

I'm here



to stay!

Getting the training ... Getting the job



COMITÉ
AVISEUR
FEMMES

EN DÉVELOPPEMENT
DE LA MAIN-D'ŒUVRE



This guide was developed by the
Comité aviseur Femmes en développement
de la main-d'œuvre.

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The bibliography is available from the Comité aviseur Femmes at (514) 954-0220.

Hello!

It was with great pride and enthusiasm that the Comité aviseur Femmes joined forces with Emploi-Québec and the Ministère de l'Éducation to bring you the new edition of *I'm here to stay! Getting the training . . . Getting the job.*

This publication, which has been completely updated, was developed for anyone interested in the many occupations where women are still under-represented. The purpose of this guide is to provide information about the realities of nontraditional occupations and to shed light on the experiences of women who have ventured down this path. In the guide, you will find personal stories of students and workers who, through their differences, enrich their work and training environments daily.

In addition, this guide will serve those working in educational institutions and organizations involved in developing the work force. It is also intended for companies who see the diversification of career choices as the way of the future, not only for women, but also for the sectors in which women decide to invest their potential.

I encourage you to read this guide. In it you will find useful information on nontraditional careers, training programs with a promising future, the pleasant truth behind certain myths, and profiles of women who, through daring and persistence, were able to find their place in the work force.

We would like to extend our many thanks to Isabelle Vaillancourt, the project manager, whose professionalism and perseverance enabled her to develop a guide that is at the same time practical, inviting, relevant and even a little humorous.

We would also like to mention the involvement of the members of the steering committee: Monique Bernier, Emploi-Québec; Anne Thibault, Ministère de l'Éducation (MEQ); Sylvie Lépine, Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ); Isabelle Dugré, Femmes regroupés en options non traditionnelles (FRONT); and Martine Cuerrier, coordinator of the Comité aviseur Femmes.

Good luck to all of you who are pursuing careers in one of these promising fields.

Thérèse Belley

Member of the steering committee

President

Comité aviseur Femmes en développement de la main-d'œuvre

Hello,

On behalf of the Ministère de l'Éducation (MEQ), I would like to say that it has been a pleasure to contribute to this guide, which is essential to the success of women enrolled in nontraditional training programs.

The diversification of career choices for women and women's academic and occupational success are important issues. A great deal of work has gone into raising awareness among parents, school staff, guidance counsellors, academic and vocational information counsellors, the media and women themselves.

In addition to the production of books, articles and videos, these efforts have included broadcasting and printing interviews with the winners of the *Hats Off to You!* competition and holding promotional activities at exhibitions and symposiums. In short, no effort has been spared to promote nontraditional occupations among women and to dispel the myths surrounding them.

Since the first *Hats Off to You!* competition seven years ago, the MEQ has worked with labour unions and various ministries and government organizations to try to change people's views and help women gain access to all types of employment, without gender discrimination.

These efforts have definitely been worthwhile. In the past four years, the number of young women who have chosen traditionally male-dominated training programs has increased by 22%. This is a very encouraging number!

Even though we have made real progress, we must continue what we started through actions such as supporting women currently enrolled in training programs.

We hope that the publication of this guide will help you succeed in your program.

Anne Thibault

Coordinator of the *Hats Off to You!* competition and the
Excellence in Science contest

Ministère de l'Éducation

Hello!

Emploi-Québec is happy to be involved once again in the publication of the guide *I'm here to stay!*

Emploi-Québec recognizes the importance of women in the work force and upholds its desire to actively support them throughout the province with an approach that is diversified and adapted to their needs.

In order to make equal opportunity for women and men in the work force a common reality, Emploi-Québec has been supporting and strengthening the resolve and abilities of women enrolled in secondary vocational training and in the Workplace Apprenticeship Program, with a view to preparing them for careers in traditionally male-dominated fields.

For Emploi-Québec, the Workplace Apprenticeship Program is a measure suited to women who are interested in pursuing careers in nontraditional fields. This formula enables them to learn a trade while working.

The apprenticeship program also allows for the official recognition of their competencies and taps into the experience of company employees. Everyone is a winner because companies need qualified workers to stay competitive and the workers need to develop their competencies in order to maintain their employability and mobility.

The guide *I'm here to stay!* is a valuable tool for women. Keep it on hand, it may be the key to your fulfillment and success.

