such questions when they already have the academic credentials and technical competence to qualify for the job. Moreover, they are likely to answer these types of questions with their own cultural experiences and not fit within the social norms of Canadian workplace culture.

Understanding Canadian workplace culture is a challenge for new immigrants as they often miss many of the social cues and nuances, which are subtle and may also be dismissed and perceived as inappropriate due to cultural differences.

Settlement and employment services will assist and mentor new immigrants in becoming more familiar with the social graces, attitudes and behaviours of Canadian workplace culture, and to learn job search techniques and strategies within the Canadian context to find work in related fields.

But more importantly, as these "soft skills" are culturally defined and are generally learned through life experiences rather than through academic training, the one advice that newcomer jobseekers have heard time and time again, but perhaps have not yet embraced, is VOLUNTEERING.

It is through life experience, such as volunteering, where one may pick up social cues or nuances, from repeated interactions that generate unexpected reactions. It is where one meets people from literally all walks of life and discovers that perhaps being an immigrant does not automatically mean one is an expert on cultural diversity. Through the trial and errors of these interactions, newcomers may craft their skill at establishing collaborative working relationships with others.

Employers are looking for workers who are able to demonstrate that they will be able to adapt and blend in with the team, and to represent the goals and values of the organization. There are plenty of ways for newcomers to demonstrate that they have the necessary soft skills without having worked in Canada. Perhaps through volunteering, potential workers can demonstrate that they can, and have, created trusting and collaborative working relationships. ■

**Susan Denomme** is a veteran Career and Employment Specialist with an academic background in applied communications, social change and technology, cultural anthropology and sociology.

**Susan Liu Woronko**, who contributed to this article as an editor, immigrated to Canada from Taiwan as a teenager. She now manages employment programs at the DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society, helping new immigrants on the lower mainland of British Columbia find their dream job in their new country. For more information, visit [dcrs.ca](http://dcrs.ca).



# When “Time Off” Is Actually a Step Forward

When done properly, a gap year at any age can be an enriching experience, both personally and professionally

By Michelle Dittmer



Call it what you will – a gap year, a career break or a sabbatical – intentional time away from normal routine is becoming a more acceptable and necessary step in many people’s lives. Many students and professionals are seeking new ways of disrupting the cradle-college-cubicle-cemetery trajectory that is stifling Canadians and preventing them from finding fulfillment, achieving their optimal potential and sometimes leading to burn-out or bore-out (being so unmotivated by your work that you desire a change).

People are choosing to take time away from their existing pathway for many reasons. Some may be feeling overwhelmed by the pressures of academia or the workplace; others may be seeking to build skills to overcome some of their personal barriers such as anxiety or lack of confidence; while others may be simply searching for a year of self-discovery that will help them develop new skills, explore new interests or define what their next move might be. Historically, within Canada, taking an extended break has been seen as a weakness or a move for someone who couldn’t “rise to the challenge” but we are now able to better speak to the social, emotional and

developmental growth that can occur by taking this time, leading to a more fulfilled, productive and committed student or employee.

According to research performed by Tony Wagner for his book *The Global Achievement Gap* (Basic Books, 2008, updated 2014) the most-needed survival skills within the workplace are:

- Critical thinking and problem-solving
- Collaboration across networks and leading by influence
- Agility and adaptability
- Initiative and entrepreneurialism
- Effective oral and written communication
- Accessing and analyzing information
- Curiosity and imagination

Although some of these skills can be taught through post-secondary programs or in organizational onboarding workshops, many are not addressed or fostered effectively in a way that is accessible to all learners, nor are many of these coachable without access to real-life experiences. Within academia or the workplace, it can be a challenge to provide opportunities for practising, or even failing-forward, without

a permanent black mark on your reputation or without negative implications on the organization. Through intentional time off, many of these skills can be explored, developed and practised. Let’s explore with an example.

An investor has decided to take a few months away from her position in the head office of a bank to volunteer her time with a charity bike race supporting a cause she is passionate about. In choosing to take time away, she is actively engaging her curiosity and selecting experiences that will help her to connect her skills with her passions in a new way. During this time, she will be introduced to different challenges, a different way of thinking and a new network of individuals. This diversity will stimulate her to use different thinking patterns to solve problems, interact with people who will provide her with new perspectives, and build a new network to bring back to her personal and professional life. Upon returning back from her time away, this investor will now be able to apply her new-found skills to her previous job and become a stronger employee.



Stepping away from your day-to-day can reaffirm your commitment to your organization, or help affirm that you do need to take further steps to actively change your pathway by either increasing involvement outside of the 9-5 or taking intentional steps to make a change.

Another measure of soft skills development that continues to gain momentum is emotional intelligence, primarily attributed to Daniel Goleman's work in the 90s (See *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, 1998). These skills are measured in many ways, one of which being the Bar-On EQi which breaks down emotional intelligence into the following categories and skills:

- Intrapersonal (Self-Regard, Emotional Self-Awareness, Assertiveness, Independence and Self-Actualization)
- Interpersonal (Empathy, Social Responsibility and Interpersonal Relationships)
- Stress Management (Stress Tolerance and Impulse Control)
- Adaptability (Reality Testing, Flexibility and Problem-Solving)
- General Mood Scale (Optimism and Happiness)

Whether working explicitly with these categories, as we do at mygapyear (a Canadian organization designed to support young adults in periods of transition), or leaving it to implicit development, these skills are often developed through time spent away from normal routine. Let's look at another example.

An 18-year-old high school graduate is struggling with social anxiety and low self-regard; moving directly into a post-secondary program has been identified as a stressful trigger to these conditions and an unsuccessful year will heighten his struggles. By taking some time for a group trip to South America where they learn Spanish, volunteer with sea turtles and learn to surf, this young man gains independence from his parents, develops empathy for nature and those living in other areas of the world while solving problems and reaping the benefits of the feel-good hormones associated with helping others. By realizing how to use his strengths in novel and challenging situations and being successful, he develops the self-actualization and positive self-regard to want to take on new challenges, such as his post-secondary schooling.

Employers now express a higher interest in developing soft skills and in having employees with enhanced soft skills. It is worth investigating how taking meaningful "time off" from the typical educational and employment journey can support this. In order to ensure that time off is spent in a purposeful way (for some it is all too easy to spend it on less-than-meaningful or non-developmental activities) mygapyear recommends that the person taking the opportunity consider the following steps:

- 1) Set goals. Before your time off begins, make sure you know what you want to get out of this time away so you can learn, grow and develop.
- 2) Find someone to hold you accountable to your goals. We are all human and having someone who is aware of what we want to achieve and who will check in on our progress will help ensure that we reach those goals.
- 3) Pick experiences that push you out of your comfort zone. The best learning comes when you are in novel situations, on the edge of your current capacity and challenged to go beyond. Don't forget that you have many skills you can tap into in new ways to ensure your success even in new situations.
- 4) Take time to reflect. Taking time off allows you to step out of the fast lane and spend

more time thinking and reflecting on yourself, your skills, your dreams and your progress. Take this time to ensure you are capturing all you are learning through your experiences.

- 5) Learn to articulate your growth. The journey of taking time away is still a mystery to many. Learn to speak concisely to what you have learned, what the time meant for you both personally and professionally, how you will now move forward with new skills to be a better employee or student, and how you are now a better-rounded person.

Get in the driver's seat of your life. Take control of your learning, development and your direction. Time off can be very valuable to develop new skills, experience the world in a new way and reconnect with what makes you unique and what inspires you. ■

**Michelle Dittmer** is a Director at mygapyear, an organization supporting young adults in transition through structured gap years and provides coaching, emotional intelligence and experience planning support to help people find direction, connect with their gifts and talents and plan for next steps. Dittmer believes in developing skills through experiential means and learning to reflect on and articulate how those experiences have led individuals to being the people they are today.

