

# Workbook Four

# 4

## Essential Skills to Search for Jobs





This workbook was created by Literacy Link South Central. We are a regional network in Ontario that provides support to literacy programs. We are a partner in the Employment Ontario system. This series of workbooks is the result of a project called, “Connecting Literacy and Employment through Essential Skills.” These resources have been developed for people who want to look for employment while strengthening their Essential Skills.

**Thank you to our project partners for their help in creating these resources. Our partners for this project include:**

- Elgin, Middlesex, Oxford, Workforce Planning and Development Board
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- London Employment Help Centre
- Pathways Skill Development & Placement Centre

A special thanks to the employment agencies, literacy programs, employers and Essential Skills experts who participated in this project. Their feedback was valuable in the development of this workbook series.

The word "Canada" is written in a large, black, serif font. To the right of the letter 'a' is a small, stylized Canadian flag.

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These workbooks can be downloaded free of charge at [www.llsc.on.ca](http://www.llsc.on.ca). Organizations are encouraged to copy these materials; however, reproducing these materials for a profit is prohibited. All website links were accurate at the time of printing – May 2011.

# Read this Part First

## **This workbook is for you if:**

- You're looking for work.
- You have access to a computer with Internet.
- You feel comfortable using a computer and the Internet and you would like to practise and improve these skills.
- You want to build your Essential Skills.

## **This workbook is one in a series of seven titles:**

1. Essential Skills to Identify the Job Searcher
2. Essential Skills to Identify the Job
3. Essential Skills to Research Your Occupation
- 4. Essential Skills to Search for Jobs**
5. Essential Skills to Market Yourself with a Resume and Cover Letter
6. Essential Skills to Market Yourself at the Interview
7. Essential Skills to Maintain Employability

## **What are Essential Skills? Why are they important to you, the job seeker?**






Essential Skills are the skills you need for work, learning and life. Knowing your Essential Skills helps you to tell employers what you can do for them. It shows people that you have the skills to learn, that you adapt to change and that you can work well with others. A good employee has strong Essential Skills. When you practise and improve your Essential Skills, you increase your chances of finding a job.





## **Why are these workbooks unique?**

- These workbooks combine job search activities and Essential Skills resources. You can look for a job and improve your Essential Skills – at the same time.
- You can photocopy or download the copies you need – they're free!
- The workbooks are self-paced. You can take as much time as you need and complete as many workbooks as you need.

## How you will use Essential Skills for job search

You will find that you use your Essential Skills for all of the job search activities in these workbooks. When you begin to read the content, you will notice that activities requiring Essential Skills are identified with icons and tips. The icons tell you which Essential Skills you will be using. The tips tell you how you will use the Essential Skill for a specific activity.

Essential Skills Icon	What It Means
	<b>Reading:</b> Understanding materials written in sentences or paragraphs Example: Read a case study about job search.
	<b>Document use:</b> Using and understanding labels, graphs, signs and other similar materials Example: Fill in a chart of job search contact information.
	<b>Numeracy:</b> Using and understanding numbers Example: Budget your monthly expenses.
	<b>Writing:</b> Writing text or typing on a computer Example: Write a thank you note after an interview.
	<b>Oral communication:</b> Using speech to share thoughts and information Example: Practise answering interview questions with others.

Essential Skills Icon	What It Means
	<p><b>Working with others:</b> Interacting with others to complete tasks</p> <p>Example: Help to improve one another's interview skills.</p>
	<p><b>Thinking:</b> Reviewing information to make decisions</p> <p>Example: Analyze how you spend your time during your job search.</p>
	<p><b>Computer use:</b> Using computers and other technical tools</p> <p>Example: Use the Internet for research.</p>
	<p><b>Continuous learning:</b> Participating in an ongoing process of gaining skills and knowledge</p> <p>Example: Learn to maintain a positive attitude during job search.</p>

## Computer Skills

As you work through the workbooks you will be practising your computer skills. You must have some basic computer skills in order to complete many of the workbook activities.

Can you do the following?

- **Use a mouse.** Can you open links by clicking on them? Can you double click on files?
- **Use a keyboard.** Can you type? Can you type in a web address? Do you know how to use command keys like Shift and Control?
- **Search the Internet.** Can you use a search engine like Google or Internet Explorer? Can you use key words to find a specific topic?
- **Search a website.** Can you use the menus, links and tabs to find your way on a website?
- **Watch an online video.** Can you open, play and pause a video? Can you adjust the sound?

If you are unable to perform these computer functions, you may wish to take some basic computer training before you use the workbooks.



## Tips for making the workbooks work for you

These workbooks have been designed for job seekers who want to look for work and improve their Essential Skills.

Here are some tips to help you get the most out of each workbook.

- ✓ Use the Essential Skills Checklist before and after you complete each workbook to see how your Essential Skills improve.
- ✓ Read the Job Search Terms so that you are familiar with the terms used in each workbook.
- ✓ For best results, work through all the workbooks. They follow the steps you'll take when looking for a job. But if you don't need the information in every workbook, you can just choose the ones with the content that is right for you.
- ✓ Try to work through the whole workbook and not just sections. This will increase your understanding of the content and help you practise your Essential Skills.
- ✓ These workbooks have been designed for clients in both employment and literacy agencies. If you get stuck, ask for help.
- ✓ As much as possible, work with your colleagues (other jobs searchers in your program). You will practise your Essential Skills when you share information and ideas.
- ✓ Remember that these are your workbooks. This means that you can write in them, underline, highlight, make notes – anything that helps you to learn and get ready for work.