Michèle Béland

Counsellor at the Direction du développement
des compétences en milieu de travail

Emploi-Québec

Hello

Nontraditional Careers

Owner's Manual

So your mind is made up! You have chosen a field of work that has been traditionally reserved for men but has interested you for a long time. Read on, this guide is for you.

Still not sure? Need more information before making a decision? You'll find what you're looking for in this guide.



Passion

Follow Your Passion

Landscape, civil engineering technician, butcher, ambulance attendant, correctional service officer, tile setter, land surveyor—in Québec, the list of occupations and programs in which women represent less than 33% of the work force is long. Surprisingly, over 300 of the 522 occupations listed by the National Occupational Classification are still considered nontraditional for women.

Fortunately, more and more young women are exploring these new avenues. Why shouldn't they? Nontraditional occupations offer fascinating opportunities and exciting challenges. Women who choose these occupations not only realize their potential but take great pride in their work. Below are a few of their comments.

“When the lights don't work in a building, I have to find the source of the problem. It's a challenge that requires logical thinking. I also feel useful because everyone needs electricity.”

Sylvie, electrician apprentice

“My work is never dull. I deal with all kinds of things: electronics, pneumatics, welding, tool-making, mechanics and new technology. Plus, I feel comfortable working in a factory, and I love working with the guys. I'm part of a dynamic team.”

France, electrical mechanic in automated systems

“When you go out on the floor and you see something you designed at work, you feel appreciated and valued.”

Lyne, industrial drafting technician

Paths With a Future

Many nontraditional fields offer excellent job placement and great opportunities for full-time employment. In addition, many of these occupations have been classified as the most promising jobs of the future by Emploi-Québec, and many of their related training programs are part of the *Top 50*, offering some of the best employment prospects.¹ See for yourself. Here are some examples of the attractive wages these occupations offer.

Technical Training	
	Weekly Salary
Chemical Process Technology	\$680
Pulp and Paper Technology	\$714
Industrial Maintenance Mechanics	\$687
Transportation Logistics	\$539
Computerized Systems Technology	\$539
Industrial Design Techniques	\$525

Vocational Training	
	Weekly Salary
Modelage*	\$493
Machining Techniques	\$498
Aircraft Electrical Assembly	\$619
Mise en œuvre de matériaux composites*	\$455
Installation and Repair of Telecommunications Equipment	\$491
Montage et installation de produits verriers*	\$621

Average weekly salaries of male and female workers who graduated in 2001 from some of the *Top 50* programs.²

More and more women are enrolling in traditionally male-dominated training programs. However, despite the improvement, women still face a few barriers. What about you? Will you be a trailblazer?

* This program is available in French only.

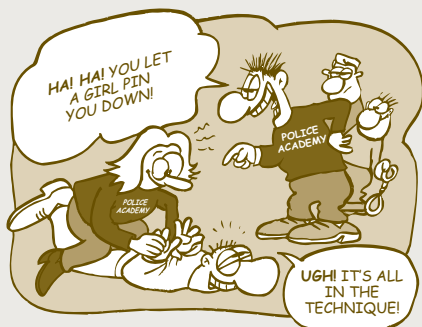
1. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, *The Vocational and Technical Education Top 50* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2002).

2. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, *The Reliance Survey at the Secondary Level - Vocational Education and The Reliance Survey of College Graduates* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2002).

Training

A Promising Tool

Whether you are about to start a training program or are already working, there is a program that meets your needs.



At School

Both secondary-level vocational training and college-level technical training provide the opportunity to acquire competencies in various nontraditional fields. One of the greatest advantages of these training programs is that they provide access to the labour market directly upon graduation. In addition, a Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS) gives access to certain college programs for those who wish to pursue their training and develop their expertise.

Secondary-level vocational training	Target group	Participant's status	Supervision	Length of program	Organization
Attestation of Vocational Education (AVE)	Young people and adults aged 15 years or older who have successfully finished Secondary II, as required by the chosen program	Student, at school and in the workplace	Teaching personnel and sponsoring worker	From 725 to 900 hours	MEQ
Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS)	Young people and adults who have successfully finished Secondary III, IV or V, as required by the chosen program	Student, at school	Teaching personnel	From 600 to 1800 hours	MEQ
Attestation of Vocational Specialization (AVS)	Young people and adults who have a DVS or who work in an occupation that is related to the chosen training program	Student, at school	Teaching personnel	From 330 to 900 hours	MEQ