# CAREER SERVICES GUIDE

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## Cannexus National Career Development Conference turns 10

From January 25-27, 2016 CERIC will host the Cannexus 10th anniversary conference in Ottawa. Canada's largest bilingual National Career Development Conference, Cannexus explores innovative approaches in career counselling and career development. Cannexus16 is expected to welcome 800 professionals from education, community, government and private sectors.

In addition to 130+ education sessions, this year Cannexus will feature four notable Canadian keynote speakers: Ratna Omidvar, Executive Director, Global Diversity Exchange; Spencer Niles, Dean & Professor, School of Education, The College of William & Mary; The Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair, Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC); and Wab Kinew, Writer, Journalist and Honourary TRC Witness.

Delegates can save if they register by the November 2 Early Bird deadline. For more information on Cannexus and to register, visit [cannexus.ca](http://cannexus.ca).

### Webfolio: an online career development tool for students is now Canada-wide

A web-based career exploration tool developed by the career centre (Service de Placement) at Quebec City-based Laval University is now available for free across Canada and can be accessed by students in both French and English.

Webfolio provides a career-related reflection platform and allows students to choose strategies to prepare them for their career of choice, while simultaneously building an online portfolio. Students participate in a series of activities across three steps: (1) my skills and interests (2) understanding the job market, and (3) my plan in action. When they finish, they may submit their final Webfolio to career counsellors or employers, as a complement to their resume and cover letter.

Laval University first introduced Webfolio in 2009 as a resource for its students. Due to its success, Webfolio, with a grant from The Counselling Foundation of Canada, was adapted and distributed to secondary schools and CEGEPs across Quebec. The online tool has been available province-wide since September 2014, with participation from 200 organizations and 9,000 individual users.

Webfolio is currently looking for sponsors to help sustain its use from coast to coast in both languages.

Learn more about Webfolio at [webfolionational.ca](http://webfolionational.ca).

### "Demilitarizing" career transition and job search

A set of bilingual resources, *Military to Civilian Employment: A Career Practitioner's Guide*, is being developed for Canadian career service professionals to use in working with veterans transitioning to civilian careers and further educational opportunities.

Topics covered in the guides will include:

- Understanding military culture and systems
- Career development needs of ex-military personnel: transition and adaptation
- Effective interventions for helping veterans move to civilian employment
- Military training and education and determining civilian equivalencies
- Helping ex-military personnel translate military skills/jobs into civilian workplace language
- Trends in occupations for which transitioning armed forces personnel have immediately transferable skills and training
- Employment and implications for military families

Authored by career development expert Yvonne Rodney, the guides will be available in print or ebook or for download as a free pdf, and are scheduled to launch at the Cannexus conference in Ottawa in January 2016. The project is being headed by CERIC, in partnership with Canada Company and its Military Employment Transition (MET) program, and includes consultation and collaboration with the Canadian Armed Forces, Veterans



Affairs Canada, Military Family Services, military-friendly employers and front-line career professionals, as well as the support of several key Knowledge Champions.

If you are interested in learning more about this project, check the project page at [ceric.ca/military](http://ceric.ca/military) where you can sign up for updates.

### Is it time to retire “retirement”?

A new study funded by CERIC will examine how Canadians in their 50s, 60s and 70s are seeking out second and third careers as “retirement” is redefined. The project, led by York University’s Suzanne L. Cook, will also look at how career professionals can best assist older adults in their career development.

The Redirection: Work and Later Life Career Development Project will examine this new emergent phase of later life, which Dr Cook has coined “redirection,” referring to the process of finding new pursuits during the second half of life. Redirection, which aims to move beyond traditional notions of retirement, occurs as older adults live longer and increasingly seek the rewards of work and staying engaged.

Investigating the diversity of paid work that older adults undertake and their later life career “redirection” experiences will be a focus of the study. The project will also assess how career practitioners are currently working with older adults and identify best practices.

For more information about the study, see [ceric.ca/olderworkers](http://ceric.ca/olderworkers).

### Be part of CERIC’s 2015 Survey of Career Service Professionals!

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Access the survey at [ceric.ca/survey2015](http://ceric.ca/survey2015) or the French version at [ceric.ca/sondage2015](http://ceric.ca/sondage2015).

### Canada Career Week 2015

The Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) is inviting all career professionals to celebrate November 2-6, 2015 as Canada Career Week. The theme for this year is “Decent Work, Healthy Lives.” Career practitioners are asked to promote “the link between decent work and our health – as individuals, communities and as a nation.”

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# Career Exploration in Elementary Years: It's Not Too Early!

**Community-based and parental involvement in career exploration throughout a child's educational development can make a significant difference in their career engagement**

By Kathy Levine, Dawn Sutherland and Darrell Cole



Over the past decade in Canada, there has been increased interest on the part of educators, academics, labour market specialists and federal/provincial policy analysts in career exploration programs for youth. This awareness may be partially attributed to the career education paradox of the 21st century. At a time of an ever-increasing number of post-secondary choices available to students, approximately 190,000 youth are unable to access any of these programs due to dropping out of high school (Statistics Canada, 2010). In addition, for those students who do complete high school and move on to post-secondary education, approximately 35-50% of students drop out prior to program completion, partially due to not liking their program or feeling that it did not fit with their interests (Parkin & Baldwin, 2009). Given this situation, the need for innovative programs that can facilitate greater career awareness for students is unquestionable. Much of the current knowledge uses mainstream developmental norms to determine when career exploration experiences should occur, typically in adolescence. There is however an emerging understanding that early intervention directed toward career awareness can have significant benefits for children, and career exploration programs can play an important role in facilitating children's career exposure through integrating a "career focus" at different stages of children's lives.

Children's career exploration programs may be accessed in academic, community-based and computer-based or online environments and provide a diverse range of career-related activities. These include watching online videos of individuals describing and/or working at particular careers, completing a variety of trait-based measures that suggest positive occupational "matches," and providing information about specific careers, including current labour market needs, educational requirements and potential earnings. Experiential career exploration programs are another vehicle through which children can be introduced to different careers. The nature and extent of these programs vary; the main differences are related to whether they are provided within school or community settings, and the degree to which the children experience the tasks of the particular career. Community-based programs provide a unique opportunity for exposing students to career exploration, particularly for children who may need additional supports to explore their career interests in an era when the school day is occupied with academic material.

One example of a community-based program is Career Trek; an early intervention, social inclusion initiative in Manitoba that is targeted toward students who, due to social economic or family structure disadvantages, may not successfully transition to post-secondary education. The intent of the program is to increase students' and families' knowledge about

careers that are accessible via post-secondary education through experiential career exposure, the provision of information about post-secondary institutions, including admission and eligibility criteria, applications and financing, and by encouraging parental involvement in the program. During the academic term, participants attend one of a number of post-secondary institutions, including the Universities of Winnipeg and Manitoba, Brandon University, University College of the North, Red River College, and the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology to learn the specific skills, knowledge and abilities, as well as the post-secondary pathways, associated with a range of careers in different disciplines: Engineering, Education, Political Studies, Biology, Geography, Native Studies, Dental Hygiene, Commercial Cooking, Graphic Arts and Design.

Although there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that exposure to career exploration during the earlier years of children's education has been associated with future aspirations through middle school and even high school graduation, it is important to examine whether these outcomes can be demonstrated empirically. As part of a larger project to further develop knowledge about children's career development, we conducted an evaluative study to address three questions: (1) How do children and adolescents perceive careers and career exploration (2) How do children and adolescents engage in career exploration and decision-making, and (3) What is the role of career exploration programs in this process?

