

The Insider's Guide to Getting Job **READY!**

The 5 Dimensions of Job Readiness

JOB READINESS DIMENSION 1: Workforce Preparation

There are basic practices you need to maintain and abilities you need to cultivate in order to ensure your success on-the-job. Success on-the-job and workforce preparation include:

- ▶ Dressing for success in the workplace
- ▶ Developing a winning attitude
- ▶ Practicing positive self-talk and replacing negative statements
- ▶ Becoming aware of employer expectations and learning the corporate culture
- ▶ Practicing good literacy/numeracy skills
- ▶ Completing a job application successfully

Dressing for **SUCCESS** in the Workplace

It is a fact that in our society, we are constantly being judged by our appearances. The way you dress at work will affect how your co-workers see you, and even how they treat you. Here are some helpful tips for dressing for success at the office:

- **DO** find out what the company dress code is
- **DO** look at what your co-workers are wearing: decide what works and what gets disapproving glances
- **DO** keep makeup natural looking and understated
- **DO NOT** wear skin-tight clothing, super baggy clothing, or clothes that reveal too much skin
- **DO** wear jeans, but only if they are allowed, and if they are the right sort
- **DO NOT** wear anything that makes noise: no jingly bangles, earrings, belts or flip-flops
- **DO** dress up for meetings: dress one notch above the way you would otherwise
- **DO** always wear clean and polished shoes
- **DO** always be neat and clean: no soiled, stained or crumpled clothing
- **DO NOT** wear too much cologne, if cologne is permitted at your workplace
- **DO** keep fingernails clean and manicured
- **DO** keep your beard and/or moustache, if you have one or both, clean and nicely trimmed at all times
- **DO NOT** wear shorts. EVER!

Developing a Winning Attitude

Our minds are powerful. With them, we decide what we deserve to have according to how much we value ourselves. We then make that our reality. The bottom line is: **you are what you think you are**. In the workplace, that translates into **you will earn what you feel you are worth**. You can "change" your life by "charging" your mind with positive thoughts. Here are some basic exercises that will help you cultivate a winning mindset: *(Write on the back of this sheet if you need more space.)*

1. Passion: It is the driving force that sets those who have it apart from the rest. It gives them the fuel to achieve their true and highest potential. If maintained 24/7, **it will not let them do anything other than just that.**

ACTIVITY: Answer the question: "I am passionate about..."

2. Belief: Expand your belief of your own abilities and you will also expand your accomplishments.

ACTIVITY: Finish the following sentence: "I believe in myself and my own abilities, so I believe I can..."

3. Strategy: Strategy is otherwise known as your life's "game plan" or the "road map" you will follow to accomplish your goals and realize your ambitions. You need to build a strategy that gives your life direction and drives you towards success. The key is to find the shortest distance between "destinations" (goal points), then following through with taking them.

ACTIVITY: Finish the following sentence: "My life's current game plan is..."

4. Clarity of Values: Be clear on what is most valuable to you. Determine what your feelings are about core values.

ACTIVITY: Finish the following sentence: "This is how I feel about pride, love, freedom, excellence, ownership and tolerance:..."

5. Energy: You can have all the passion in the world and the best strategy in place, but without the physical energy to carry out your actions, nothing would ever get accomplished.

ACTIVITY: Complete the following sentence: "I nurture my body by..."

and I fuel my emotional and intellectual energy by living in a...
environment."

6. Bonding Power: The ability to get along with anyone and everyone and to build a positive rapport with them is the key to effective communication.

ACTIVITY: Complete the following sentence: "I proved I can build positive rapport with someone when..."

7. Mastery of Communication Skills: Cultivate positive thoughts and put them to work for your own success.

ACTIVITY: Write down three positive thoughts that will help you achieve your goals, like for example: "I WILL achieve the goals I set out for myself this year."

Goal 1: "I WILL..."

Goal 2: "I WILL..."

Goal 3: "I WILL..."

Practicing Positive Self-Talk

Your thoughts and actions create your reality. What you say and do becomes who you are and is translated into how you live, who you associate with, what kind of job or career you have. The words you speak out loud are born in your mind, as are the ones you hear repeated over and over again in your head. **Negative self talk is when you repeat negative things about yourself in your mind.** If you find your mind plays these negative "tapes" in your head, here are ways you can protect yourself from the destructive power these thoughts have on your life, and use your mind to boost your self-esteem, relieve stress and help you shape a more positive environment for yourself. Here are some activities that can help you stay positive:

- **ACTIVITY 1: Journal Writing:** Write down negative comments when you catch yourself thinking them. Then immediately, write the opposite. For example, if you are thinking "I am never going to get a job... Nobody wants to hire me..." then write down "I AM going to get a job... a GREAT job, because EVERYONE will want to hire me!"