College-level technical training	Target group	Participant's status	Supervision	Length of program	Organization
Diploma of College Studies (DCS)	Young people or adults who have a Secondary School Diploma (SSD) or a DVS	Student, at school	Teaching personnel	3 years	MEQ
Attestation of College Studies (ACS)	Adults who have interrupted their studies for at least two consecutive semesters or one whole school year or who have completed at least one year of postsecondary studies spread out over a period of at least one year	Student, at school	Teaching personnel	From 330 to 1350 hours	MEQ



Learning While Working

If you wish to complement your training or learn a trade while working, the Programme d'apprentissage en milieu de travail (Workplace Apprenticeship Program) may be just what you're looking for. This on-the-job training program will enable you to master a trade and obtain a Certificate of Qualification. Issued by Emploi-Québec, this certificate officially recognizes the competencies required to practise a trade.

As an apprentice, you will be paired with an experienced co-worker, a journeyman or journeywoman, who passes on his or her knowledge and experience and who supervises, trains and evaluates you. The required competencies are recorded in a

learning log. The competencies are established by employers and workers. The training therefore truly meets the needs of the labour market. In addition, a representative of Emploi-Québec provides follow-up during the learning period. For more information, contact your CLE (local employment centre).



In the workplace	Target group	Participant's status	Supervision	Length of program	Organization
Workplace Apprenticeship Program	Workers aged 16 years and over, with or without a diploma	Apprentice, in the workplace	Journeyman or journeywoman	From 3 months to 3 years, depending on the trade	Emploi-Québec

Currently, 32 trades are eligible for the Workplace Apprenticeship Program. Between 1993 and 2002, 6 000 workers benefited from the program. Here is what a few participants thought of the experience:

A DVS is important and essential, but once you have the diploma in hand, you still need experience. That's why I started the Workplace Apprenticeship Program. The learning log is well done, it enables you to evaluate yourself and see what needs to be improved and perfected. It really helps you develop an overview of your work. And it's recognized by employers too!

Marlène, cabinetmaker

My journeyman taught me how to use machines that I don't usually use, so that I could meet the requirements in my learning log. Without the program, I probably would have never got to use those machines because my boss would have given the work to someone who had already worked on them. It enabled me to acquire new competencies, which I will definitely add to my résumé if I ever have to look for another job.

Isabelle, aircraft machinist

Depending on the contracts the shop gets, I complete the different sections in my learning log. I take this program very seriously because I would eventually like to work in France, where apprenticeships are very common. I would also like to become a journeywoman some day and pass on my knowledge to someone else.

Lyne, cabinetmaker and shop supervisor

Answers

Finding Answers

Still undecided about the type of training and occupation to choose? Here are some pointers to help you find the answer.



Start by visiting different companies. This will enable you to see the type of environment you would be working in. Take advantage of your visits to find out what kind of tasks you would be performing, what kind of supervision you would have and what kind of equipment you would be working with. You should also take the opportunity to talk to the workers.



Consult *Inforoute*, Québec's vocational and technical training Web site. It contains useful information on all the training programs, trades and occupations.



Enroll in the Student-For-A-Day program. It gives students the possibility of trying out a training program under the supervision of a teacher. For more information, contact the school that offers the training program.



Establish a relationship with a mentor at school, at work or in the community to keep informed and get advice, support and appreciation. For help or guidance in choosing a career, get in touch with a support group or find a cybermentor. The addresses of cybermentorship sites can be found in this guide under the section "Resources and Support Groups."



Contact your local employment centre and financial assistance counsellors at your educational institution. They can address any financial questions you may have concerning the government's Loans and Bursaries Program, special programs for parents returning to their studies or Emploi-Québec grants.



The Job Market and Tips for Getting a Job

With your diploma in hand, you have the competencies and knowledge you need to take your place in the job market. Here are a few useful tips to help you find a job.



Visit a company to find out more about it before requesting an interview or accepting a job offer.



Network! Keep in touch with people you used to study with or old teachers or colleagues; they can help promote you to possible employers.



Get letters of recommendation from your teachers or employers.



Use your educational institution's employment centre.



During an interview, dress for success! Wear classic clothing in which you feel comfortable so that the person interviewing you focuses on your personality and competencies.



Don't forget, in your region there are organizations that help women interested in nontraditional occupations find jobs. Resources are also available at your local employment centre or in your educational institution's employment centre to help you organize and conduct your job search. See the section "Resources and Support Groups" at the end of this guide.