A total of 1,400 students across four Manitoba school divisions completed a series of measures that assessed career outcome expectancies, career self-efficacy, parental involvement in career exploration, and relationships with family, friends and school. The data was analyzed to compare students who participated in career development programming to those who did not. The key finding was that Grade 5/6 Career Trek participants scored higher on measures of curiosity, interest, planning and self-

concept compared to the non-program group. Additionally, Grades 7-8 Career Trek participants reported more curiosity in school, greater awareness of their academic interests, felt that they had greater control over their school-related activities and behaviours, attributed more importance to planning their future, and had clearer self-concepts than the non-Career Trek group.

Given that there is a significant body of research that suggests that the transition to middle school is a period in which there is a negative shift in adolescents' academic, social and emotional self-concepts (Duchesne, Ratelle, & Roy, 2009; Forrest et al., 2013), the finding that participants in career exploration reported better outcomes suggests that this type of programming can mediate the negative impact of transition to middle school. This supports previous work by the research team that has suggested that Career Trek provides an academic retention effect when students undertake the transition from elementary school to middle school. Interestingly enough, Career Trek students also report less school satisfaction – this may be due to their perspective that their educational needs and interests are not always being met in the context of their educational programs.

What are the implications of these findings? The diminishing career interest and exploration behaviours, as suggested by the decrease in interest, curiosity, planning and control scores between non-Career Trek elementary and Grade 7/8 students suggest a need for more direct intervention during this period. One possible response may be to provide information to parents about the impact of their involvement on the career exploration behaviours of adolescents. In collaboration with community-based organizations that are targeted toward positive youth development, a series of school-based educational sessions could be developed that highlight the personal, social and academic benefits for students that occur as a result of parent-initiated conversations and activities in regard to career exploration. Some parents

may simply need to be educated about how their awareness of their adolescents' career exploration interests and activities can impact adolescents' sense of psychological well-being, especially in the areas of self-efficacy and self-concept.

Perhaps the most important implication of this research is the importance of making community-based career exploration opportunities more accessible, particularly for elementary year students. In addition to providing career exploration for students outside of the school day, community-based programs may work to promote students' academic engagement connection to school (Anderson-Butcher, 2010). Currently, there are few programs focused on facilitating middle school children's career exploration through developmental intervention. This remains an understudied area for programming, however, as we have learned, it's never too early! ■

Learn more about this research in the project report at [ceric.ca/projects](http://ceric.ca/projects).

**Dr Kathy Levine** is an Associate Professor with the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba and co-recipient with **Dr Dawn Sutherland** of the Manitoba Career Development Award of Excellence in the Research and Innovation Category. Her research areas include child and adolescent mental health, interventions for individuals with intellectual disabilities in conflict with the law, and working with at-risk youth and their families. With the support of CERIC, she continues to research career exploration and career development needs of children and youth and their families.

**Darrell Cole (Waabishki Pinesi Kinew Inini)** is the founder and current Chief Executive Officer of Career Trek Inc. a not-for-profit organization based in Winnipeg, MB. Career Trek's work is dedicated to helping young Manitobans achieve their educational, career and life potential through the provision of its unique holistic and experiential programming.

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# ESAT

## EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS ASSESSMENT TOOL (ESAT): CONNECTING PEOPLE TO WORK

### SYSTÈME D'ÉVALUATION DES APTITUDES EN EMPLOYABILITÉ (ESAT): FAIRE LE LIEN ENTRE LES PERSONNES ET LES EMPLOIS

**ESAT was created to support the integration of "soft" skill development in training programs so they are given the same or greater emphasis as literacy or technical skills**

By Paul Brinkhurst

**R**esolving the looming labour shortage facing Canadians will require a variety of strategies including increased immigration, the retention of older workers, and the engagement of typically under-represented groups in the workforce. The latter includes people who face barriers to employment arising in part from a lack of "soft" skills such as confidence, accountability, personal presentation etc. Moreover, employers across North America report that many new employees lack these fundamental skills. It is typically stated that employers would rather hire people with strong "soft" skills, and invest in upgrading technical skills as required, than the reverse.

Addressing problems related to "soft" skills can be a major challenge to career practitioners. Helping people change behaviours can be intensely personal and difficult, especially if combined with discomfort with the reaction honest feedback may spark. However, the provision of honest feedback about some very personal matters is, in our experience, what clients often need most if they are to find success in the workplace. The skills pyramid (Figure 1) illustrates the point that employability ("soft") skills are the base upon which other skills rest – to ignore them is to ignore the most common cause of a person's failure to connect to the workplace.

In recognition of this, Futureworx Society of Truro, NS has created a tool for supporting the development of the nine core "soft" skills. The skills were selected based on our over 30 years of experience working with clients and employers. With funding from The Counselling Foundation of Canada and RESDAC, Futureworx has digitized the tool and had it translated into French. The resulting cloud-based tool, ESAT, is now being used in all Futureworx programming and by a variety of organizations in Nova Scotia, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Ontario, with great success.

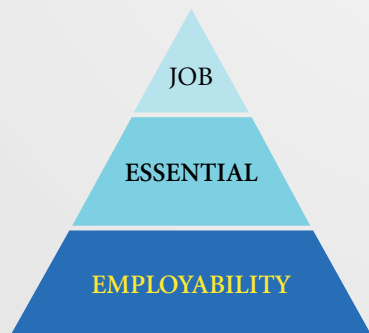


Figure 1

**L'ESAT a été conçu pour soutenir l'intégration du développement des compétences non techniques dans les programmes de formation, de manière à ce qu'elles aient autant, sinon plus d'importance que l'alphabetisation ou les compétences techniques**

Par Paul Brinkhurst

**L**a résolution de la pénurie imminente de main-d'œuvre à laquelle seront confrontés les Canadiens nécessitera diverses stratégies, notamment une immigration accrue, le maintien en emploi des travailleurs plus âgés et la mobilisation de groupes qui sont généralement sousreprésentés dans la main-d'œuvre. Ces groupes comprennent les personnes qui ont de la difficulté à trouver un emploi en partie en raison d'un manque de compétences générales, comme la confiance en soi, la responsabilisation et la présentation personnelle. Partout en Amérique du Nord, des employeurs signalent qu'un grand nombre de nouveaux employés ne possèdent pas ces compétences essentielles. En général, les employeurs disent qu'ils préféreraient engager des gens ayant de bonnes compétences non techniques et investir dans le perfectionnement des compétences techniques plutôt que le contraire.

Il peut être ardu pour les intervenants en perfectionnement professionnel de régler des problèmes associés aux compétences non techniques. Il peut être particulièrement délicat et difficile d'aider les gens à modifier leur comportement, surtout lorsque des commentaires sincères peuvent susciter une vive réaction. Toutefois, selon mon expérience, ce dont les clients ont le plus besoin pour réussir dans le monde du travail est d'entendre des commentaires sincères sur des sujets très personnels. La pyramide des compétences (figure 1) illustre le principe selon lequel les aptitudes en employabilité (ou compétences non techniques) sont le fondement sur lequel reposent les autres compétences – ne pas en tenir compte, c'est ignorer la cause la plus courante de l'échec d'une personne à s'intégrer au milieu du travail.

Conscient de cette réalité, l'organisme Futureworx de Truro, en Nouvelle-Écosse, a créé un outil qui vise à soutenir le développement des neuf compétences non techniques essentielles. Ces compétences ont été choisies en se fondant sur plus de 30 ans de travail auprès de clients et d'employeurs. Grâce au soutien financier de la Counselling Foundation of Canada et du Réseau pour le développement de l'alphabetisme et des compétences (RESDAC), Futureworx a numérisé l'outil et l'a fait traduire en français. Le résultat de ce travail est l'ESAT, un outil infonuagique maintenant utilisé avec beaucoup de succès dans tous les programmes de Futureworx ainsi que par diverses organisations en Nouvelle-Écosse, en Alberta, au Manitoba, en Saskatchewan et en Ontario.