Negative comment 1:

It's POSITIVE opposite comment:

Negative comment 2:

It's POSITIVE opposite comment:

Negative comment 3:

It's POSITIVE opposite comment:

- **ACTIVITY 2: Thought-Stopping:** As you notice yourself saying something negative in your mind, stop your thought mid-stream by saying to yourself, "Stop!". Saying this out loud will be even more powerful, and doing so will make you more aware of how many times you are stopping negative thoughts, and where. Keep a record: you may find certain situations or places trigger negative thoughts.
- **ACTIVITY 3: Rubber-Band Snap:** Place a rubber band around your wrist: as you notice negative self-talk, pull the band away from your skin and let it snap back. It will hurt a little, and serve as a slightly negative consequence that will both make you more aware of your thoughts, and help to stop them.

Becoming Aware of Employer Expectations

The following are some expectations an employer will have of you as their employee.

ACTIVITY: *Imagine you are an employer. Rate yourself regarding the following characteristics from 1 to 10 starting with 1 being the one most important characteristic:*

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| – Initiative and Work Ethic | – Acceptance of Criticism |
| – Observe and respect chain of command | – Loyalty |
| – Honesty | – Dress Appropriately |
| – Dependability | – Punctuality/attendance |
| – Enthusiasm | – Task completion |

Some On-The-Job Success Tips

- If someone offers to help you, accept pleasantly with a smile, **but do not do that often.**
- If someone asks for your help, never say *"That's not my job."* **Share unpleasant tasks.**
- If you have finished your work, it is a good idea to **offer to help someone with theirs.**
- If in doubt about anything, **do not hesitate to ask questions: if you need help, ask for it.**

(If you chose "honesty" or "dependability" in the exercise above, you would be in agreement with what most employers value.)

Learning the Corporate Culture

The Corporate Culture of an organization is an **unwritten set of rules that dictate how an organization runs.** In other words, it means "how things are done in this office." You will be evaluated on how well you **"fit"** into the company's culture, and on your **performance on the job.** *Write the answers to the following questions about your new workplace on a separate sheet of paper:*

- *Are there certain cliques or groups in your workplace?*
- *Is the atmosphere casual and friendly, or is it formal, without much socializing?*
- *How do co-workers complete their assignments: is there one particular format everyone seems to follow?*
- *Is there a chain of authority, meaning, as a new employee, are there certain things you "should not do" because it would be considered that you overstepped your boundaries?*
- *What are your co-workers' attitudes towards their superiors?*
- *Do supervisors treat all employees the same, or do some seem to be favoured over others?*
- *What are the office politics: are there any unspoken policies or procedures that everyone seems to follow?*
- *Do individuals in the office help one another, or are all assignments completed independently?*
- *Is the atmosphere competitive, or does management encourage team-work?*
- *Is there someone in the office who could act as your mentor or be someone you can go to ask questions rather than having to ask your supervisor all the time?*

JOB READINESS DIMENSION 2: Communication

Listening To, and Communicating with Others

Interpersonal communication skills are **the tools we use to let others know what we are thinking, feeling, needing and wanting, and how we let others know that we understand what they are thinking, feeling, needing and wanting.**

Everyone needs to communicate effectively with co-workers, bosses and clients or customers. We each have our own style of communicating and have had to develop strategies for communicating with others in different situations. Because we are all unique in our approach to communicating, **there is always a possibility that when we get together with another person, there may be times when we just can't seem to communicate all that well.**

The solution is to learn about different kinds of interpersonal communication skills and how to implement them.