**Improving your Essential Skills increases your chances of finding work. Good luck with your job search!**





# Workbook Four

*Undertaking a job search is a job in itself.*

(From: Can I Wear My Nose Ring to the Interview? by Ellen Gordon Reeves)

If you are recently unemployed, you may be wondering about where to start looking for work. If you have been unemployed for a while, you may think that you have done everything you can and are now wondering about next steps.

Developing a job search plan can help you keep all of your activities organized and up to date while you are searching for work. With a plan you are less likely to skip any steps or forget a contact name or misplace a phone number. Planning and organization can make the difference when it comes to finding a job.



**This workbook will increase your chances of finding work by helping you focus on the most successful job search methods.**

**In this workbook you will learn to:**

- **Organize your job search**
- **Manage your job search time**
- **Activate your network**
- **Develop a useful elevator speech**
- **Access the hidden job market**
- **Stay positive**

**The activities that you complete in this workbook will help you with these job search methods so that you increase your chances for finding work.**



## Using Your Essential Skills for a Job Search

One of the benefits of using this workbook series is that as you prepare for employment, you also practise your Essential Skills. Essential Skills are the skills that enable you to carry out life and work tasks, including your job search. Practising and improving your Essential Skills will improve your job search techniques and materials and increase your chances of finding the work that you want.

### In Workbook Four you will use the following Essential Skills:

- Reading
- Document Use
- Writing
- Oral Communication
- Thinking
- Working with Others
- Computer Use
- Continuous Learning



You can evaluate your confidence and progress in using these skills by assessing yourself before and after you complete this workbook. Your self-assessment can show you the skills you feel confident in using and the skills you need to practise more. This is important information for your job search and your success as an employee.

1. Take a few moments to complete the self-assessment on page 11 before you begin the workbook activities. Assess your Essential Skills in the **Before** column.
2. As you work through the activities, notice the icons and tips that help you to focus on particular Essential Skills.
3. When you have completed the workbook, return to the Essential Skills Checklist. You will be able to measure your improved job search abilities using Essential Skills by putting check marks in the **After** column.

## Job Search Terms

Term	Definition
<b>Job search plan</b>	This is your plan of action for looking for work.
<b>Contact sheet</b>	This is the place where you keep track of people and contact information like phone numbers and emails that are related to your job search.
<b>Job search journal</b>	This is a place to record your job search plans and activities.
<b>Job search network</b>	This is a group of people of any size that is helping you in your job search. It includes anyone who is willing to support you in your job search.
<b>Elevator speech</b>	This is a short speech you have prepared ahead that tells others: who you are, the kind of job you want, what you can offer and contact information.
<b>Gatekeeper</b>	This is the person (often a receptionist or secretary) who screens callers and can prevent you from speaking with the employer.
<b>Optimism</b>	Optimism is believing you have the ability to influence events in your life. It is also hoping for the best and looking on the bright side of things.
<b>Hidden job market</b>	These are the jobs that are filled without being advertised.

## Essential Skills Checklist



Use this Essential Skills Checklist to rate your increased confidence in using Essential Skills. Before you start the activities in this workbook, fill in the **Before** column. When you have finished the workbook, fill in the **After** column. Have your Essential Skills improved? Knowing what you do well can be important information to share when applying for jobs. Knowing what you still need to work on will help you to prepare for future job search success.

Using Essential Skills for Job Search	I'm not sure if I can do this.		I can't do this yet.		I can do this with help.		I can do this.	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Using Reading Skills I am able to:								
• Read a case study about the benefits of being organized during my job search								
• Read through Yellow Pages listings and scan for specific information (Activity 5)								
• Read a case study for an example of the value of working with others								
• Read to learn about job search networks and their value								
• Read information about accessing the hidden job market								
Using Document Skills I am able to:								
• Use a contact sheet to record information about job contacts (Activity 1)								
• Use a Yellow Pages research sheet to record job search information (Activity 5)								
• Create a business card using MS Word (Activity 10)								

Using Essential Skills for Job Search	I'm not sure if I can do this.		I can't do this yet.		I can do this with help.		I can do this.	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Using Writing Skills I am able to:								
• Use a journal to record daily job search activities (Activity 2,3,4)								
• Create a job search network list (Activity 6)								
• Plan my elevator speech on paper (Activity 7)								
• Write out my elevator speech using my notes (Activity 8)								
• Write out positive self-talk statements (Activity 13)								
Using Oral Communication I am able to:								
• Rehearse my elevator speech out loud (Activity 8)								
• Practise my elevator speech in front of my colleagues (Activity 9)								
• Practise calling employers (Activity 11)								
• Practise a positive self-talk statement out loud								
Working with Others I am able to:								
• Work as a member of a team to support Yellow Pages job search (Activity 5)								
• Work with others to improve my elevator speech (Activity 9)								
Using Thinking Skills I am able to:								
• Identify and analyze how I spend my job search time (Activity 9)								

Using Essential Skills for Job Search	I'm not sure if I can do this.		I can't do this yet.		I can do this with help.		I can do this.	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan and organize my tasks to increase my chances of success (Activity 4)</li> </ul>								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Memorize my elevator speech (Activity 8)</li> </ul>								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practise overcoming problems I may face when calling an employer (Activity 11)</li> </ul>								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solve problems by changing negative statements to positive ones (Activity 13)</li> </ul>								
Using Computer Skills I am able to:								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a business card using MS Word (Activity 10)</li> </ul>								
Using Continuous Learning I am able to:								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn more about optimism for my job search through self-study (Activity 12)</li> </ul>								

## Job Search

You might think that job search is a pretty straightforward activity. You check various job boards and job banks, you post your resume online and you send it to employers who advertise available positions. If these activities have worked for someone you know, then they are very lucky. Even the most qualified and experienced workers usually need to put more planning and effort into their job search.