ESAT was created to support the integration of “soft” skill development in training programs so they are given the same or greater emphasis as literacy or technical skills. This emphasis is needed if people are to overcome multiple barriers to employment that have limited their success, sometimes for years. The tool provides a respectful, positively oriented vehicle for supporting people as they look at personal behaviours. Applied as an integral part of training, it ensures that learners gain enhanced self-awareness and a set of personal management skills that are fully aligned to the needs of employers. These skills include motivation, attitude, accountability, time management, stress management, presentation, teamwork, adaptability and confidence, but ESAT can also be tuned to function with any 12 skills defined for a particular sector or group.

ESAT works by first providing a common framework of definitions and behavioural exemplars for discussing and tackling the behavioural issues that may arise within the training program. The tool focuses on behaviours that can be seen and heard, those which employers also focus on. Within the safe, employment-oriented environment of the program, learners are observed interacting with supervisors, instructors and peers, and their behavioural patterns and triggers are identified. ESAT then encourages discussion of behaviours between a case manager and learner, by contrasting a self-assessment with a consensus-based staff assessment presented in the form of a radar plot (Figure 2). The plot highlights strengths and areas for improvement from both staff and learner perspectives and, most import, reveals the perception differences that so often create difficulty in the employer/employee relationship.



Figure 2

In the example shown, clear perception gaps exist in stress management, attitude, presentation and time management, some of which may be linked to a few underlying issues. The case manager’s role is to help the learner explore these issues and define alternative behaviours which they can test within the safe learning environment of the program. Progress over time is tracked by ESAT on a Distance Travelled plot for each skill (Figure 3).

L’ESAT a été conçu pour soutenir l’intégration du développement des compétences non techniques dans les programmes de formation, de manière à ce qu’elles aient autant, sinon plus d’importance que l’alphabétisation ou les compétences techniques. Il est nécessaire de leur accorder une telle importance pour que les gens surmontent les nombreux obstacles à l’emploi qui limitent leur réussite, souvent depuis des années. L’outil constitue un moyen respectueux axé positivement sur le soutien des personnes en ce qui a trait à leur comportement individuel. Considéré comme partie intégrante de la formation, il permet aux apprenants d’acquérir une meilleure connaissance d’eux-mêmes et un ensemble de compétences en gestion personnelle pleinement harmonisées aux besoins des employeurs. Ces compétences comprennent la motivation, l’attitude, la responsabilisation, la gestion du temps, la gestion du stress, la présentation, le travail en équipe, l’adaptabilité et la confiance en soi, mais l’ESAT peut aussi être programmé pour tenir compte de 12 compétences définies pour un groupe ou un secteur en particulier.

L’ESAT fournit d’abord un cadre commun de définitions et d’exemples de comportements aux fins des discussions et traite des questions de comportement qui peuvent être soulevées pendant la formation. L’outil est axé sur les comportements visibles ou audibles – ceux auxquels les employeurs portent attention. Dans le cadre du programme de formation mené dans un environnement sécuritaire axé sur l’emploi, les interactions des apprenants avec leurs superviseurs, leurs instructeurs et leurs pairs sont observées, et leurs modèles de comportement et les seuils de déclenchement de ces comportements sont établis. L’ESAT sert ensuite de base à une discussion sur les comportements entre un gestionnaire de cas et l’apprenant, en comparant l’autoévaluation de ce dernier à l’évaluation consensuelle faite par le personnel, présentées sous la forme d’un tracé radar (figure 2). Le tracé souligne les forces et les points à améliorer des points de vue du personnel et de l’apprenant et, surtout, révèle les différences de perception qui entraînent si souvent des relations employeur-employé difficiles.

Dans l’exemple montré, des écarts de perception existent nettement relativement à la gestion du stress, à l’attitude, à la présentation et à la gestion du temps, et certains de ces écarts peuvent être liés à des problèmes sous-jacents. Le rôle du gestionnaire de cas est d’aider l’apprenant à explorer ces questions et à déterminer les autres comportements qu’il pourrait essayer d’adopter dans l’environnement sécuritaire du programme de formation. Le suivi des progrès est effectué par l’ESAT à l’aide d’un tracé de la « distance parcourue » (figure 3).



Figure 3

ESAT is a team-based tool that, over time, supports the sharing of information and the establishment of consistent feedback among the full range of people engaged in supporting a person in their movement towards the workplace. It provides the team with an indication of the person's readiness for work or further training, and can also be exercised during work exposures in order to monitor progress. Applications for existing employees are also being studied.

As a tool for career practitioners, ESAT offers a way to combine the input from a group of professionals working with a client in a way that is consistent and meaningful. Dealing with "soft" skills as an integral part of programming, with clear outcomes, an effective assessment methodology, and ESAT's curriculum supports, programs can have a dramatic impact on the lives of learners. Maximizing this impact requires orienting practitioners to the tool and to the principles that underpin it, including placing "soft" skill development at the core of practice. This involves learning appropriate ways to provide feedback and coaching regarding "soft" skills so that practitioners are comfortable addressing highly personal matters with their clients. ■

**Paul Brinkhurst, MSc, BEd**, is the Innovation Developer and ESAT Co-ordinator at Futureworx, based in Truro, NS. His experience as a parent, naval architect and teacher all inform his approach to skill development. ESAT and supporting curriculum and training is available from Futureworx, which specialize in integrating employability skill development into training programs. For more information, contact [esat@futureworx.ca](mailto:esat@futureworx.ca), go to [futureworx.ca](http://futureworx.ca), or call 902.843.4292.

L'ESAT est un outil axé sur le travail d'équipe qui, au fil du temps, favorise l'échange de renseignements et de commentaires pertinents entre les personnes qui soutiennent un apprenant dans son intégration au milieu du travail. Il fournit à l'équipe une indication de l'état de préparation de la personne en vue du travail ou d'une autre formation, et peut aussi être utilisé pendant des expositions au travail dans le but de surveiller les progrès. Des applications pour les employés en poste sont aussi à l'étude.

Aux intervenants en perfectionnement professionnel, l'ESAT offre un moyen de recueillir les données provenant d'un groupe de professionnels qui travaillent avec un client de manière cohérente et significative. En considérant les compétences non techniques comme une partie intégrante d'un programme de formation, et grâce à des résultats clairs, à une méthode d'évaluation efficace et aux services de soutien de l'ESAT, les programmes de formation peuvent avoir un effet important sur la vie des apprenants. Pour maximiser cet effet, il est nécessaire que les intervenants utilisent l'outil et qu'ils tiennent compte des principes sous-jacents, y compris l'importance de placer le développement des compétences non techniques au cœur de leur pratique. Pour ce faire, il faut apprendre des manières appropriées de donner des commentaires et offrir un mentorat portant sur les compétences non techniques, afin que les intervenants se sentent à l'aise d'aborder des sujets très personnels avec leurs clients. ■

Titulaire d'une maîtrise ès sciences et d'un baccalauréat en éducation, **Paul Brinkhurst** est développeur en innovations et coordonnateur de l'ESAT à Futureworx, une organisation établie à Truro, en Nouvelle-Écosse. Ses expériences en tant que parent, architecte naval et enseignant ont nourri son approche du développement des compétences. Futureworx, spécialisée dans l'intégration du développement des aptitudes en employabilité aux programmes de formation, offre l'ESAT, la formation et le service de soutien. Pour obtenir plus de renseignements, veuillez envoyer un courriel à [esat@futureworx.ca](mailto:esat@futureworx.ca), visiter [futureworx.ca](http://futureworx.ca) ou appeler à 902.843.4292.