Everyone can benefit from learning new interpersonal communication skills, no matter how skilled they may already be. As with any new skills development, having identified the need, and having the motivation to make a change, **introduce yourself to new strategies and tools, and seek out opportunities to practice and receive feedback.**

A good tool to practice is called "**active listening**". If you practice active listening, your chances of resolving a conflict, or of understanding someone's needs thoroughly, will be very high. The following activity is an exercise in active listening:

ACTIVITY 1: *This exercise is based on improvisational techniques and is called "Yes, and..." It's fun, and it teaches you to acknowledge what the other person is saying in a dialogue. It goes like this: choose a partner. Start with saying to them, "I really like the way you expressed yourself in yesterday's meeting..." They should respond with, "Yes, and I understand that you like the way I expressed myself in yesterday's meeting - and I like the solution you came up with for the problem we were discussing." Then you respond with, "Yes, and I understand you liked the solution I came up with for that problem we were discussing - and I thought you handled the supervisor's comments really professionally..." and so forth. Always start your sentence with "Yes, and", and acknowledge what the other person said before making a new POSITIVE comment.*

Communication Tips

Here are some tips on how you can communicate more effectively with customers, co-workers, subordinates, or superiors:

1: Interrupting: Be careful about interrupting others, particularly customers. If you feel you *have* to interrupt, cut to the chase and tell the other person what you think his or her main idea was. That way, the other person at least can confirm or correct you.

2: Listen actively: It is just as important that people be *aware* that you are listening to them as it is that you actually listen. For that reason, react to what the other person is saying, either via a nod, or an "I see," or a paraphrase of the other person's statements. You will strengthen your own understanding and make a better impression.

3: Avoid negative questions: Asking a negative question like, "You *DON'T* have WORD installed?" creates confusion. It is clearer if you phrase the question positively: "Do you have WORD installed?" Or ask an open-ended question like, "What applications do you have installed?"

4: Use positive statements instead of negative ones: Your customers are more interested in what you *can* do than what you *can't* do. So instead of saying, "I can't help you unless you log off," consider saying, "Please log off so I can help you." Your statements will be easier to understand this way as well.

5: Anticipate customer objections and questions. Try to anticipate the objections your customers will have to your message and address them with a sentence such as, "This Windows update is necessary even if your virus definitions are current."

In general, keep your customers informed of developments involving them. For example, let them know you have contacted the vendor but still have not heard anything back. No news is still news. If a customer leaves you a request via voicemail or e-mail, let them know you have received it even if you are still in the process of handling the situation.

Body Language

Wikipedia says, "Body Language is a term for communication using body movements or gestures instead of, or in addition to, sounds, verbal language or other communication. This includes the most subtle movements that many people are not aware of, including winking and slight movement of the eyebrows. It also incorporates the use of facial expressions."

Becoming aware of and improving all aspects of your body language will cause a positive shift in the way you present yourself, in your general attractiveness, and even your attitude. **Only a small percentage of communication involves words: in fact, it is only a mere 7%. 38% is vocal, which includes the pitch, speed, volume and tone of voice, and the remaining 55% of communication is visual, which includes body language and eye contact.**

Here is the key: if you behave as though you are confident and credible, you likely will be. If you do not believe you are credible and present yourself in a confident manner, no one will think you are.

If you are going to improve your body language, you must first become aware of it. Notice how you sit, how you stand, how you use your hands and legs, and what you do while talking to someone or when someone is talking to you. Ask for feedback from friends and co-workers whose opinion you respect and value. Do not take their comments personally! Most of us are completely unconscious of our body language and remain that way until we have made a conscious effort to become aware of it.

ACTIVITY 1: Step 1: All actors, presenters, singers and professional presenters practice in a mirror. You too can do this at home. It will feel very silly at first, but in order to really change your body language you must teach your body and brain new behaviours. This is how to begin: During the course of the day, observe others whom you feel embody the qualities you would like to embody, namely individuals you respect and would like to emulate. Observe what they do with their body language and also what they don't do (like fidget or stare off into oblivion).

Step 2: Write down your observations. Find your answer to "Tell me about yourself..." from The Career Foundation's Job Interview guide book that you prepared for your upcoming interview.

Step 3: Now, be a copy-cat. Do what they do in the mirror while practicing your answer to "Tell me about yourself..." for as long as it takes for you to feel comfortable emulating their body language, and it becomes your own. Children learn by emulating adults until they develop their own personalities and body language. It may seem artificial to you in the beginning, but this feeling will quickly go away as you integrate new behaviour and mannerisms into your everyday body language.

NOTE: Part of learning something new is un-learning what no longer serves you. Your brain and body need at least 24 hours to integrate new physical movements into your vocabulary, and to override the previous ones. **Be patient.** Just keep repeating the new behaviour consciously and soon it will feel completely natural to you.