“

I used to drive around with my hard hat in the car. Whenever I saw a construction site, I'd stop, put on my hat and ask if they needed a plumber. I had a packed lunch in the car and was ready to start immediately.

Isabelle, plumber

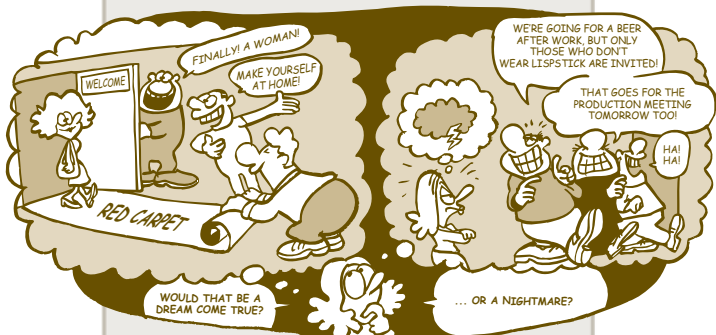
”

Myth or

Reality?

In certain nontraditional fields, myths abound. Often they imply that job competency is linked to gender. When confronted with these myths, hold your ground; they are usually the result of a lack of information.

The next section addresses some of these myths as well as some of the truths that dispel them.



Job

A Job for Her-cules?

"A woman is not strong enough to do a man's job!"

Lack of physical strength is often cited as a reason why women should not work in traditionally male-dominated fields. Yet, a number of studies have shown that most women working in these fields do not consider physical strength to be a factor in the exercise of their occupation. Do you really have to be King Kong to do these jobs? Here are some facts to the contrary.



First of all, the "weaker sex" is not as weak as one might think: 20% of women are stronger than 50% of men.¹



"Nontraditional" does not necessarily mean "physically demanding!" Many traditionally male-dominated trades or occupations require limited or moderate physical strength. Such is the case for food inspection, machine operation, aircraft structural assembly and many more occupations.



“

*I love driving. And the bigger the vehicles,
the happier I am!
You just need nerves of steel!*²

”

Diane, truck driver

1. Sylvie de Grosbois, Serge Simoneau, and Marie Roy, *L'essayer c'est l'adopter : Les obstacles ergonomiques à l'accès des femmes aux postes traditionnellement masculins* (Montréal: Comité conjoint UQAM-CSN-FIQ, 1990).

2. Translation of an excerpt from *Des métiers pour les filles!* (Ma Carrière/Jobboom, 1998).



Many traditionally female occupations require more strength than traditionally male occupations. For example, early childhood educators regularly have to pick up wriggling children weighing about 20 kg. A study shows that seamstresses may lift up to 3 500 kg of clothing per day with their arms and an equivalent of 29 000 kg with their legs by depressing the sewing machine pedal.¹

“

In the Canadian Forces, female tank mechanics have developed ingenious ways of accomplishing certain tasks. “Sometimes they just use the tools normally used for a specific task and sometimes they use other tools and get the work done just the same,” said Lieutenant-Colonel Clarke.²

”



According to the Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CSST), women are injured in all fields, whether traditional or not. In fact, nurse's aides are injured more frequently than welders or mechanics, and salesclerks just as often as farm machinery mechanics.



1. N. Vézina, D. Tierney, and K. Messing, *Quand le travail « léger » est « lourd » : composantes de l'activité de travail d'un groupe de couturières* (1991).

2. M. Legault-Faucher, “La force entre les deux oreilles” in *Le travail des femmes : rose ou noir?* Prévention au travail (January/February 1992).



Demonstrations of strength and recklessness that land you in the clinic do little to improve working conditions. If the equipment, work clothes or workstation are not adapted to your height and your strength, discuss the matter with your colleagues, your supervisor or the person responsible for occupational health and safety in your union.



It's true, certain jobs are physically demanding. If that's the case, whether you are a man or a woman, regular training can help you develop your strength or endurance to avoid a whole range of work-related injuries.



Teamwork and collaboration with colleagues are excellent strategies. Expressing your needs and limits can keep you safe.

“

When a colleague offers to carry my tools, I return the favour the following week so that it's not a one-way street.

”

Audréanne, avionics technician

“

I am always on the look-out for new technology that can make tasks easier.

”

Véronique, dairy producer and winner of the Hats Off to You! competition



With time and experience, you will be able to devise new tricks and find new tools to make your work easier. Many female workers say that they have developed work methods that are different from those of their male counterparts. Quite often their colleagues end up using these new methods. There is always room for improvement when it comes to safety.