### Organizing your Job Search

When you begin your job search you will have a lot of information to manage. You will need to keep track of the following:

- Contact names
- Names of businesses
- Addresses, emails and phone numbers
- Dates and times
- Follow up information

You will also need to make the best use of time during your job search.





# Case Study One



## Essential Skills Tip: Reading

- Read a case study about the benefits of being organized during your job search

Tony had been unemployed for over a month before he got his first real break. He was standing in a long line at the bank with his Employment Insurance (EI) cheque and fell into conversation with the man in front of him who had just finished having his house renovated.

“The contractor is a local guy and he couldn’t get any dependable help,” said the guy ahead of Tony. “He had to come in and do all of the dry wall and painting on his own.”

Tony said, “That’s the kind of work that I do. I worked for a guy for a couple of years, but he went bankrupt.”

“Look, here’s my card. Give me a call tonight and I will give you the name of the guy and his cell phone number.”

“Great! Thanks!” said Tony, taking the business card and stuffing it into his jacket pocket.

After Tony had finished in the bank he walked out into the warm sunshine. He peeled off his leather jacket and slung it over his shoulder. The business card slipped from his pocket and fell unnoticed to the ground.

That night Tony went to make his call. He searched all of his jacket pockets, his shirt pockets and his pants pockets. He emptied the contents of his wallet onto the kitchen table.

Tony felt angry and discouraged. His first real lead – gone!

When you are gathering information for your job search, it is easy to lose a vital phone number, name or email. One good way to avoid situations like Tony's is to keep all of your information in one place. Here are four tips to help you keep your information organized and to make the most of your job leads.

**Tip #1** Create a document that contains all of the important information you have for your job search leads.

**Tip #2** Use a daily journal or notebook to keep track of your job search.

**Tip #3** Keep business cards and scraps of paper in one place.

**Tip #4** Buy a binder or folder to use as a Job Search Organizer. Use it to keep all of your papers together. During your job search you will have a lot of paper to deal with.

**Tip #1** Create a contact sheet that contains all of the important information you have for your job search leads.

This document should have all of the important information that you need for your successful job search, including:

- Contact name and title
- Employer name
- Contact number
- Email
- Follow-up date(s)
- Notes

Look at the example on page 18.



## Activity One: Begin to Fill In Your Contact Sheet



Use the job search information that you have already collected to begin to fill in your own contact sheet. You can use the blank copy on page 19 or develop your own. For example, you may have:

- Copies of job ads
- Lists of possible places of employment
- Employer names
- Names of friends or acquaintances to contact about work

Transfer the contact information to your Contact Sheet so that it is all in one place. Double check that you transfer the information accurately, particularly phone numbers and email addresses. You can keep this information in your Job Search Organizer binder (Tip 4).



## Contact Sheet - Example

[illegible]

# Contact Sheet - Example

[illegible]

**Tip #2** Use a daily journal or notebook to keep track of your job search. Invest in a notebook or journal that you can easily carry with you. Dated pages are the easiest. Use the journal to record

- Your intended job search activities for that day
- New contacts
- The people you have contacted (from your contact sheet)
- Any follow-up actions that you need to take

## Activity Two: Keep Track of Job Search Plans and Activities



### Essential Skills Tip: Writing

- Use a journal to record daily job search activities

Look at the example on page 21. Then use the blank journal page that follows or buy/create your own. You can add the journal pages to your Job Search Organizer binder. The journal will help you to keep track of your job search plans and activities.





## Job Search Journal – Example

Date: June 27	Date: June 28
Job Search Activities	Job Search Activities
Call Red Cab 365-6565	Call Maria about required qualifications for ambulance dispatch 360-1911
Follow-up with Jack at Peterson's Trucking 365-0092	
Call EMS Transport to get a contact	
New Contacts	New Contacts
Maria Fernandez (Dispatch supervisor) EMS 360-1911	
Follow-up	Follow-up
Call Maria about required qualifications for ambulance dispatch tomorrow	

## Job Search Journal

Date:	Date:
Job Search Activities	Job Search Activities
New Contacts	New Contacts
Follow-up	Follow-up

**Tip #3** Keep business cards and scraps of paper in one place. Record on the back of the business card when you met the person and what your contact is willing to do for you. If you don't have a business card holder or if you (like most people) mislay cards easily, record the information on your contact sheet. Or, use a large envelope. Use a three-hole punch to make the envelope fit into a binder. Keep the envelope of business cards and pieces of paper in your Job Search Organizer binder.



**Tip #4** Buy a binder or folder to use as a Job Search Organizer. You can keep all of your papers together in this binder. You can also buy some inexpensive dividers to help you organize your documents in your binder or folder. Money can be tight when you are out of work, but this is a few dollars well invested in your job search success.

## Manage your time during job search

One of the most challenging things about job search is that, suddenly, you are your own boss. You set your own hours and decide how long and how hard you are going to work. Full-time job search takes discipline and determination.

If you are collecting Employment Insurance (EI), you can be called upon at any time to prove that you have been looking for work full time. Keeping a record of your job search and managing your time effectively will help ensure that your EI claim is not disrupted while you are out of work.



One way to keep your job search on track is to set regular hours and structure your time. You can do this with a job search journal or notebook. You can photocopy the previous page to use as a journal or you can purchase a notebook to use instead. If you photocopy the Job Search Journal, you can keep it in your Job Search Organizer.

## Activity Three: Record a Day of Job Search and Analyze Time Management



### Essential Skills Tip: Writing

### Thinking (Identify and Resolve Problems)

- Record a typical day's job search in a journal
- Identify and analyze how you manage your time




In your journal, record a “typical day” of job search. Try to be as accurate as possible regarding how much time you spend on each activity. For example, if you spent two hours formatting your resume on the computer, record that activity and time.