Resolving On-the-Job Conflict

The natural human response to conflict is "fight or flight", neither of which helps when it comes to resolving conflict. If you find yourself in conflict with a co-worker, try resolving it on your own. Here are some tips to help you do that:

- ▶ **If you are upset, cool down:** take a time out, and agree to meet again within 24 hours.
- ▶ **Observe the situation as objectively as you can,** first from both perspectives, namely yours and the other person's.
- ▶ **When you meet, practice the "active listening" technique you learned on page 5**
- ▶ **Describe the situation from your perspective in objective, neutral terms,** avoiding accusations or negative remarks: express your feelings using "I" statements, and always remember to acknowledge the other person's feelings.
- ▶ **Listen actively (and respectfully) to what they have to say to you:** you may learn something from their perspective.
- ▶ **Try to describe what caused the conflict:** was there a specific event that triggered it? If so, describe what happened to turn it into a conflict.

- ▶ **Do not lay blame on anyone.** That will never resolve conflict, but rather more than likely, escalate it.
- ▶ **Brainstorm solutions together, or suggest a change or a compromise:** remember, conflict resolution is not about "winning", it is about working things out to mutual satisfaction.
- ▶ **Try a mutually agreed upon solution and give it your best effort.** If it does not work, try again. If it still does not work, try another solution, and stick with it until you experience a breakthrough.
- ▶ **After the issue is resolved, put it aside:** there is never any need to bring up the past: it is not constructive.
- ▶ **If you cannot resolve the situation between you, seek the assistance of a supervisor:** it is not good to let any negative feelings fester as they will likely be transferred to other situations or co-workers
- ▶ **Conflict does not have to end your relationship:** people can agree to disagree, and get along well even if they do

Being an Effective Team Player

Check off the following points you feel apply to you. **A good team player:**

- Is reliable and consistent.** Being able to consistently be counted on by other members of a team is a key factor.
- Communicates constructively.** A good team player expresses thoughts and ideas clearly, directly, honestly, and respectfully for the benefit of the team. When they make a point, they do so in a positive, confident, and respectful manner.
- Listens actively.** Good listeners absorb, understand, and consider ideas from others without debating and arguing.
- Receives criticism well.** Good team players do not react defensively and know how to listen first and speak second.
- Is an active participant.** An effective team player comes prepared for meetings and both listens and speaks up in discussions. They ask, "*What can I contribute to help the team achieve success?*"
- Shares openly and willingly.** Sharing information, knowledge, and experience and keeping other team members in the loop is one of the keys to being an effective team player.
- Cooperates effectively.** A good team player finds ways to work together to solve the team's problems and achieve goals.
- Is flexible.** Effective team players know how to roll with the punches and can adapt to change.
- Shows commitment to the team.** Good team players show up every day with care and commitment. They consistently put in a good effort, and expect other team members to do the same.
- Is a problem-solver.** Effective team players deal with problems in a solutions-oriented fashion. They do not put off dealing with issues, and they discuss problems openly, and work with others to find solutions and form action plans.
- Treats others in a respectful and supportive manner.** Effective team players always treat team members with courtesy and consideration. They also have a sense of humour and know how to have fun, but never at someone else's expense.

**A committed team player looks beyond their own work and cares about the team's overall effort.
Their commitment is to seeing the team succeed while knowing they are part of its success.**

Valuing and Respecting Diversity

Multiculturalism is based on the belief that **cultural identities should be maintained and valued**. It matters to every single person because when any one group is excluded or oppressed, all of us are denied. **That is why we all need to be sensitive to ALL members of our community**. Every ethnicity has its unique customs, traditions, beliefs and practices, and we need to make ourselves aware of and be sensitive to them. **It is therefore important to become familiarized with others' cultural traditions**, as it is equally important for **them to become familiarized with ours**. Of course, you do not have to accept their beliefs, ideals, etc., and neither do they have to accept ours. What does need to happen is **a mutual understanding and appreciation for each other's culture and traditions**. If you are not aware of a co-worker's cultural traditions, take the time to ask them to explain about them to you. Extending your curiosity that way makes others feel valued and acknowledged, and taking the time to share your traditions with them can only lead to a win/win situation.