Heroines

The Stuff of Heroines

"A woman needs to have a very specific profile to pursue a traditionally male occupation."

While you should just follow your hearts, many of you ask yourselves if you have what it takes to practise a nontraditional occupation. Do you need to have great moral fibre, a caustic sense of humour and be born with a hammer in hand to be able to pursue a traditionally male occupation?

Certainly not. But it is obvious that, in order to be happy with your job, your abilities and skills must correspond to the type of work you do. In fact, all women have skills that would be useful in a nontraditional occupation. The trick is to recognize them.

Emploi-Québec's fact sheets provide information on the skills, knowledge and interests needed to practise different occupations.^{1,2} If you look at these sheets, you will notice that the skills required of women in traditional occupations are similar to those required in nontraditional occupations.

"In the past, I have sculpted, made stained glass and painted watercolours. I consider aircraft sheet metal work to be another form of art."
Chantal, sheet metal worker

"I used to sew and make my own patterns and alterations. I can come up with an idea, design it and picture it in three dimensions."

Solange, drafter

1. Direction de la planification, du partenariat et de l'information sur le marché du travail, Direction régionale d'Emploi-Québec de la Montérégie, *Fiches professionnelles par occupation en Montérégie* (Québec: Emploi-Québec, 2002).

2. Direction de la planification, du partenariat et de l'information sur le marché du travail, Direction régionale d'Emploi-Québec de Montréal, *Répertoire des fiches professionnelles, Région de Montréal, 2002-2003* (Québec: Emploi-Québec, 2002).

Female-Dominated Occupations

Male-Dominated Occupations

Early childhood educator

Effective listening and communication skills

Ability to react quickly in an emergency

Ability to observe children's behaviour and determine their needs

Ambulance attendant

Empathetic and caring attitude

Ability to remain calm and to adapt to different situations; good knowledge of first-aid techniques

Good sense of perception

Esthetician

Good people skills, ability to sell products and services

Manual dexterity

Concern for the health and safety of clients

Butcher

Good customer-service skills

Dexterity, attention to detail

Conscientious attitude toward food safety and quality

Industrial sewing machine operator

Dexterity, rapidity and precision

Willingness to perform repetitive tasks

Good hand-eye coordination

Building painter

Precision, attention to detail

Willingness to perform repetitive tasks

Ability to perceive and distinguish colours and textures

And what about knowledge? Education does not always prepare women for occupations that involve manual labour or scientific work. Vocational or technical training will teach you everything you need to know to do your job: how to use tools, materials, equipment, hardware, etc. After all, operating a cement mixer is no harder than operating a food processor.

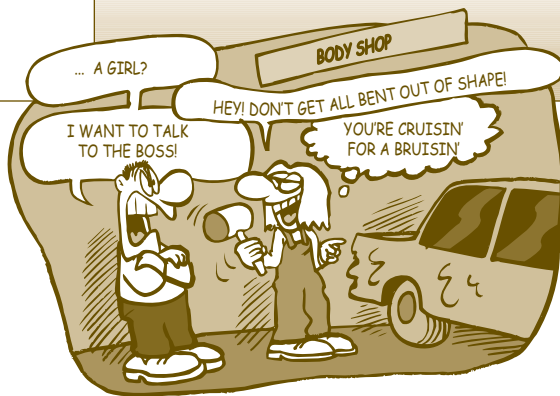
Don't lose heart if you have a tough time doing a task or if the subject matter seems difficult at first. You're probably not the only one who feels this way. Don't hesitate to ask your teacher or your colleagues for help. You'll benefit from their experience and become more productive more quickly.

When I started in applied physics technology, I was more comfortable with a hairdryer than a screwdriver. I had never changed a light bulb or touched a computer before. I learned everything in my training program! Now, I've decided to do my final project in mechanics and machining techniques. I'm amazed by how far I've come.
Myriam, physics technologist

It was only after building an entire rec room in my basement by myself when I was 40 that I realized I had what it takes to become a plasterer: physical endurance, patience and perfectionism.
Suzanne, plasterer

MOMMY! I WANT A
FIREFIGHTER'S UNIFORM
FOR BARBIE!





Doubly Competent

"To get ahead in these jobs, girls have to be better than guys."

Proving oneself does not mean always being the best or the brightest. By recognizing their limits, women often find different strategies that enable them to increase their productivity and even that of others.

