

Career Professionals of Canada



# INSIDER SECRETS FROM CAREERPROS

A GUIDE FOR YOUR CAREER DEVELOPMENT



**Career Professionals of Canada**

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# Introduction

**If you want to have a great career, this eBook is for you!**

You are in charge of shaping your own career, and it's never too early or too late to start. CareerPros are experts at helping people like you imagine, plan, and create a great career!

In this eBook, 14 brilliant CareerPros offer you their best insider advice. CareerPros are diverse and come from a wide variety of backgrounds. We are career counsellors, employment consultants, social media experts, job developers, mental health professionals, résumé writers, recruiters, and human resources professionals. The advice is as diverse as the expert contributors. We all have one thing in common, we are all here to help you.

You'll learn about common “snags” that happen during various stages of your career development. You'll receive thought-provoking tips and actionable strategies to prevent missteps in your work life. These tips are offered to help move you closer to your goals and to create a great career.

Let's get started!

# Career Development

## Why should I care about my own career development?

“ *Career development* is a proactive approach you take to create the work and life you desire. It is much more than getting a job. It is a lifelong process of learning and growing.

Career development enables you to make informed educational, occupational, and employment choices. It is an ongoing process that you embark on to ensure meaningful work throughout your life.

It is possible to create and manage every stage of your career and your life.

- When you *know your value* you gain confidence.
- When you *explore your options* you can make informed choices.
- When you *plan your actions* you can set reachable goals.
- When you *create your future* you are in control of your life and work.

You can attain joy and satisfaction from proactively creating a career that is fulfilling. When you are prepared and self-aware, you can make knowledgeable decisions that empower you to have the career you want and deserve!



Sharon Graham  
Career Professionals of Canada

# Student Life

## How do I start my career development journey?



You need certain skills to develop your career. Most people expect that they will build these *Career Development Skills* while they are in school, however not all students make career development a priority.

As a student, you know your technical skills are being developed, but you also need to build your career development skills. So it would be wise for you to reach out yourself. Seek advice and counsel from people in your network about how to develop skills like job search, résumé writing, and interview strategies.



**David Waddington**  
Mohawk College

Consider touching base with classmates, peers, community members, teammates, and career centers. Your job is to develop your career skills concurrently with your technical (academic) skills so that when you graduate you know *how* to find work in your field.

Raising your own awareness about career development is the first step to empowering yourself in job search and career building.

# Job Skills

## How do I identify skills I may not know I have?



As a student, you may not realize how many skills you have gained already in your academic pursuits. You have robust academic and extra-curricular experiences to draw from.



Charmaine Rodrick  
Trent University Career Centre

In your courses you research topics, analyze information, use critical thinking to develop and advance your arguments, and write your reports clearly and concisely. You present projects to classes, develop skills in creativity, use computer applications, and are always improving your verbal ability. Sometimes, you even complete group-based projects that require collaboration, leadership, and conflict resolution skills.

Proven, hands-on skills are gained from *course* lab work, field work, placements, internships, and other forms of experiential learning. In addition, you have rich, *extra-curricular* experiences to draw from - athletics, executive-level involvement in student groups and student government, peer mentoring, and volunteering.

When you write your résumé, remember that it's less about your work history and more about you and your achievements.

# Career Choices

How can I figure out what career is right for me?



Career development has often been centered on a “matching” paradigm. This approach requires you to take a test that matches you to a job title that you are expected to hold for the rest of your life.

Unfortunately, there are several limits to this approach:

- Many potential jobs have not been invented yet.
- Most people expect to work on several different opportunities, with different job titles, during their lifetime.
- People generally don't get excited about their future when reading job titles.

Instead of using the matching paradigm, shift your focus from job titles to the challenges, problems, and opportunities that exist in the world.

This simple shift will unlock new opportunities, a different way to see the world, and a powerful approach to preparing for success.



Jean-Philippe Michel  
SparkPath



# Career Transition

## How do I keep ahead of career changes?



Canadians are changing career directions like “hotcakes” – holding two to three completely different careers over a lifetime. \*

Before launching your internet browser to research “*how to make big career changes*”, there is one super-attribute you can focus on to help ease the process: *adaptability*.

Here’s how to sharpen this superpower:

- *Start with situational awareness.* Study your skills, experience, and uniqueness, as well as the target industry, company, and/or job. Align your skills to *adapt* to a new career.
- *Be resourceful.* Opportunities can present themselves in ways you least expect. Seek solutions, opportunities, and networks to open doors and *adapt* to a new career.
- *Declare a commitment to continued learning.* Seek information, resources, and embrace learning new skills to *adapt* to a new career.