When you are finished, look for

- **Time wasters:** For example, running errands during the day that could easily be done after “work”.
- **Not enough time spent on a given activity:** You intend to make phone calls for two hours on Tuesday morning and get discouraged after 45 minutes.
- **Time unaccounted for:** Be honest and accurate about how you use your time. If you watched three hours of TV Thursday afternoon, say so. You may notice a pattern or a way you can improve your time management.

Look at the example on the following page to get an idea of how you can use your journal to help manage your time.

## Job Search Journal: Example

<b>Date: June 21</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Job Search Activities</b>	<b>Job Search Activities</b>
Make calls 9-10:20 am	
Coffee 10:20 - 11:20 am 	Notice how long this job searcher's coffee break has lasted.
Lunch 12 - 1:30 pm 	Look at the time gap between coffee and lunch. Also, this is a long lunch.
Meet Jeff re: job at Philips 2-2:30 pm	
Pick up Sarah from school 3 pm 	Does this activity cut into his or her job search time? Can another family member perform this activity?
<b>New Contacts</b>	<b>New Contacts</b>
Rudy at Philips 416 661-6600	
<b>Follow-up</b>	<b>Follow-up</b>
Call Rudy at the beginning of July re: temp position	

Notice that this job searcher has time wasters and time unaccounted for recorded in his or her job search journal. How do you think this job searcher can better manage his/her time?

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The advantage of being organized in your job search is that you can use your time more efficiently. Read the following statistics from *The Job Hunter's Survival Guide* by Richard N. Bolles. (The success rate refers to performing the job search activity on its own.)

Job Search Activity	Success Rate
Mail out resumes to employers, electronically or by post	7%
Use the Internet to look for job-postings from employers	10%
Answering local newspaper ads	5% to 24% (Better percentages are for jobs that do not pay as well.)
Using employment agencies and search firms	5% to 28% (Better percentages are for jobs that do not pay as well.)
Ask your network for job leads	33%
Knocking on the door of any employer that interests you, whether they are hiring or not	47%
Use the index to your phone book's Yellow Pages to identify areas of work interest	69%
Do a self-inventory in detail of your interests, skills and experience so that you know what you have to offer and what you are looking for in your next job.	86%

For example, if in your job search you only mailed out resumes to employers, you would have about a 7% chance of getting a job as a result. Does this mean that you can do your job search without a resume? No: it just means that a resume on its own is unlikely to get you a job. You will have to combine your resume with another job search activity to increase your odds of finding work.

Statistics like these can be useful in helping you to decide where and how you want to spend your job search time. If doing a self-inventory leads 86% of job searchers to employment, then it is definitely worth spending the time to discover your interests, skills and experience and to have a clear picture of the kind of work you want.

You may want to make sure that you are using your job search time effectively by spreading your time over several of these activities and not just one or two.





**Workbook One** can help you with your self-inventory.

**Workbook Two** can help you form a clear picture of the job you want.

Setting goals is another way to help you use your time effectively and efficiently. To learn more about setting job search goals, check out **Workbook Seven**.

## **Activity Four:** Plan and Organize Job Search Activities



### **Essential Skills Tip: Writing**

#### **Thinking** (Plan and Organize Job Tasks)

- Use your journal to record daily job search activities
- Plan and organize your tasks to increase your chances of success

Photocopy another page of your job search journal on page 22. Use your job search journal to plan several job search activities over two days. Try and give more time to activities that have a higher success rate. Also, you can combine two or more activities to increase your chances of success. For example, if you want to do a resume mail out, then your self-inventory will help you to target the employers that you should focus on. You can also do a Yellow Pages search to find the right employers for your skills and abilities.



## Activity Five: Yellow Pages Research



### **Essential Skills Tip: Reading, Document Use, Working with Others**

- Read through Yellow Pages listings and scan for specific information
- Use a Yellow Pages research sheet to record job search information
- Work as a member of a team to support Yellow Pages job search

In his book, *The Job Hunter's Survival Guide*, Richard Bolles notes that the success rate for Yellow Pages research increases when a group is working on this activity.

Try this activity with a few of your colleagues.

1. Tell each other the areas of work you're interested in.
2. Create a list that includes the jobs or areas of work interest for everyone in the group. Make a copy of the list for each group member. (You can use the Yellow Pages Research Sheet on page 30.)
3. Use the alphabetical listings at the beginning of the Yellow Pages. If you live in a large city with many pages of listings, each job searcher should search under one or two letters. Not only should they search for areas of their own interest but also for those of their colleagues.
4. When you are finished, compare notes. Explain why you chose the listings you did.



Let's use Tony (from the Case Study on page 15), who is interested in painting and installing dry wall, as an example. Under the letter B in the alphabetical index you might make note of:

Yellow Pages Research Sheet – Example			
Job Seeker's Name:	Job Seeker's Name:	Job Seeker's Name:	Job Seeker's Name:
<i>Tony</i>			
Work Interest:	Work Interest:	Work Interest:	Work Interest:
<i>Painting and Drywall</i>			
Listing and Page Number	Listing and Page Number	Listing and Page Number	Listing and Page Number
<i>Pg 61 Basement repair, renovation and waterproofing</i>			
<i>Pg 65 Bathroom remodelling</i>			
<i>Pg 82 Building contractors</i>			
<i>Pg 83 Building maintenance</i>			
<i>Pg 84 Building repairs and restoration</i>			

5. Make a note of the listings that others have made for you. Look up the businesses and record their names and phone numbers on your contact sheet for follow-up.
6. Contact the businesses that you are interested in. Try to find out the name of the person who does the hiring. Ask if you can send a resume and covering letter to this person. Deliver it in person, if possible, and follow up in three to four business days.