Always keep in mind that you were chosen for your training, your skills and your experience. Whenever you doubt your ability, think of your accomplishments.

“Just because I’m a woman and an immigrant, many people didn’t believe in my ability. My mistakes were quickly pointed out and criticized, whereas the men were just considered to be making “normal” mistakes. Today, I’m a bus driver, and there are many men who didn’t make it.”

Pascaline, bus driver

Pregnancy }

Pregnancy and Nontraditional Occupations

"My plumber is pregnant! Women sure are complicated."

Parental leave, reassignment and safety measures during pregnancy raise many questions about hiring women. How will pregnancy affect a worker's productivity? How will the team she works with be reorganized? Will it mean more work for the others?

It is important to point out that this situation is not unique to nontraditional occupations. Indeed, it is quite common. Validating motherhood and fatherhood, reconciling work and family life are social issues we all face. Parental leave is not the only type of leave where an employee must be temporarily replaced. Many people ignore the fact that 86% of women

return to work in the year following the birth of their child.¹ Some workplaces have established measures that help employees balance work and family life. Here are a few examples of measures that can be established or negotiated at work.



1. Katherine Marshall, "Employment After Childbirth," *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, Catalogue no. 75-001-XPE (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Autumn 1999).



Organization of working time: flexible working hours, compressed work weeks, reduced work weeks, working from home, job sharing, adapting work hours to school hours, understanding on the part of supervisors in the case of lateness.



Family-related leave, maternity, parental or adoption leave, salary supplements during these leaves, possibility of accumulating hours to be used as leaves.



Financial assistance for childcare expenses, childcare services for preschool children, family group insurance, domestic services (cleaner, caterer, ATM) in the workplace.

Examples of how to plan, develop, evaluate and monitor work and family measures can be found in the action plan entitled *Concilier travail et famille : un défi pour les milieux de travail*¹ (an abridged version entitled *Toward a Policy on Work-Family Balance* is available in English).



1. Conseil consultatif du travail et de la main-d'œuvre, *Concilier travail et famille : un défi pour les milieux de travail, Plan d'action*, (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2001).

Taking

Your Place

It was Helen's first day on the job.
Although she was expecting it,
it still came as a big shock:
she was one of the few women
in a mine of 150 employees.



Strategy

Let's Talk Strategy!

Being in a minority can be motivating and gratifying, but it can also be difficult. The exciting side of being different can quickly turn sour when the rules and behaviour of the majority are completely foreign to us.



When you are one of a few women in a predominantly male environment, you must integrate into a work environment that has already established its own culture and habits.

The changes brought on by your arrival may result in curiosity, extra attention, scepticism, perhaps even hostility or rejection. However, in most cases, you should expect many of your new male colleagues to be open and react favourably to your presence as a woman.

“ Having a strong character is not a prerequisite. Girls that are timid or reserved can succeed too. I think one of the most important things is knowing who you are and what you want and acting on it. ”

Chandra, diesel mechanic

“ In the mine where I worked, I worked alongside men who trusted me to do my job. They let me use their tools and allowed me to learn more about all the aspects of mining. ”

Annie, mineral processing technician and winner of the Hats Off to You! competition

Regardless of how others may react to your presence in the workplace, keep in mind that establishing good working relationships is a shared responsibility, one that relies as much on you, the new employee, as on your colleagues, union and employer. Below are several tips to help you integrate:



Jokes and teasing can be part of the culture of certain nontraditional working environments. Using humour can sometimes be an excellent way to create bonds, relieve tension and convey messages.



However, when these comments make you feel uncomfortable, there is a problem. Taking things with a grain of salt is a first step: sometimes resistance to change fades on its own. However, if the behaviour persists, discussing it with the person making the comments, with certain colleagues or a union representative can solve the problem.



“

As bold as I am, I'm never afraid to ask for advice. On several occasions, I've had to swallow my pride and ask for help. [...] Telling yourself every morning that you are good, beautiful and, above all, capable can help compensate for discouraging comments.

”

Annie, maintenance carpenter and winner of the Hats Off to You! competition



To integrate into the workplace more easily, women may try adopting certain masculine attitudes just to fit in. Changing your personality at work may be taxing in the long run. Besides, male employees may learn to appreciate the benefits of having a woman in the workplace, as it brings a new and complementary perspective on the job, healthy competition and a respectful, supportive and serious working environment.¹



Proving yourself does not mean always being the best or the quickest. Learning to recognize your limits is the best way to work to your potential and reach maximum productivity.