Lena Stewart  
Modern Résumé

The way we work is changing, and the better we learn to *adapt*, the more value we can add to companies across industries.

\* *Thinkopolis IV: ‘Time’ to Work, Workopolis*

# Social Media

## How do I create a strong online presence?



Social media profiles are your online digital footprint. One must project professionalism and authenticity the same way you might offline.

Social media and personal branding are commonly used buzzwords. The term “branding” used to be associated with companies, but technology has enabled individuals to develop their personal brands using a variety of social media tools such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook.

When it comes to your personal brand and social media presence, consistency across platforms is key.

Some people are quick to create online profiles, but don’t know how to make social media work for them. One must have a plan or a strategy to regularly update and monitor their digital presence. Having an online identity is not enough; engaging with your audience on a consistent basis is what will strengthen your personal brand.



Creating an online presence is not as difficult as you might think. It does require effort to make it work for you, though.

Taranum Khan

Education Training Research Employment Consulting

# LinkedIn

## How do I build a better LinkedIn profile?

“

Do you suspect that your profile is not effectively representing your professional identity? Here are six ways to create a stronger profile.



**Ian Christie**  
**The Bold Career Project**

- *Complete Your Profile:* Utilize the profile elements that best allow you to tell your story. Commit to completing those sections.
- *Showcase You, Your Work, and Your Employer:* Promote your company and team, the great work you're doing and at the same time, tell your professional story. Serve yourself by serving your employer.
- *Pay Attention to the Details:* Don't damage your reputation through typos and inconsistent or poorly formatted content.
- *Get Personal:* Rather than use formal résumé language, consider adopting a more personal voice (I, we, our).
- *Get Visual:* Have a strong headshot. Capture the logos for schools and employers. Brainstorm visual elements for your Experience or Summary sections.
- *Be Findable:* Identify and deploy the important keywords across your profile.

With a little effort, you can build a strong LinkedIn profile.

# Credibility Building

## How do I become influential on LinkedIn?



Being a LinkedIn leader is more than a title; it is a behaviour. It is how you communicate with others online and the “action” you take to promote others.

To become influential on LinkedIn you need to develop an effective and powerful online voice. It is important for people to “hear” you. To be heard, you must engage with your LinkedIn network regularly.

The more you build and share content, the more people “hear you” and you will be perceived as an expert with answers and insights people seek.



Shelly Elsliger  
Linked-Express

LinkedIn is a place where you can go to make your mark as a credible, trustworthy, and knowledgeable professional. An influential LinkedIn leader has a great story and a powerful network willing to share that story.

# Social Networking

## How do I get over my fear of networking?

“

Job search networking calls for great communication, and we can't get it right every time. Everyone makes mistakes. We overanalyze what we do. Then, we hesitate to try again. But sometimes, it's simply not about you.



Ali Breen  
Ali Breen Career Coaching

Here are two common scenarios:

- *You're ghosted after a networking event.* You had an epic conversation. You promised to follow up but didn't. You're thinking, "If I reach out now, I'll seem disorganized." Remember, it's not all about you. People meet so many contacts at events, they have probably forgotten your promise. Solution: reach out with something topical and express that you'd like to reconnect.
- *You sent an email and didn't get a reply.* Is anyone at "inbox zero" anymore? People miss messages. You're thinking, "I didn't impress them." Say it with me: it's not all about you. Solution: reach out again, kindly, and if possible, on another platform (like a direct message on Twitter).

Try, try again. You'll get points for perseverance!

# Interview Preparation

## How do I get ready for interviews?



Linda Rawbon  
JobLinks Employment Centre



There are many options with regard to getting through the interview process. *First impressions* continues to lead the way.

A few years ago, your *first impression* meant how you showed up for the interview.

Today it includes the preparation you have done *before* attending the interview. *Researching the company* and *having the skills required* to do the job you have applied for will give you confidence when it comes to the actual interview.

Meet with a CareerPro or a qualified colleague to set up a *mock interview*. Keep the industry you want to work for in mind. Rehearse using a job posting similar to what you will be applying for and be prepared to accept the feedback given to you, which will help you in the real interview. Visualize yourself doing the job and the contributions you will bring to the workplace. And, smile!

# Interview Questions

## How can I win the interview game?



Interviews can sometimes feel terrifying.

Job candidates are known to sweat profusely, become tongue-tied, give wrong answers, and blow the entire interview. Some have even tried reading the interviewer's mind to come up with what they think the interviewer wants to hear instead of focusing on the value they have to offer. These peculiarities run across the continuum – from entry-level to executive-level candidates.