Coping With Change

Change is a constant in the workplace, and generally in life. Here are a few tips to help you if you find change difficult:

1. **Be willing and open to change!** The whole world is changing, like it or not.
2. **Change little things** like wearing something you normally wouldn't, reading a book in a place you never have before in your house, or take the TTC to work if you drive. Get used to change.
3. **Learn to tolerate the discomfort** that can sometimes come along with change.
4. **Keep some things the same** while you're coping with big changes.
5. **Be around positive people** who are supportive of the changes you are collectively going through, like an office renovation. Stay away from the whiners and complainers.
6. **Find out the reason behind the change**. You may not want change to occur because you cannot see a reason for it.
7. **If the change is beyond your control, just accept it, make the best of it, then move on.**
8. **Understand the transition process**. Accept and be tolerant of the resulting underlying emotions in yourself and in others, and move through them.
9. **Do not take change personally**. If the need to change is beyond your control, it is called "policy".
10. **Take charge of your own change management**. There are those who impose change on others as opposed to easing them into it. Just because other people do not manage change well, does not mean you cannot manage it well.
11. **Recognize the emotions you have in response to change**. During a time of change, it is perfectly acceptable to feel fear, anxiety, frustration, despair, anger or excitement. Realize it is the change that is causing these emotions.
12. **Reflect on other changes you have gone through**. Ask yourself, "*How did I find a way through it before?*" The answer will put the change that's happening in perspective.
13. **If the change is beyond your control, start to take back control** by asking yourself what you want out of this change, what you can get out of this change, and what positive effect it will have on you and others.
14. **Build your skills and never stop learning**. By doing this, you will create a greater array of options for yourself when change is imposed because your skill base will be wider and your network broader.
15. **Remember the old saying, "*This too shall pass.*"**

Responding to Feedback

Responding well to feedback can be challenging, **especially if the feedback you are getting is not particularly positive**. As human beings, we instinctively protect ourselves against feedback we perceive as being threatening to our self image, and are likely to respond to it more like a 2 year old than a 40 year old. Here are some tips on handling feedback effectively:

1. **Never get defensive: especially if you asked for the feedback**. Think of it as a gift. The person you asked took a personal risk in giving it to you, so no matter what, accept it with grace.
2. **Asking others for feedback increases their expectation that you will make positive changes based on it**. Negative

perceptions are likely to occur if you chose not to. Neither accept nor reject feedback completely. Instead, try and find a fine balance, then make the changes you feel are necessary.

3. Always take some time after getting feedback to decide on what changes you will implement. Feedback always causes an emotional reaction of varying degrees, depending on the individual. It is always best to decide on making changes associated with feedback with a cool, clear and balanced approach - after the initial emotional charge it normally causes has worn off.

4. Understand the comments you receive fully, and decide whether or not you believe in them. Remember, perception is reality: others will see things differently than you do. Try to understand **why** the person has given you the feedback they did.

5. Stay open minded. Use the feedback to become more self aware and improve your relationship with those you work with.

6. Feedback does not define you: it is not all you are. What you choose to do with the feedback, however, does!

JOB READINESS DIMENSION 3: Life Management

Time Management

No one can "manage" time: the same 24 hour day exists for everyone. We can only manage what we do with the time we have. Here are some helpful tips on managing your time:

- What is your desired outcome? Increasing productivity? Decreasing stress? Finding more time for personal activities?

ACTIVITY: *Write down why you feel you need to manage your time more effectively and what your desired outcome is.*

- During the course of a week, observe yourself and **identify your "time bandits"**. Do you spend too much time surfing the internet, emailing or making personal calls? Become aware of your habits so you can better "budget" your time.

ACTIVITY: *Keep a time log for 3 days. Write down every activity you do and how long you do it. Afterward, analyze where you spend your time wisely and unwisely. Becoming aware of bad habits is the first step to changing them.*

- **Set attainable goals**, like for example, deciding not to take personal phone calls while working.

ACTIVITY: *Set yourself one easily attainable goal. Write it down, and keep it visible at all times. When you have achieved this goal, try attempting another by doing the same.*

- **Set aside a specific amount of time at the beginning and end of the day to respond to personal emails.**

ACTIVITY: *Write down exactly how much time you will devote to emailing per day. Keep the note visible at all times to prevent you from succumbing to the temptation.*

- **Create an overall time management plan and track your progress over time to see.** The goal is to change your behaviours to achieve the goal you have set for yourself.