Yellow Pages Research Sheet			
Job Seeker's Name:	Job Seeker's Name:	Job Seeker's Name:	Job Seeker's Name:
Work Interest:	Work Interest:	Work Interest:	Work Interest:
Listing and Page Number	Listing and Page Number	Listing and Page Number	Listing and Page Number

## Case Study Two



### Essential Skills Tip: Reading

- Read a case study for an example of the value of working with others

A few of the clients at Peak Employment Services decided to try the Yellow Pages method when they had had so little success with simply dropping off resumes. Karla knew that she wanted to be a dispatcher. She had done this kind of work for over ten years. She enjoyed the excitement of the job. She was good at organizing the drivers and she knew all the city streets without looking at a map.

Karla and four of her job search colleagues spent the morning with the Yellow Pages. It was hard, boring work.

At noon Tony said, "If I stare at these pages any longer I'm going to go cross-eyed. Why don't we see what we have and then go for lunch?"

The others felt the same way, so each of them photocopied the sheet they had been working on and gave a copy to the others.

Karla flipped through the sheets. She wanted to have a quick look now and a closer look after she had eaten. But as she glanced through Tony's listings the first entry caught her eye. Ambulance services! She had never really thought of that before, but of course they needed dispatchers. And that would be really exciting work, thought Karla.

After lunch Karla thanked Tony for the ambulance dispatch suggestion.

"I never even thought of dispatching ambulances!" she said.

"No problem," said Tony. "I've got a cousin who does this kind of work in Montreal. He tells some pretty crazy stories, so when I think of dispatching, I always think of ambulances!"

# Your Job Search Network



## Essential Skills Tip: Reading

- Read to learn about job search networks and their value

If you did the last exercise, you will appreciate the difference a few extra people make in your job search. Let friends, family and associates know that you are looking for work and ask for their support. This group of people becomes your “job search network”.

A job search network is any group of people of any size that is helping you in your job search. For example, your network might include:

- Your mother who sells Avon and has lots of contacts.
- Your best friend who works at an auto body shop. She speaks to many clients weekly.
- Your dentist who has several patients who work in fields that interest you.

Your network includes anyone who is willing to support you. Not only does your network create more leads, but you will not feel so alone in your job search. Some job searchers are reluctant to ask for help. They feel embarrassed about being unemployed and they don’t want to “bother” friends and family. In fact most people are happy to help.

### Think about this...

Have you ever needed a piece of equipment, for example, a paint sprayer, to do a job? It is something that you don’t want to purchase because you just need to use it this one time. Finally you go to the expense of renting one. Sometime later you mention this to a friend who says, “Why didn’t you let me know? You could have borrowed mine!”



The fact is, if we don't let people know that we need something, they can't help us. Most people are more than happy to pass along a job lead. If you had a friend or family member in the same position and could share a possible lead, how would you feel? More than likely you would be happy to help that person.

A job lead is a person or piece of information that could lead you to a job.

Your network doesn't have to be restricted to people who know you well. Get into the habit of talking to people you meet on a day-to-day basis about the kind of work that you're looking for. These could be people who you meet at church, at the arena or at the mall. Make it a goal to add a new person to your network daily.



# Activity Six: Create a Network List



## Essential Skills Tip: Writing

- Create a job search network list

If you have not already done so, create a list of potential job search network members. Try and come up with at least ten names to start.

If you already have a network, make a list of ten people you know that you have not yet added to your list. Commit to talking to them over the next two weeks so that they know how best to support you. You may want to develop your “elevator speech” (next activity) before you make the calls.

Ten New Network Names and Contact Information	
1.Name Contact Info	6. Name Contact Info
2. Name Contact Info	7. Name Contact Info
3. Name Contact Info	8. Name Contact Info
4. Name Contact Info.	9. Name Contact Info
5. Name Contact Info	10. Name Contact Info

## The Elevator Speech

You probably already have a job search network. If you do, you may have had someone in your network offer you a job lead that has little to do with your own employment goals. You thank them, but at the same time you know that the information is not useful for your job search. To get useful leads, you need to give your network members a clear picture of the kind of work you are looking for. If you have done a self-inventory, you will have a clear idea of your interests, skills and experience.

Now how do you let your network know exactly the kind of job you are looking for? One way to do this is to create an “elevator speech”. The name comes from the time one might spend with strangers in an elevator – about 30 to 45 seconds. In a 30 to 45 second speech you can tell your networker

- Who you are
- The kind of work you are looking for
- What you can uniquely offer
- Contact information

Elevator speeches were first developed by people in sales, and were focussed on products. Your elevator speech is not so very different. You are in sales because you are marketing yourself to employers.



Learn more about marketing yourself in  
**Workbooks Five and Six.**

A good elevator speech makes your employment goal clear.

## Activity Seven: Plan Your Elevator Speech



### Essential Skills Tip: Writing

- Plan your elevator speech on paper

Begin to develop a networking elevator speech. Use the steps below to guide you.

#### Who you are

Many members of your network know who you are, but don't limit yourself to them! Remember Tony's encounter with the helpful stranger in the bank. You never know when you are going to meet someone who has the right lead for you. Get used to beginning your speech by introducing yourself. Speak clearly and smile.

Hi. My name is \_\_\_\_\_

#### The kind of work you are looking for

Which is more memorable?

"I'm looking for work. Can you let me know if you hear of anything?"

OR

"I'm looking for a job as a dispatcher. In the past I've dispatched trucks, taxis and work crews and equipment. Can you let me know if you hear of anything?"

Clearly the dispatcher sticks, and that is what you want to do: stick in your networker's mind.