**Daisy Wright**  
**The Wright Career Solution**

It's natural to be nervous and experience some or all of the above symptoms, but there are better ways to prepare for interviews, lessen your stress, and win the interview game.

It IS really possible to unravel the mystery in each question, develop answers that showcase your accomplishments, and convince the interviewer you are the perfect person for the job. It starts with knowing what the employer wants: someone who will be able to do the job, be productive, help them make money, and who will fit in with the team.

# Mental Health

I'm feeling down about my job search. Should I worry?

“

Job loss ranks high as a stressful life event. Many job seekers are ill-prepared for a strenuous search. As a result, they may feel overwhelmed, isolated, unmotivated, or embarrassed by the loss of work identity.

A CareerPro can give you the structure to help focus on accomplishments and make an action plan that works for you.

Assess yourself against these points to determine whether it might be time to inquire about additional support.\*

- Little interest or pleasure in doing things.
- Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless.
- Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much.
- Feeling tired or having little energy.
- Poor appetite or overeating.
- Feeling bad about yourself — or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down.
- Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television.
- Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed. Or the opposite — being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around a lot more than usual.
- Thoughts that you would be better off dead or of hurting yourself in some way.

If you answer “yes” to the last question, it is time to see a mental health specialist or call the 2-1-1 help line. Knowing when to ask for help or additional support can get you back on your feet again.

\*PHQ9 Assessment Developed by Drs. Robert L. Spitzer, Janet B.W. Williams, Kurt Kroenke, and colleagues, with an educational grant from Pfizer Inc.



Sheila Taylor  
Coach 4 Career



# Job Search

What should I do if I can't find a full-time job?



**Gail Kastning**  
**Purposeful Careers**



Maybe a full-time job isn't the answer for you. If that's the case, consider a *portfolio career*. Look for potential income streams instead.

Portfolio careerists stream income from a variety of sources to make their living. They combine part-time, contract, freelance, project based, and entrepreneurial ventures to make an income. They may use one specific skill and interest such as a voice teacher who teaches part-time at a university and has a home-based private lessons business, or an office administrator who has two part-time jobs at two different companies.

Portfolio careerists may also use a combination of skills and interests to create a full-time income such as an entrepreneurial interior designer who also sings in a band, or a contracted online marketer who has a dog-sitting business.

In some cases, portfolio careerists make more than a full-time income. One example would be a contracted project manager who is also a landlord with multiple rental properties.

# The Future

## How do I prepare for my career development future?

“ You’ve undoubtedly read articles about future jobs and industries that haven’t even been invented yet.

By default, the future is an unknown for all of us. So, how do we prepare a career development plan for areas of work we know nothing about?



Cathy Milton  
Career Professionals of Canada

- *Embrace life-long learning.* Watch TED Talks about innovation in work or attend future-focussed conferences and seminars. Take courses to stay current.
- *Do your research.* Google really is your friend. Cultivate your curiosity about new areas of work, and new ways of doing existing work.
- *Think differently about change.* Remind yourself regularly that change and progress are inevitable and natural.
- *Foster foundational soft-skills.* Jobs of the future will still depend on very human skills such as cultural awareness, emotional intelligence, and reasoned decision-making.

The future of work doesn’t have to be a scary place. Do your homework so that you feel comfortable, informed, and prepared for anything!

# The Next Generation

## How do I introduce my child to career development?

“ When it comes to a child’s career development, *watch for the spark*.

- Watch for a child’s face to light up when she or he talks about a topic, an activity, an interest, or a subject she or he finds fascinating.
- Take note and help the child look for patterns to clarify their interest. Help the child find the words to articulate what they find.
- Introduce the child to how this “interest” shows up in the world of work. Explore it together.
- Be sure not to limit the child to what *you* think is possible. Remind yourself that anything is possible.
- Encourage the child to explore and expand their knowledge about the thing that “lights them up.”

We cannot know with any certainty what the future holds for children; our job is to simply prepare them for a happy one.

*Watch for the spark.* Enjoy the show.



**Maureen McCann**  
Promotion Career Solutions

Thank you for reading INSIDER SECRETS FROM CAREERPROS.

Share this resource with your friends, family, and colleagues.

**Career Professionals of Canada** is a member-run, volunteer-driven social enterprise. We are a leading national association for career development practitioners supporting the Canadian labour market. We promote quality, ethics, and expertise within the field.

Members are diverse and come from a wide variety of backgrounds. We work with clients from coast-to-coast-to-coast to help them secure meaningful employment and advance their careers.

For this publication, we reached out to members working across the country as entrepreneurs and business leaders in academia, private practice, government agencies, and employment centres and asked them to offer their best advice for today's job seeker.

We're working together for your career success!



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