ACTIVITY: *Create a calendar page for the period of 1 month. Use it to record your progress on. Make changes where needed.*

- **Prioritize.** Each morning, decide what tasks you want to accomplish that day. Be realistic and stay stress free.

ACTIVITY: *Commit to writing down the tasks of the day in whatever time management tool you choose. (See next paragraph.)*

- **Use a time management tool best suited to you.** Whether it is a day-timer or a Blackberry is not important. The important thing is that you do and use it faithfully.

- **Establish a routine.** Doing so will save time in the long run. Unforeseen events and crises will always pop up, but striving to maintain a balance in your workflow will make it easier to deal with them as they arise.

Developing Support Systems

It is important to maintain a healthy life/work balance, and to minimize, if not eliminate stress from your environment.

Research confirms that having a strong support network made up of friends, family and co-workers you can count on is virtually a

necessity in order to maintain good health and mental well-being. Benefits of an effective social support network include an increased sense of self-worth and belonging, and a feeling of overall security.

ACTIVITY 1: *Make a list of family and friends you feel you can count on in any situation. Make another list of family and friends you normally socialize with and with whom you can discuss important personal matters. Keep this list close by, and make sure you reach out and connect with those individuals as much as you feel they would appreciate. You never know when you will need their advice or assistance.*

ACTIVITY 2: *If you want to make new friends, here are some ideas on how you can do just that: volunteer, join a gym or a local community centre, start a walking group at work or at your place of worship, go back to school or take an evening course or class, and use social interactive websites like Facebook to stay in touch with friends and family.*

JOB READINESS DIMENSION 4: Decision Making

Locus of Control



Locus of control describes **the degree to which a person perceives that outcomes result from their own behaviours and actions, or from forces that are external to themselves.** This means a person either has an "internal" or an "external" locus of control: if you believe outcomes result from your own behaviours or actions, you have an "internal" locus of control, and if you believe that outcomes result from forces that are external to you, you have an "external" locus of control.

When you believe you have the power to control your own destiny and determine your own direction, you have a strong internal locus of control. **Generally, this is an important attitude to have if you want to be successful.**

Locus of Control Exercise

ACTIVITY: *To find out what your locus of control is, do the following Locus of Control Exercise. Your score will tell you to what degree you have an "internal" or "external" locus of control.*

For each pair of statements, choose the one that you believe to be the most accurate, not the one you wish was most true. To determine your score, add up the numbers found next to the boxes you have ticked off.

- 2 1a Bad luck is what leads to many of the disappointments in life.
- 1 1b Disappointments are usually the result of mistakes you make.

- 1 2a You "reap what you sow". In the end, your rewards will be directly related to what you accomplish.
- 2 2b Despite your effort and hard work, what you accomplish will probably go unnoticed.

- 2 3a There are some people in this world that will not like you, no matter what you do.
- 1 3b If you have good interpersonal skills and know how to get along with others, then getting people to like you is not difficult at all.

- 2 4a If something is meant to happen, it will; there is little you can do to change it.
- 1 4b You decide what will happen to you. You don't believe in fate.

- 1 5a If you are prepared for an interview, you increase your likelihood of doing well.
- 2 5b There is no point preparing for an interview because the questions they ask are completely random and determined by whim.

- 1 6a To be successful in your career takes a lot of hard work: effort is what makes the difference.
- 2 6b It's who you know, not what you know, that determines how good a job you get.

- 1 7a If you set a reasonable goal, you can achieve it with hard work and commitment.
- 2 7b You don't plan ahead or set goals because too much can happen that you can't control.
- 1 8a Luck doesn't play a large role in getting what you want out of life.
- 2 8b Life is like a game of chance. What you get or what happens to you is mostly a matter of fate.
- 2 9a "The assessments I get at work are at the whim of my supervisor; I don't understand them half the time."
- 1 9b "How much pride I take in my job largely determines the results of my performance assessment."
- 2 10a You often feel that you have little control over your life, and what happens to you.
- 1 10b You don't believe that luck or chance play a large role in determining what happens in your life.

Total = ____ **Score Interpretation:**

10-12 Internal Locus of Control (strong), 13-18 Internal Locus of Control (moderate), 17-22 External Locus of Control

Note: This assessment has not been validated and is intended for illustrative purposes only. It is patterned after the Locus of Control Scale developed and presented in Rotter, JB (1966), "Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement", Psychological Monographs, 80 (Whole No. 609).