There are ways of breaking the isolation associated with being a minority. Supporting your colleagues in causes that are important to them can make your integration easier.



Several support groups exist for women who work or study in traditionally male-dominated fields. For more information, see the "Resources and Support Groups" section in this guide.

"We all know how good it feels to be supported by people who understand what you're going through. Solidarity among women is an incredible force that should not be ignored because it enables us to go further in our achievements."

Lucie, assembler

1. Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec, *Quand le masculin se conjugue au féminin* (Montréal: Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec, Service de la condition féminine, 1998).

Friendly Work Environments

Employers and work teams can adopt strategies to help recruit, welcome and retain female employees in male-dominated occupations and trades.



Establish an equal access employment program and review how tasks are distributed among work teams.



Update the reception process: prepare employees for the arrival of female colleagues, create a network among employees in the same position and pair new employees with experienced ones. It is important to adopt an open attitude.



Review policies and practices related to recruitment, promotion and training so that young people and women who were recently trained have access to different positions or advancement opportunities.



Adopt a clear policy on discriminatory behaviour and harassment that establishes guidelines for treating complaints and involves both the employer and the union.



Unions

Unions play an important role in facilitating the integration of new female employees into a male-dominated workplace. Below are a few examples of measures that unions have suggested to meet this objective.

✓ When newly hired employees arrive, welcome them and inform them of their rights and of the recourse they have in certain situations. Mentoring programs can also help employees fit in and forge ties with their peers.

✓ Adopt union policies that promote equality, dignity and respect.

✓ Use union meetings and newsletters to raise awareness about women in the workplace.

✓ Pay special attention to equal representation of men and women in union positions. The presence of women in nontraditional working environments could change concerns and priorities: adapting equipment, clothing and sanitary facilities; updating occupational health and safety; reconciling work and family life, etc.

✓ Include provisions in the collective agreement to offset certain problems.

Women can benefit from keeping in close contact with their union and should turn to the union first when dealing with problems that are not addressed in the collective agreement.



Harassment: The Importance of Taking a Stand

Even if predominantly male workplaces have their own specific culture, sexist behaviour and violence should never be a part of them. It is important to be able to recognize harassment, whether it is for your own benefit or for someone else's.

When it happened to me, I talked to my co-worker about it. It made it easier to take a stand.

Julie, landscaper

What is harassment?

Harassment includes all forms of unwanted attention or advances that make a person feel uncomfortable or fearful and that threaten his or her well-being or job. It can take the form of winking, propositions, threats, jokes, gestures, touching, displays of pornography, etc.

While sexual harassment has long been legally recognized by the Commission des normes du travail, psychological harassment was not legally recognized until June 1, 2004. Psychological harassment is unwanted harmful or hostile conduct that is not necessarily sexual in nature. Conduct intended to discredit or belittle a person is considered psychological harassment. For more information on harassment, see the section

"Your Rights at Work" in this guide.

A good tip is to trust your instincts. If somebody's behaviour makes you feel uncomfortable, or if you feel that you are losing control of a situation and wish things were different at work, it's a sign that something's wrong.

Stéphanie, computer technician

React

We cannot emphasize it enough: you must stand up to harassment. Minimizing what you feel or believing that it will go away on its own are defence mechanisms that, unfortunately, will do nothing to solve the problem. Here are a few strategies you may adopt instead:



Tell the person who is harassing you that you do not appreciate their behaviour.



Talk about it with your colleagues and friends. You'll find that you have sympathetic and natural allies.



Check whether your collective agreement or your company has a policy prohibiting harassment.



In cases involving serious acts of harassment, or less serious but repetitive acts of harassment, keep a detailed journal of all incidents: record the date, time, place, act and gesture, words spoken, names of witnesses. Don't hesitate to see a doctor who could provide medical proof of the effect the behaviour has had on you.



Contact your union or a support group in your area. (See the section "Resources and Support Groups.")

“

I had some really macho teachers. They'd pretend not to see the girls in the class. One of the teachers told three girls in the class that they didn't belong there because they weren't good enough. We went to see the principal and the problem was solved.

Isabelle, vocational training student

”

Your Rights at Work

There are laws to protect workers, and it is important to be familiar with them. In a unionized job, the collective agreement provides you with a pretty good overview of your rights.