I'm looking for work (or a job) as

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## What you can uniquely offer

Try to focus on one or two skills that let your networker know something special about you.

It is not enough to say, “I have good communication skills and I work well in a team.” Go one step further and describe what these skills look like on the job.

For example, instead of

“I have good communication skills.”

Say,

“I can dispatch for twelve hours straight and speak clearly and accurately the whole shift. “

Instead of,

“I work well in a team”

Say,

“I made sure that I developed good working relationships with the truck drivers I dispatched, so they never minded the extra trips I sometimes asked them to do.”

List two strong skills you have for the job you hope to get:

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Now describe how these skills look on the job.

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## Activity Eight: Write and Practise Your Elevator Speech



### **Essential Skills Tip: Writing, Thinking, (Using Memory) Oral Communication**

- Write out your elevator speech
- Memorize your speech
- Rehearse your speech out loud

Now that you have created the elements of an elevator speech, it's time to put them together. Look at how our example works out below.

Hi, my name is Karla Kolowski. I'm looking for work as a dispatcher. I have ten years experience dispatching trucks, taxis and work crews and equipment. I definitely have the skills that employers are looking for. I can dispatch for twelve hours straight and speak clearly and accurately the whole shift. As well, I made sure that I got along well with the truck drivers I dispatched, so they never minded the extra trips I sometimes asked them to do.

I would appreciate it if you would let me know if you hear of any work in my field. Here is my business card. Thanks!

### **Your Elevator Speech**

- Use your information from Activity Seven and the example above to help you develop your speech. Don't forget to keep it between 30 and 45 seconds.
- If memorizing a speech is too difficult, try writing down your information in point form first and memorizing that. Remember how many points you want to make so that you include all of the important information.
- Work on your speech until you can comfortably say what you want to say.

## Elevator Speech

[illegible]

## Activity Nine: Practise and Improve Your Speech with Others



### Essential Skills Tip: Oral Communication, Working with Others

- Practise your speech in front of your colleagues
- Work with others to improve your speech

Once you have written and rehearsed your speech, it's time to practise it in front of your colleagues. Don't worry if you are nervous at first. The more you practise, the easier it will become. Work with other job seekers who have written their speeches. Offer each other feedback. Use the following checklist to guide you.

Elevator Speech Checklist	Yes	No
Does the speaker look relaxed and confident?		
Is the speaker smiling?		
Does the speaker speak clearly?		
Is the speaker using familiar, proper language, as opposed to jargon or slang?		
Does the speaker tell you what kind of work they want?		
Does the speaker give one or two examples of skills an employer would want for the job?		
Do you think that you will remember the speech and think about your colleague if you hear of any work in their field?		



## Tips on giving positive feedback

- ✓ Tell your colleague one or more things that you liked about the speech.
- ✓ Suggest one or two things that, in your opinion, need to be changed or improved.
- ✓ Remember to give feedback about the speech and not the speaker!

Elevator Speech Feedback
What I like about the speech:
What may need to be changed or improved:

## Contact information

Be prepared to have your contact information on hand when you give your elevator speech. If you have business cards, hand them out so that your network can get in touch with you if something comes up. You can include a reminder of the kind of work you're looking for on the back of your card.

## Activity Ten: Create a Business Card Using Microsoft Word



### Essential Skills Tip: Document Use, Computer Use

- Create a business card using MS Word

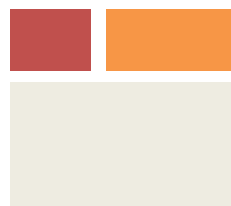
If you don't have business cards, it is easy to create them with a Microsoft Word Template.

1. Open Microsoft Word – you will need version 2003 or later.
2. Click on the **Office** button in the top left corner of your screen.
3. Select **New**.
4. From the templates listed, select **Business Card**.
5. Select a design that you like and download it.

You can buy blank business cards at office supply stores.

#### Tony DeMarco

Drywall Installer and Painter



234 Main Street East,  
Hamilton, ON L0L 909  
(905) 404-8858  
agdemarco@cogeco.com

6. Change the information in the template to your personal information.

This should include:

- Name
- Address
- Phone number
- Professional email address (This means an email address that is suitable for an employer. If you don't want to give up **cookiedough@hotmail.com**, then create another, more professional-sounding email address for your job search.)

7. Check and double check that your information is correct! Then have one of your colleagues check for mistakes.
8. Print out one sheet of cards (or less than one if your printer will let you) to make sure the design is correct. Then make sure that you print enough cards so that you always have some ready to hand out.

## The Hidden Job Market

The *hidden job market* is really just another name for a proactive job search.

John E. Long

Many jobs go unadvertised. “The hidden job market” describes the approximately 85% of jobs that are filled without being posted. Because these job openings are not advertised, it’s difficult to access them using traditional job search methods like searching want ads and job boards.

How do you find these jobs? Here are three suggestions from job search experts:

1. Activate your job search network.
2. Target the employers you would like to work for.
3. Knock on doors.

Read about and practise these three effective strategies.

1. **Activate** your job search network. When your network has a clear picture of the kind of work you want to do, the odds of one of them coming up with your future job greatly increase.
2. **Target** the employers you would like to work for. Use your network, the Yellow Pages, your local library or Chamber of Commerce to uncover every possible employer that fits your employment goal. Make a list of them in your job search planner. Then begin calling them to get the name (including correct spelling) and title of the person who does the hiring. If appropriate, give that person your elevator speech and finish with, “May I send you a copy of my resume?” If the employer says yes, and they often do, make sure that you make reference to your phone call in your cover letter.



Read more on resumes and cover letters in **Workbook Five**.