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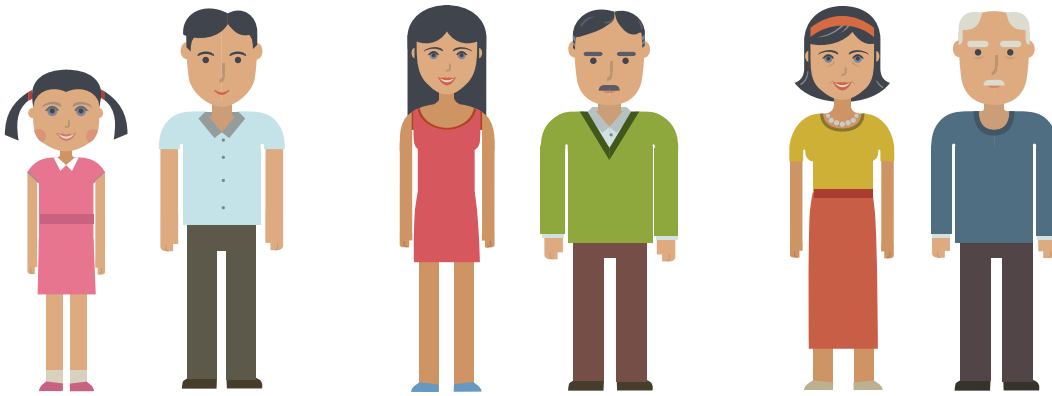
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# The Generations at Work

## Les générations et le travail

Understanding the life backgrounds of three different generations of workers can help us advise them better

By Madeleine Fortier

The people you guide in an employment search or in career management come from all walks of life. Their work expectations and perspectives are not the same.

These differences can stem from a range of influences, including their family, cultural background and generation.

It is this last factor that we will focus on in this article. Following a brief overview of the socio-economic environment and general characteristics of the three generations comprising the workplace, we will discuss the principal ways in which these contexts and characteristics shape each generation's expectations in terms of career, work/life balance and recognition.

### The three generations and their contexts

No two authors agree on the dividing dates of the generations. We therefore used David Stillman's chronology, taken from his work entitled *When Generations Collide* (Collins Business, 2005). It's also important to specify that the generational characteristics described here are not labels. Rather, they are generalizations associated with common backgrounds.

**Baby boomers:** born between 1946 and 1964; they are currently aged 51 to 69 years. Keyword: optimism. The flourishing economy of the post-war era instilled the impression that anything was possible. Idealists, they had the power of numbers and faith in their capacity to improve society. However, they had to work hard to change their lot in life and gain recognition. They are widely known as workaholics. They respect authority but want to be treated as equals.

Comprendre le contexte dans lequel évoluent les travailleurs de trois générations différentes peut vous aider à mieux les conseiller

Par Madeleine Fortier

Les personnes que vous accompagnez dans la recherche d'un emploi ou la gestion de leur carrière proviennent d'horizons différents; leurs attentes et leur vision par rapport au travail ne sont pas les mêmes.

L'origine de ces différences peut être liée, entre autres facteurs, au milieu familial, culturel ou générationnel.

C'est de ce dernier aspect dont nous allons traiter dans cet article; après un survol du contexte socio-économique et des caractéristiques générales des trois générations présentes en milieu de travail, nous présenterons les principaux impacts de ces contextes et de ces caractéristiques sur les attentes de chaque génération en ce qui concerne la carrière, l'équilibre travail-vie privée et la reconnaissance.

### Les trois générations et leur contexte

Aucun auteur ne s'accorde sur la chronologie des générations. Nous avons utilisé la chronologie de David Stillman tirée de son ouvrage *When generations collide* (Collins Business, 2005). Il est important aussi de préciser que les caractéristiques générationnelles ne sont pas des étiquettes, qu'elles sont générales et qu'elles sont liées à un contexte commun.

**Les babyboomers :** nés entre 1946 et 1964, ils ont entre 51 et 69 ans. Mot clé : optimisme. L'économie florissante d'après-guerre donnait l'impression que tout était possible. Idéalistes, ils avaient la force du nombre et la foi dans leurs capacités pour améliorer la société. Ils ont cependant été forcés de travailler fort pour sortir du lot et se faire connaître. Ils sont généralement reconnus comme des bourreaux de travail. Ils respectent l'autorité, mais préfèrent être traités comme des égaux.



**Gen Xers:** born between 1965 and 1980; they are currently 35 to 50 years old. Keyword: skepticism. They witnessed the symbols of stability crumble and learned to trust in themselves rather than in the institutions. They are independent and resourceful. Carving a place for themselves in the job market has not been easy. They are sometimes referred to as the lost generation.

**Gen Ys:** born between 1981 and 1999; they are currently 34 years and under. Keyword: realism. They are people of the network, so it's a small world to them. Pragmatic, they live for change and in change, they seek challenges and stimulation. Often they are described as overindulged or spoiled. Nonetheless, this generation embodies a unique combination of common sense and social conscience, which promises to shake up the labour landscape. They want to contribute to society and are determined to live full and satisfying lives.

### The three generations and their relationships with work

The differences among the three generations in work perspectives and expectations manifest in their relationships with hierarchy, their sense of commitment and loyalty, their career vision, work/life balance and their expectations for feedback and rewards.

To illustrate this, what follows is a summary of how each generation views three of these work dimensions.

**Les X :** nés entre 1965 et 1980, ils ont de 35 à 50 ans. Mot clé : scepticisme. Ils ont vu s'effriter les symboles de la stabilité et ont appris à croire en eux-mêmes plutôt qu'aux institutions. Ils sont indépendants et débrouillards. Se tailler une place sur le marché du travail ne fut pas pour eux chose facile. On les désigne parfois sous le nom de la génération sacrifiée.

**Les Y :** nés entre 1981 et 1999, ils ont 34 ans et moins. Mot clé : réalisme. Des gens de réseau pour qui le monde est petit. Pragmatiques, ils vivent par et dans le changement, ils recherchent des défis et des stimulations. On les décrit souvent comme des enfants rois et des enfants gâtés. Cette génération forme pourtant un composé unique de bon sens et de conscience sociale, ce qui promet un bouleversement du monde du travail. Ils veulent contribuer à la société, et sont déterminés à vivre une vie pleinement remplie et satisfaisante.

### Les trois générations et leur relation avec le travail

Les différences de vision et d'attente des différentes générations par rapport au travail touchent des aspects tels que les relations avec la hiérarchie, le sens de l'engagement et de la loyauté, la vision de la carrière, la conciliation travail-vie privée, ainsi que les attentes par rapport à la rétroaction et aux récompenses.

À titre d'exemple, voici la vision de chaque génération en ce qui concerne trois de ces dimensions.

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**Nadine Harrison, PCP**  
Payroll Administrator,  
TGG International Inc.



## CAREER VISION

**Baby boomers:** job security. They want to shine and excel in their careers. Many are currently heeding the call not of their biological clocks but of their career clocks: they realize they don't have much time left to achieve career distinction and want to maximize their remaining years.

**Gen Xers:** career security. They believe job security is a thing of the past. They want to build their portfolio of skills and experience in order to secure their ability to land on their feet in face of whatever catastrophe might befall them. From this standpoint, changing jobs becomes a necessity, a survival strategy.