Tips for Developing an Internal Locus of Control

Accept the fact that you always have a choice. Not making a choice is a choice in and of itself. It is ultimately your choice to allow other people or events hold sway over you.

Set goals for yourself and observe how, by working towards achieving them, you control what happens in your life. Do this, and you will find that your self-confidence grow quickly.

Practice your decision making and problem solving skills so you feel more confident and in control of what happens. With these tools, you will find that you can better understand and navigate through situations that would otherwise challenge you.

Pay attention to your self-talk. When you hear yourself saying things like, "I have no choice" or "There's nothing I can do", step back and remind yourself that you do, in fact, have some degree of control. It is your choice whether you exercise it or not.

Assertiveness

"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent." - Eleanor Roosevelt

Assertiveness is about "who you are" first and foremost, not so much about "what you do". This means that in order to "act" assertive, you need to have basic core values and beliefs to act upon. Remember, you are 100% entitled to your own values, beliefs, opinions, and feelings, as long as they cause no harm to others. You also have the right to not have to justify or explain your actions to others, to make mistakes, and to stand up for yourself and for what you want and believe in.

Assertiveness is the ability to formulate and communicate one's own thoughts, opinions and wishes in a clear, direct and non-aggressive way. There is always a way to politely communicate to others how you expect to be treated in the workplace should the need arise. If you feel this is an area where you could use some assistance, there are self-help books available in your local bookstore, and a lot of helpful information available on the internet.

Managing Anger

Anger is a necessary and natural emotion: it is how we recognize that something or a situation is not right in our lives and needs our attention. It is also a defensive response to a perceived attack or threat to our well-being. When we become angry, we experience both psychological and physiological changes: our adrenaline flows, our heart rate increases, and our blood pressure escalates. Hence the phrase, "I'm so mad my blood is boiling!" Many of us do not learn to manage our anger effectively:

statistics show that one in five North Americans has an anger management problem.

Anger needs to be expressed in a healthy way so you can resolve the problems that ignite it. Step one in anger management is learning to define the problem, and then facing it head on. If you feel any of the above applies to you, it would be wise to consult your family physician. They will direct you towards the help you need in order to deal with any of these issues.

Anger Management Tips

- ▶ **Find a safe spot.** Yelling at friends or family members, slamming doors or breaking things doesn't solve any problem, and usually just escalates the situation. However, sometimes you just need to vent. Finding a safe spot to act out your anger can relieve the majority of your stress, calming you enough to solve the real problem at hand.
- ▶ **Breathe deeply:** anger often comes up when we feel weaker than we really are.
- ▶ **Count to ten:** counting to ten is an anger management tip that has worked for centuries! The Roman poet Horace (65 - 8 BCE) said, "*When angry, count to ten before you speak; if very angry, one hundred.*"
- ▶ **Take a break:** it is easier to think when you are calm than when you are agitated.
- ▶ **Learn to act - and not react.**

JOB READINESS DIMENSION 5: Customer Service

Providing Prompt and Courteous Service

What any business is about really is "**people**". Customers are not "just" customers - they are individuals. If you think this way, you will come to realize that your business is your customers - and not your product or services. Focusing on the merchandise in your store or the services your company offers leaves out the most important component, which is your customer/individual.

ACTIVITY: Put a checkmark in the box for each question you would answer yes to:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do you greet your customers enthusiastically? | the door or at least within 30-40 seconds upon entering? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do you try to accommodate their requests? | <input type="checkbox"/> Is it impossible they could come in, look around, and go out without ever having their presence acknowledged? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do you really listen to their concerns? | <input type="checkbox"/> Is mostly every one of your customer's experience a positive, pleasant one when dealing with you? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> If a regular customer came in, would you recognize them? | <input type="checkbox"/> Are you properly trained in how to handle a customer complaint or an irate person? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Would you be able to call them by name? | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do your customers know who you are? | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> If they see you, would they recognize you? | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Could they call you by name? | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are your customers greeted when they walk in | |

If you deal directly with the public in your job, and if you answered "yes" to all the questions above, then congratulations! You are doing a fine job providing prompt and courteous service. If you answered "no" to any of the above questions, you know the area(s) that you need improvement in. Here are a few tips on providing quality customer care:

- **Give customers the benefit of the doubt:** proving to them they are wrong and you are right is never worth losing a customer over. Remember, you will never win an argument with a customer, and you should never, ever put a customer in that position.
- If a customer makes a request for something special, **do everything you can to provide it.** The fact that a customer cared enough to ask you for something is all you need to know in trying to accommodate them- if it is not against company policy, or is illegal.
- The big money is not as much in winning customers as it is in **keeping customers.**

Managing Customer Requests and Concerns

No matter how hard you try or what you do, things are bound to go wrong from time to time. Food gets burned, orders get forgotten in the middle of a dinner rush, products do not get delivered to the right address, the wrong items get shipped or any one of a myriad of slip-ups can occur. No matter the reason for your customer's complaint, the important thing is to try and please them as best you can, and send them home knowing that, yes there was a problem, **but it is not typical of your establishment**. Let them know that you value their comments and their business.

Always apologize. Think of a customer who was unhappy waiting a long line-up. Offer them an apology. Say, *"I understand that you are not happy about the wait, but we are working as fast as we can to get you a table. We really appreciate your patience and willingness to wait. Perhaps you would like to have a drink at the bar until your table is ready."* By doing so you demonstrate that you completely understand their frustration and are working hard on a solution.

ACTIVITY: Do the following Role Reversal Exercise:

1. Recall a time when you received bad customer service. How did you feel?

2. Was the situation resolved to your satisfaction?

3. How did the employee resolve the situation?

4. If you were the employee, how would you fix the situation? Would you do something different from the employee above?

5. How would you prevent it from happening again?

Dealing With Customer Complaints

Every business has to deal with situations where things go wrong from the customer's point of view. How you respond to these situations is one of the keys to your company's success and your success at your job. Believe it or not, **a customer with a complaint represents a genuine opportunity for your business!** How so? If you handle the customer's complaint successfully, they are likely to prove more loyal than if nothing had gone wrong in the first place.

Research has proven that few people actually take the time to complain. Your complaining customer may be alerting you to a problem experienced by many others who quietly took their business elsewhere. So treat each complaint as feedback on your business or customer service. Always handle complaints courteously, sympathetically and most important, quickly. Make sure your business has an established procedure for dealing with customer complaints, and you have been properly trained to handle them according to your company policy. Here are some basic rules to adhere to:

- Listen sympathetically and find out all the details of the complaint.
- Record the details and gather all relevant material such as a sales receipt or damaged goods.
- Offer compensation of some kind, whether it be by repair, replacement or refund.
- Take the appropriate follow-up action: a letter of apology or a phone call to make sure the problem has been solved.

Mistakes That Could Cause You to Lose Your Position

You have worked so hard to obtain the position you have. It would be a shame to lose it by making some unforgiveable mistakes. Aside from serious transgressions like theft, or coming to work inebriated day after day, there are a few seemingly lesser mistakes that could cost you your job. Here are some of them:

- **Taking personal calls at work:** It is quite alright to take a couple of personal calls during the workday, as long as that is the company etiquette. But if your personal life should conflict with your work, you may be asked to leave.
- **Internet Browsing.** We are all guilty of checking our personal email from time to time, or of taking a quick break to read a funny article. However, spending excessive time surfing the internet on websites that are irrelevant to your job will more than likely get you into trouble.
- **Gossiping.** Gossip hurts company morale, and you do not want to get caught up in spreading rumours.
- **Searching for Another Job.** Do not be tempted to search for another job while you are on your current one thinking you will not get caught doing so. If you should be terminated, imagine how much more difficult it will be to have to address that fact during upcoming interviews.
- **Dating a Coworker.** Companies have varying policies regarding coworkers dating. Make sure you know what your company rules are. You do not want to get involved in a relationship that could potentially cost not just one job, but two.
- **Being late for work.** Once or twice is acceptable, with a good excuse. Any more than that and you may be in trouble.
- **Saying bad about the company, boss or staff.** Get caught doing this anywhere, and it could cost you your job.
- **Not taking "ownership of your responsibilities".** This is a serious transgression. Your responsibilities are, after all, your job. Stop looking after them, and your job will surely no longer be looking after you.

In short, a general rule to abide by is, if you have to think twice about something before doing it, proceed with caution!

GOOD LUCK ON-THE-JOB!

From all of us at The Career Foundation, thank you for the opportunity to assist you in developing your human potential!