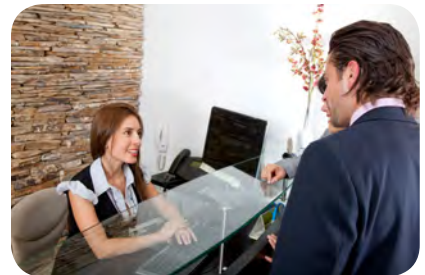
## Essential Skills Tip: Reading

- Read expert information on the hidden job market

### Access the Hidden Job Market

Sometimes getting through to employers is hard. It can help you to anticipate the obstacles you may have and to plan for how you'll deal with them. Some of the most common obstacles you're likely to face are:

**Gatekeepers:** These are the receptionists and secretaries whose job is to take messages for the employer. Remember to be polite! The gatekeeper may admire your hard work and put you through to the boss.



**Voicemail:** Leave a detailed message. Explain why you're calling and offer your contact information. Then end the call by saying that you'll call them back and when. This is a good introduction for when you're able to reach them on the phone. They will already know who you are and why you're calling.



**Objections:** When you do get through to the decision maker you may be met with some objections. "We're not hiring" or "I'm too busy right now" are common, so expect to hear them. Reassure them that you will only take a moment of their time. Then quickly state your reason for calling.

When you anticipate obstacles you can be better prepared for them. Don't let obstacles discourage you because almost all job searchers must face them.

## Activity Eleven: Practise Overcoming Obstacles



### Essential Skills Tip: Oral Communication, Solving Problems

- Practise calling employers
- Practise overcoming obstacles that callers often face

#### Practise calling employers and facing obstacles

With a colleague, role play the three obstacles you may need to overcome: gatekeepers, voicemail and objections.

To make the activity more real, use your cell phone or another phone to make the calls.

- Role play the “gatekeeper”. Be polite and try and find out a time that the decision maker will be available for your call.
- Role play the “voicemail message”. Make your message as brief as possible while including essential information: who you are, why you are calling, how you can be contacted, when you will call back.
- Role play the “objections”. Work on keeping your voice calm and professional. Be as brief as possible.

3. **Knock** on doors. If the job market is hidden, then you have got to find it! Here are some tips for going door to door.

- Research the businesses that you will be visiting. There may be information at your local library, business associations and Chamber of Commerce.
- Dress like you are going to work so that you create a positive and professional impression.
- Be polite to everyone. Who knows? The receptionist may be the boss’s daughter. If someone is rude to you, resist the urge to be rude back.
- Try to meet the person who does the hiring. You can assure him or her that you would only take a few minutes. Give him or her your elevator speech and a copy of your resume. Ask if you can follow up in a few days after he or she has had a chance to look at it.

- Look interested and ask questions. Your questions should let the person know that you have already researched his or her company. For example, “I understand that you currently have trucks moving shipments across the province. Have you any plans to expand into the rest of Canada or the United States?”

## Maintain Your Optimism

We have already seen that a personal inventory can increase your chances of finding the right job. Your personal inventory enables you to focus your time and energy where it is most likely to succeed. Optimism is similar in that it affects all aspects of your job search. It gives you the resiliency you need to work hard and believe in yourself. Resiliency is the ability to bounce back and thrive – even under difficult circumstances.

Optimism makes you a very attractive candidate in the eyes of employers. Read the article on the next page to learn more about optimism and job search. Answer the questions that follow the article to review and reflect on the content.

What is optimism? It's really two things.

1. Believing that you have the ability to influence the events of your life
2. Hoping for the best and looking on the bright side of things under all circumstances



# Why Optimism Isn't Optional in a Job Search



## **Essential Skills Tip: Reading, Writing**

- Read an article on the importance of optimism in job search
- Write answers to questions that help you to understand the article better

By Andrew Jensen

[www.associatedcontent.com](http://www.associatedcontent.com)

## **Seeking a New Job, Looking on the Bright Side Isn't Just a Nice Feeling**

Of all the emotions you'll go through during the course of a job search, one of the most difficult to preserve is optimism. And yet this is by far the most valuable personality trait you can harness when looking for a new job.

### **Optimism is Energy**

A job search is powered by hope, faith, and sheer energy. And all of these things come from your basic, built-in optimism. It's really that simple. Let yourself get pessimistic, and you'll almost certainly stop working as hard on finding a new job. You'll find more excuses. You'll ignore more opportunities. You quite possibly may even abandon the effort altogether.

### **You See Possibilities**

When you're optimistic, you see the chance for great things to happen. And if you see an opportunity with such clarity, you'll pursue it eagerly and effectively. You don't hesitate. You don't talk yourself out of it, or delay. By being optimistic, you allow your brain to be open to great new things. And that's always the first step to making those things reality.

## **Optimism is a Catalyst for Creativity**

Your brain is at its most creative when it's free, unburdened by negativity that can shoot down ideas before you can explore them. And creativity can be one of your most powerful weapons in a job search. Creativity is what enables you to see a great way to find the right contact in a company. Creativity can enable you to create a stunning proposal for a new position, or anything else you need. It's the force that makes miracles happen in your job search.

## **Confidence Grows from Optimism**

By being optimistic about the future, you automatically gain enormous amounts of confidence. And if you've read any of my other articles, you know how much that matters in a job search. Think about it. Projecting the certainty that you're right for the job is obvious. Walking into an interview with that sort of power makes all the difference. Now think about how hard it is to have that kind of self-assurance if you believe that bad things are going to happen. You could never achieve the confidence you really need.

## **Optimism is Contagious**

When you walk into an interview and you positively glow with optimism, that feeling is certain to rub off on anyone else in the room. Strong optimism can actually change the emotional state of the people you're talking to. And it makes anyone feel good. Imagine how impressive you'll be to a hiring manager if you can make him feel better than he did to begin with by the end of the meeting. Who wouldn't want to be around someone like that?