**Gen Ys:** parallel careers. Their highly programmed lives have trained them to be multi taskers, to be able to successfully juggle several jobs at once. It is predicted that they may dabble in up to 10 different careers over their lifetimes!

## THE IMPORTANCE OF WORK/LIFE BALANCE

**Baby boomers:** for this generation, the quest for meaning and value in their work will increasingly be moderated as they approach retirement. Having often sacrificed a great deal for work, they are now seeking a more balanced lifestyle.

**Gen Xers:** These individuals are in search of a work/life balance now, not in retirement!

**Gen Ys:** They need the flexibility to be able to manage all their activities. Work isn't everything!

## FORMS OF FEEDBACK AND REWARDS

**Baby boomers:** money, titles, recognition, the corner office. Everything that proves to themselves and, most importantly, to others just how good they are at what they do. They are motivated by what they can achieve at work. They want to go far and fast, but they also want to accomplish great things.

**Gen Xers:** freedom is the ultimate reward. As they grew up in a world of uncertainty, yet one in which feedback was readily available, they desire the same in their work environment. They monitor results closely to know how to adapt their approach and achieve greater success.

**Gen Ys:** meaningful work. There must be both tangible and intangible rewards, such as the opportunity to learn, to tackle new challenges. It's important to them that their work make a difference, and they demand immediate feedback.

## VISION DE LA CARRIÈRE

**Les babyboomers :** sécurité d'emploi. Ils veulent briller, exceller dans leur carrière. Plusieurs sont maintenant aiguillés non par l'horloge biologique mais par l'horloge de la carrière : ils réalisent qu'il leur reste peu de temps pour exceller dans leur carrière et désirent maximiser les années qu'ils leur restent.

**Les X :** sécurité de carrière. Ils ne croient plus à la sécurité d'emploi. Ils veulent bâtir un portfolio de compétences et d'expériences leur garantissant qu'ils seront capables de se remettre sur pied, quelle que soit la catastrophe qui s'abat sur eux. Dans ce contexte, changer d'emploi devient une nécessité, une stratégie de survie.

**Les Y :** carrières parallèles. Leur vie programmée les a rendus capables d'accomplir plusieurs tâches, d'assumer correctement plusieurs emplois en même temps. On prévoit qu'ils pourront expérimenter jusqu'à 10 carrières différentes dans leur vie!

## L'IMPORTANCE DE LA CONCILIATION TRAVAIL-VIE PRIVÉE

**Les babyboomers :** pour eux, concilier la recherche de sens et la valeur de leur travail va prendre de plus en plus d'importance au fur et à mesure qu'ils se rapprocheront de leur retraite. Ayant souvent beaucoup sacrifié pour le travail, ils recherchent maintenant une vie plus équilibrée.

**Les X :** ils recherchent l'équilibre travail-vie privée maintenant, pas à la retraite!

**Les Y :** ils ont besoin de flexibilité pour pouvoir faire face à toutes leurs activités. Le travail n'est pas tout!

## MODES DE RÉTROACTION ET DE RÉCOMPENSE

**Les babyboomers :** l'argent, le titre, la reconnaissance, le bureau du coin. Tout ce qui leur démontre et surtout démontre aux autres à quel point ils sont bons dans ce qu'ils font. Ils sont motivés par ce qu'ils peuvent accomplir au travail. Ils veulent aller loin et vite, mais ils veulent aussi accomplir de grandes choses.

**Les X :** la liberté est la récompense ultime. Comme ils ont grandi dans un monde incertain, mais dans lequel la rétroaction est facile et rapidement disponible, ils désirent la même chose dans leur environnement de travail. Ils surveillent les résultats avec soin pour pouvoir adapter leur approche et obtenir plus de succès.

**Les Y :** un travail qui a du sens. Les récompenses doivent être à la fois tangibles et non tangibles, par exemple la possibilité d'apprendre, de faire face à de nouveaux défis. Ils désirent que leur travail fasse une différence et exigent une rétroaction immédiate.



### Comparative table of the three generations

The following table presents a comparison of other work-related factors that influence employment searches or career management (e.g. type of work environment sought and ideal boss), as a function of each generation's general characteristics.

### Tableau comparatif des 3 générations

Le tableau qui suit présente de façon comparative d'autres aspects reliés au travail qui influencent la recherche d'un emploi ou la gestion de la carrière, par exemple, le type d'environnement de travail recherché, le patron idéal, toujours en fonction des caractéristiques générales de chaque génération.

	Baby boomers	Generation X	Generation Y
Dates	1946-1964	1965-1980	1981-1999
Keyword	Optimism	Skepticism	Realism
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strength of numbers but need to stand out (competitive)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results-oriented</li> <li>Self-reliant (less trusting)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change, versatility</li> <li>Challenge, stimulation</li> <li>Network-oriented</li> </ul>
Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A way to excel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficult to assert their place</li> <li>Highly educated but stuck between the baby boomers and Gen Ys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One activity among others</li> </ul>
Hierarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respect authority but want to be treated as equals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anti micro-management</li> <li>"Tell me your expectations and give me the resources"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loyalty to the team before the company</li> <li>Respect a boss who's competent</li> </ul>
Work environment sought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities for advancement</li> <li>Supportive team environment</li> <li>Opportunity to prove yourself</li> <li>Good cause</li> <li>Vision, mission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities for professional development</li> <li>Flexible</li> <li>Pleasant atmosphere</li> <li>Quality products and services</li> <li>Efficient</li> <li>Results-oriented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Company that's open to change</li> <li>Technology</li> <li>No discrimination or favoritism</li> <li>Involves them in decision-making</li> <li>Talents and skills recognized</li> </ul>
Ideal boss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consensus-seeking</li> <li>Democratic</li> <li>Works with the team to define the vision and mission</li> <li>Appreciates your contribution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competent, honest, results-oriented</li> <li>Supports skills development</li> <li>Walks the talk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive mentoring approach</li> <li>Encourages work/life balance</li> </ul>

	Babyboomer	Génération X	Génération Y
Dates	1946-1964	1965-1980	1981-1999
Mot clé	Optimisme	Scepticisme	Réalisme
Caractéristiques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Force du nombre mais besoin de se démarquer (compétitivité)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Orientés vers les résultats</li> <li>S'appuient sur eux-mêmes (confiance limitée)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changement, polyvalence</li> <li>Défis, stimulation</li> <li>Personnes de réseau</li> </ul>
Le travail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moyen d'exceller</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficile de faire sa place</li> <li>Très scolarisés, mais coincés entre Babyboomers et Y</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Une activité parmi d'autres</li> </ul>
Hiérarchie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respectent l'autorité mais préfèrent être traités comme des égaux</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pas de micro-management</li> <li>« Dis-moi ce que tu attends et donne-moi les ressources. »</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loyaux envers l'équipe plus qu'envers l'entreprise</li> <li>Respect d'un patron s'il est compétent</li> </ul>
Environnement de travail recherché	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chances d'avancement</li> <li>Environnement d'équipe chaleureux</li> <li>Opportunité de faire ses preuves</li> <li>Bonne cause</li> <li>Vision, mission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possibilités de développement</li> <li>Flexibilité</li> <li>Atmosphère plaisante</li> <li>Qualité des produits et services</li> <li>Efficacité</li> <li>Orienté vers les résultats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entreprise ouverte aux changements</li> <li>Technologie</li> <li>Pas de discrimination ni de favoritisme</li> <li>Inclus dans la prise de décision</li> <li>Talents et compétences reconnus</li> </ul>
Patron idéal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qui recherche le consensus</li> <li>Démocratique</li> <li>Travaille avec son équipe pour définir la vision et la mission</li> <li>Apprécie sa contribution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compétent, franc, orienté vers les résultats</li> <li>L'aide à se développer</li> <li>Les actes suivent les paroles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formateur, positif</li> <li>Aide à équilibrer travail et vie privée</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

While our belonging to a generation alone is not enough to define us, the social, political and economic context in which we grew up has a formative impact on our outlook on the world and on work.

Having a global appreciation of these generational differences – because each person is first and foremost an individual – can only improve the support you give your clients in their endeavours, whether they are looking for a new job or reflecting more profoundly on their careers. This understanding will help you counsel and guide your clients, as well as recognize their apprehensions, so you can help them tackle their challenges successfully. ■

**Madeleine Fortier**, *CHRP* has been a career counsellor and coach at Accent Carrière for 25 years. She has helped hundreds of people of all ages and in all professions reposition themselves in the labour market and find work that's right for them. A certified trainer, she is also the author of the book *Trouvez un emploi qui vous ressemble*, published in 2012.

## Les générations et le travail

Bien que l'appartenance à une génération ne suffise pas pour nous définir comme personne, le contexte social, politique et économique dans lequel nous avons grandi a un impact important sur notre vision du monde et du travail.

Comprendre les différences générationnelles de manière globale – car chaque personne conserve son individualité propre – ne peut que vous aider à accompagner vos clients dans leurs démarches, qu'il s'agisse de trouver un nouvel emploi ou d'une réflexion en profondeur sur leur carrière; cette compréhension vous est utile pour conseiller vos clients, les guider ainsi que pour reconnaître leurs appréhensions afin de les aider à y faire face. ■

**Madeleine Fortier**, *CRHA* est conseillère et coach en carrière pour Accent Carrière depuis 25 ans. Elle a aidé des centaines de personnes, de

tous les âges et de toutes les professions, à se repositionner sur le marché du travail et à trouver un emploi à leur image. Formatrice agréée, elle est également auteure du livre *Trouvez un emploi qui vous ressemble*, publié en 2012.



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# Essential Skills Mismatches

**We already have the tools we need to solve the essential skills gap – they are just being underutilized**

**By Janet Lane**

(Cet article est disponible en français sur [orientation.ca/careering/](http://orientation.ca/careering/))

**F**orty per cent of the western Canadian workforce does not have the essential skills to do their jobs really well. The basic skills that everyone uses to some extent at work have been called the essential skills by the federal government. Employers often include them under the umbrella of “soft skills.” Reading for full comprehension, writing clearly, speaking and listening for clear communication, using digital technology, continuously learning, basic arithmetic, working with others, using documents of all kinds, critical thinking and decision-making skills; these are the essential skills for living and learning, as well as working.

The Canada West Foundation, in their recent paper, *Smarten Up*, reported on the extent of these essential skills shortages – they are pervasive across industries and types of jobs. On the other hand, they also showed that an average of 40% of employees aged 16-25, and a large number of older adults, have essential skills levels higher than those needed for their jobs. This results in underemployment and can lead to skill loss over time. These skills mismatches cost us all. For employers, there is a loss of productivity, competitiveness and, ultimately, profit. For individuals, there is a loss of job satisfaction and success and, ultimately, lost income potential.

The demand for essential skills has been rising for years. Even relatively low-skilled jobs require some use of computers, and many high-skilled occupations are demanding critical thinking, decision-making and the capacity to work in high-performance teams. Clear communication skills are important almost everywhere.

Some people have never gained a full complement of the skills required to do their jobs really well, even though they may be technically competent. Every job has its more routine tasks, but higher level essential skills are needed to work in times of change or crisis, or to handle more complex tasks and situations. We all know people who could do an entry-level job well but failed miserably when promoted to a supervisory position. The increased need to communicate clearly, solve problems and resolve conflict requires a whole new level of essential skills that many new supervisors just do not have.

Essential skills take time to learn and must be used often to develop fully. They must also be used often to be maintained – just like any skill, except perhaps riding a bicycle. Most of us know from personal experience that math skills deteriorate over time if not used – few of us have the same level of math skills we had when we finished school. Unfortunately, the same thing happens with other skills, like reading and writing. They sound easy, but are hard to do at high levels. Higher level problem-solving skills and teamwork come with maturity and practice and must also be maintained.

## Approaches to ease the essential skills problem

There are a number of approaches which, taken together, hold promise of easing the essential skills problem. Some simple tools for determining a person’s basic skills level are available. Among others, the office of Literacy and Essential Skills at Employment and Social Development Canada, TOWES at Bow Valley College in Calgary, and SkillPlan in Vancouver have some simple online assessment tools.

It is also not too difficult to determine the essential skills level demanded by the jobs for which a person is applying. The Government of Canada Job Bank has essential skills profiles for more than 300 jobs, also available online. These profiles show some of the distinct tasks that are normally part of a job, and the level of essential skills associated with the task. Skills are ranked on a five-level scale. Most jobs in Canada require a reading capacity of Level 3 or higher. Despite the fact that Level 3 is equivalent to the skills associated with a high school diploma, 40% of Canadian adults do not have this level of skill. Many employers find that their new hires just do not have the basic non-technical skills they are expected to have, given their level of credentials.

Ensuring that there is an essential skills match, and filling any skills gaps, will prevent these hiring disappointments for both employers and employees. Most community colleges, some private organizations and local community agencies can help with essential skills upgrading. There are also training providers who will work with employers to devise customized training for their workforce. It is helpful to know that this training may qualify under the Canada Job Grant.

### Competency frameworks

Over the last few years, another way to assess the skills of jobseekers has come into vogue. This method, using competency frameworks, is relatively new in Canada but is well known and has been used for years in other parts of the world. Competence is the proven ability to perform a task – and the knowledge of why it is performed that way.

**“Many employers find that their new hires just do not have the basic non-technical skills they are expected to have, given their level of credentials.”**

In Canada, we should move towards more competency-based training and assessment. The benefits are huge. A competency framework itemizes all the skills, abilities and knowledge that are required for an occupation. Assessing individuals for these competencies helps to

ensure that employees are much better matched to jobs. It also makes developing a career path much easier and can highlight skills gaps. When competency frameworks are fully developed, the training solutions for these skills gaps are much more easily devised.

With competency frameworks, not only are skills mismatches avoided, but training to overcome the missing competencies can streamline the process and shorten training time. For workplace essential skills training, qualified instructors will devise curricula that meet the learning needs

of the employee, gears the learning activities towards the business needs of the employer, and uses real workplace materials and processes. Competency-based college and community agency essential skills training will be more generic, but still assess skills, knowledge and abilities using actual essential skills tasks, rather than assuming written tests are enough. We may not find solutions to all our skills mismatches easily – complex problems do not qualify for silver bullets. However, there are some identified solutions to essential skills gaps, and they are being underutilized.

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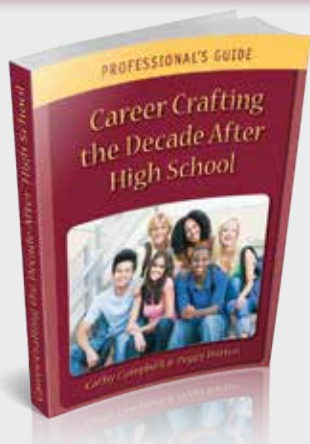
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AUTHORS: CATHY CAMPBELL AND PEGGY DUTTON



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I absolutely love this book! It combines up-to-date scholarship with practical examples and a great layout. The metaphors used throughout are insightful and bring energy and vitality. While the focus of this book is on youth, the information and practical strategies have application to career counsellors working with clients of all ages. This book deserves to be read and reread.”