## **Employers Value Optimism Tremendously**

Perhaps the best reason of all to be an optimist is the simple fact that it's an extremely valuable trait to employers. Hiring managers like to see that you can find opportunities when they're not obvious. They want to know that you don't give up when things start to get difficult. They want to know that you can persevere. And all these things are rooted in optimism.





## Why Optimism Isn't Optional in a Job Search:

### Questions to Review and Reflect

Use the space below to reflect on the article. Use the heading from each section to help you find the answers to the questions.

#### **Optimism is Energy**

What can happen if you allow yourself to become pessimistic about your job search?

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#### **You See Possibilities**

What happens to your brain when you are being optimistic?

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#### **Optimism is a Catalyst for Creativity**

Give two examples of what creativity can enable you to do.

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#### **Confidence Grows from Optimism**

What helps you gain confidence?

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## Optimism is Contagious

What can strong optimism do to the people you are talking to?

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## Employers Value Optimism Tremendously

List three things that hiring managers or employers like to see in their employees.

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## Activity Twelve: Learn More About Your Optimism



### Essential Skills Tip: Continuous Learning

- Learn more about optimism for your job search through self-study

Now that you can see its value to your job search, you may want to work on increasing your optimism.

Ask yourself these two questions to find out whether or not you need to improve your optimism.

1. Do I become down and discouraged from setbacks more easily than I would like?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

If your answer is 'yes', increasing your optimism will help you remain more positive in the face of difficult situations.

2. What do I say to myself when I encounter an obstacle or a setback?

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## Notice your thoughts

The way we think can decrease or increase our sense of control. For example, re-read John Long's quotation on the hidden job market:

"The hidden job market is really just another name for a proactive job search."

If these are just two names for the same thing, consider how each affects you. Look at these two sentences, both equally true. Which would you rather focus on?

85% of available jobs are hidden from me.

85% of jobs are available to me through my effort to find them.

### Definition for **Proactive Job Search**

- Action and result oriented behaviour
- The opposite of waiting for things to happen and then trying to react to them

## Notice your language

Just as our thoughts can influence outcomes, so can our language. Start noticing how you speak to yourself and how you speak to others. Make a habit of noticing what is right and say it. For example, supposing you are interviewed, but you don't get the job. What do you say to yourself? Instead of saying,

"I must have really screwed up that interview."

Say,

"My resume and covering letter must have really impressed that employer because I got an interview."

Optimism is not the same as having an unrealistically positive attitude in the face of difficult situations. For example, if you had four interviews in a row, you could say something positive about your resume and covering letter. At the same time, you could take steps to discover what is going wrong in the interviews and to improve your interview skills



More on interviews and interview skills  
in **Workbook Six**.

The main point is that if you work from a feeling of optimism, you are far more likely to succeed. You will feel greater confidence in your ability to learn and improve your interview skills.



## Activity Thirteen: Positive Thinking for Job Search



### Essential Skills Tip: Writing, Thinking (Solving Problems)

- Write out positive statements
- Solve problems by changing negative statements into positive ones

When it comes to optimism, practice makes perfect. Try these two exercises in making positive statements about yourself.

1. For each of the following negative statements, write a positive statement instead. The first one is done for you.

Negative	Positive
I won't be able to find a job.	I am working hard on my job search. It is only a matter of time before I am successful.
It's too late for a career change.	
There are no jobs out there.	
I don't have enough skills.	
I'm too young/old.	

2. For each topic area, write a positive statement about yourself.

**Example:** My Essential Skills are improving with practice.

My skills \_\_\_\_\_

My interest \_\_\_\_\_

My experience \_\_\_\_\_

My education \_\_\_\_\_

My knowledge \_\_\_\_\_

## Activity Fourteen: Practise Positive Self-Talk



### Essential Skills Tip: Oral Communication

- Practise a positive self-talk statement out loud

### Practising optimistic self-talk

The great thing about optimism is that it can be learned and practised.

Write a short positive statement about yourself. There should not be any negative words in the statement. So, instead of saying, “I’m not lazy,” say, “I am a hard worker”. If you can’t think of something to say, try using one of the statements below.

- When I work hard I am successful.
- I am good at the kind of work I am seeking. Employers appreciate me.
- I am successful in what I choose to do.
- I am a great employee.
- I am a great worker.

#### My Positive Statement




Now for the hard part. Every time you wash your hands in a washroom that has a sink with a mirror, look yourself in the eye and say your statement. Use a clear and confident voice. The first few times this will feel very weird, but if you practise you will get used to it, and more important, you will begin to believe it.

Try and stick with each sentence until you really convince yourself that it is true. Then create a new statement and work with it. Keep coming up with statements until they begin to pop up in your thoughts on their own. Then you will know that your optimism has really expanded!

## Conclusion

The strategies in this workbook are aimed at improving your job search techniques. With an improved job search, you increase your chances of finding the job that you want.



## Remember to Check Your Skills

Take time to return to page 11 and fill in the Essential Skills Checklist.

This checklist can help you keep track of the Essential Skills you use well and those that you have improved. It can also help you to highlight those skills that need more work and practice.



# Essential Skills for Job Search Success

## Workbook titles in this series include:

1. Essential Skills to Identify the Job Searcher
2. Essential Skills to Identify the Job
3. Essential Skills to Research Your Occupation
- 4. Essential Skills to Search for Jobs**
5. Essential Skills to Market Yourself with a Resume and Cover Letter
6. Essential Skills to Market Yourself at the Interview
7. Essential Skills to Maintain Employability



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