—DR NORMAN AMUNDSON, University of British Columbia

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Some employers have not yet realized that it is more effective to build the skills of an employee who has the right attitude and technical skills for a job, than to keep trying to hire “job-ready” candidates. Employers are also not recognizing that some of their workers have great skills that are not being fully used – skills that if put to good use would add to their bottom line. Employees have not yet figured out that if they are having trouble in their jobs, it might be because they need to upgrade their essential skills. And our training systems have not yet fully embraced the idea that making sure that our graduates have these competencies will enhance their graduation rates and their overall success.

Yet, now you know. Perhaps together we can start to reduce the essential skills mismatches in our workforce. Canadian competitiveness and our personal success depend on it. ■

**Janet Lane**, Director, Canada West Foundation Centre for Human Capital Policy, became involved in the literacy and essential skills field after a successful career in the financial sector. Over the last 15 years, she has gained expertise in human capital development and a clear understanding of the economic impact of essential skills shortages. She strives through her policy research, writing and the convening of stakeholders to ensure that both workers and employers have the skills they need to prosper.

The statistics quoted in this article are taken from *Smarten Up: It's Time to Build Essential Skills*, a report from the Canada West Foundation authored by Janet Lane and T. Scott Murray. This report is available for download on [cwff.ca](http://cwff.ca). The links to the resources mentioned in the article are available in the online edition of *Careering at* [contactpoint.ca/2015/08/smarten\\_up](http://contactpoint.ca/2015/08/smarten_up).

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2015

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DECEMBER

# Calendar – Calendrier

To have your event listed here, add it in the Learning section on [contactpoint.ca](http://contactpoint.ca).

Pour que votre événement soit mentionné ici, vous devez d'abord l'ajouter à la liste des événements sur [orientation.ca](http://orientation.ca).

## Workforce Development Month

OCTOBER 1-31 OCTOBRE 2015

Toronto, ON

[toronto.ca](http://toronto.ca)

## Online Course : Understanding Diverse Clients

OCTOBER 21 – NOVEMBER 3, 2015 / 21 OCTOBRE – 3 NOVEMBRE 2015

[lifestrategies.ca](http://lifestrategies.ca)

## Organizational Health and Wellness Summit

OCTOBER 22-23 OCTOBRE 2015

Kelowna, BC

[diversifiedrehab.ca](http://diversifiedrehab.ca)

## Webinar Series Motivation to Work: How to Support Your Clients to Get Unstuck and Get Working

OCTOBER 23 – DECEMBER 3, 2015 / 23 OCTOBRE – 3 DÉCEMBRE 2015

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## CAREERPRO 2015 - Virtual Career Development Conference

**NOVEMBER 2-6 NOVEMBRE 2015**

careerproconference.ca

## Vocational Rehabilitation Association (VRA) Ontario Fall Conference

**NOVEMBER 6 NOVEMBRE 2015**

Niagara, ON  
vracanadaon.com

## Ontario School Counsellors' Association (OSCA) Conference / Congrès Association des conseillères et des conseillers d'orientation scolaire de l'Ontario (ACOSO)

**NOVEMBER 6-8 NOVEMBRE 2015**

Toronto, ON  
oscaconference.ca

## Career Development Institute (CDI) Annual Conference and Exhibition 2015

**NOVEMBER 9-10 NOVEMBRE 2015**

Cardiff, UK  
thecdi.net

## New Brunswick Career Development Action Group (BCDAG) Conference / Congrès Groupe d'action en développement de carrière du Nouveau-Brunswick (GADCNB)

**NOVEMBER 23-25 NOVEMBRE 2015**

Moncton, NB  
nbcadag-gadcnb.ca

## 8th Annual Symposium on Inclusive Education and Employment

**DECEMBER 1-2 DÉCEMBRE 2015**

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## 10 Questions for Ratna Omidvar

**R**atna Omidvar is the founding Executive Director of the Global Diversity Exchange (GDX) at the Ted Rogers School of Management, Ryerson University and is currently Director of the Centre for Mental Health and Addiction (CAMH), The Environics Institute and Samara. She is Chair of Lifeline Syria, Chair Emerita of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council and Co-Chair of DiverseCity: the Greater Toronto Leadership Project. Omidvar is an internationally recognized expert, speaker and commentator on migration, diversity, integration and inclusion.

Omidvar will be a keynote speaker at the Cannexus16 National Career Development Conference in Ottawa in January.

**In one sentence, describe why career development matters.**

Career development is a plan to constantly develop yourself, renew yourself, add to your competencies, take courses and seminars, and join networks to keep lifelong learning alive all the time.

**Can you explain what you mean by “plan”?**

It is important to have a plan A, plan B and plan C. Life never unfolds how you think it will. My own life is a testament to that – a lot of good things have happened in my life by accident, so I give a great deal of faith in happy accidents, and in always being open. I think that this is important, especially for young people today who are looking for work. When I came to Canada in the 1980s, the job requirements were far less complex; you could enter into a field of work through informal means. Entering the same field today is more difficult. A master's degree is required to do something that we formerly needed a bachelor's for – it has become a far more professionalized world.

**Which book are you reading right now?**

My time has recently become so limited because of my work with Lifeline Syria, but the book that is giving me the greatest solace right now is a book by Pico Iyer – our keynote speaker and thought leader at the launch of the Global Diversity Exchange – *The Art of Stillness*. I'm not a still person. I'm constantly on the go, my mind is constantly on overdrive, and I recognize that failing. I need to be able to sit back, be still, and not constantly be doing something.

**What did you want to be when you grew up?**

When I was 6 or 7 years old, I really wanted to be a teacher. I was enthralled by the role of a teacher and had some wonderful model teachers who were important in forming my life; I wanted to be like them. I actually wanted to start a school for disadvantaged kids in India but my life went in a different direction. It's very interesting that at this stage in my life, I am at a university, so in a way, I have fulfilled my childhood dream.

**Name one thing you wouldn't be able to work without?**

I wouldn't be able to work without my team. My team is just the best team in the world. I have ideas and they give these ideas legs. I know people talk about not being able to work without cellphones and iPads, these are instruments – you need people.

**What activity do you usually turn to when procrastinating?**

I'm a list-maker. I make lists of things I have to do at home, people I have to write letters to, and of all the things I have to get done. Some people have lists on their phones – that doesn't give me comfort – a list to look at gives me comfort.

**Which word do you overuse?**

I'm incredibly driven and impatient with delays, so my team tells me I'm always saying “we need to get it done now.” I think that I overuse the urgency factor.



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### Who would you like to work with most?

I'm going to stick close to home and I would say I would love to work with all of the (federal government) party leaders in a non-partisan way to address the Syrian refugee crisis. We don't have to break it down to partisan bickering, this is something we should do as a nation; so I would like to work with all three of them.

### Which talent or superpower would you like to have?

I have two responses: I would love to be smarter and more intelligent. I'm very street smart, but I value people who are able to digest complex pieces of information and come at analysis in a completely different way. In the end, I think the superpower I would like to most have is time. I really would like to have more time in a day – I find time runs away – I have a family, and I wish I had more time to be with them. I wish I had more time to be an engaged Canadian; I wish I had more time to do my job better; I wish I had more time to be a better mentor to all of the people who call me.

### What do you consider your greatest achievement?

I think it has got to be playing a role in how Canadians in Canada understand that their future prosperity is linked to the prosperity of immigrants and refugees and that one cannot succeed without the other. ■

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# Right where I belong

A close-up photograph of a young man and woman smiling warmly at the camera. The man, on the left, has dark curly hair and a goatee, wearing a purple and white striped button-down shirt. The woman, on the right, has long dark hair and is wearing a white top with a colorful patterned scarf. They are outdoors with green trees and a blue sky in the background.

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