With respect to occupational health and safety,

employers must provide their staff with a safe working environment and free safety equipment.¹

With respect to equal access,

in order to better reflect the composition of society and ensure equal opportunities for all, many workplaces have implemented equal access employment programs. These programs imply that, within a group of equally qualified individuals, the person who is part of a target group (women, members of visible minorities, aboriginal peoples) will be offered the job first. Although equal access employment programs do not exist everywhere, they can be negotiated with the union.

For more information, consult the Web site of the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse du Québec.²

With respect to discrimination,

no one may practise discrimination regarding the hiring, apprenticeship, duration of probationary period, vocational training, promotion, transfer, displacement, laying-off, suspension, dismissal or conditions of employment of a person or in the establishment of categories or classes of employment.³

1. Act respecting occupational health and safety, section 51.

2. Act respecting equal access to employment in public bodies and amending the Charter of human rights and freedoms.

3. Charter of human rights and freedoms, section 16.

{Cont.}

With respect to maternity leave,

the **Act respecting labour standards** includes several sections regarding maternity leave. Do not hesitate to consult the Act.

With respect to family or parental leave,

an employee may be absent from work, without pay, for up to 10 days per year to fulfil obligations relating to the care, health or education of the employee's child or the child of the employee's spouse, or because of the state of health of a close relative of the employee (spouse, father, mother, brother, sister or even a grandparent).¹ Other provisions exist in cases of serious accidents, illnesses or death.

With respect to harassment,

no one may harass a person on the basis of the following grounds: race, colour, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, civil status, age (except as provided by law), religion, political convictions, language, ethnic or national origin, handicap.² "Psychological harassment" means any vexatious behaviour in the form of repeated and hostile or unwanted conduct, verbal comments, actions or gestures, that affects an employee's dignity or psychological or physical integrity and that result in a harmful work environment for the employee. A single serious incidence of such behaviour that has a lasting harmful effect on an employee may also constitute psychological harassment.

Every employee has a right to a work environment free from psychological harassment. Employers must take reasonable action to prevent psychological harassment and, whenever they become aware of such behaviour, to put a stop to it.³

Psychological harassment has been legally recognized by the Commission des normes du travail since June 1, 2004.

1. Act respecting labour standards, section 79.7.

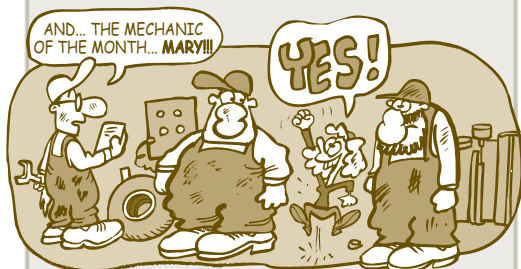
2. Charter of human rights and freedoms, sections 10 and 10.1.

3. Act respecting labour standards, sections 81.18 and 81.19.

Profiles

Profiles

And now for some personal stories from women working in or training for nontraditional occupations. May they inspire you all!



Trade

A Hot Trade for Those Who Don't Have Cold Feet!

Camille Barbeau,

one of the first female insulator apprentices in Québec

“

“I love working with men! We're always teasing each other, we laugh all day. I used to be a housewife, and I can tell you that it's much harder to stay home all day by yourself than to work in a place like this. Though I do sometimes miss not having female colleagues to talk to.”

At age 43, Camille Barbeau made a rather unusual choice. After trying her hand at horticulture, residential building maintenance and photography, this single mother finally found her calling: insulation. “I was sick of the low wages and the monotony . . . I wanted to excel, to get ahead. The best decision I ever made was to change careers.”

It was the short training period, the promising employment prospects and a discussion with the first five female insulators in Québec that convinced Camille to enroll in this vocational training program offered by the École des métiers de la construction de Montréal. The physical and intellectual challenge appealed to her: she would have to cut, install and adjust insulation materials and coverings over pipes and air ducts. She would also have to design patterns for metal cladding. And all that to prevent the transmission of heat, cold, sound and vibrations! Insulators are in high demand: after finishing her training, it will probably only take her four days to find a job.

How does she picture her future? “After my apprenticeship, I would like to become a journeywoman, a team leader and a supervisor. I would like to work on sites in northern Québec, Alberta, the United States and even overseas. I hope that my experience will show women of all ages, including single mothers, that it is possible to work at a fulfilling job that you enjoy. The percentage of women in nontraditional fields is on the rise, and I want women to stay!”

”

Fierce Determination: Guilty on All Counts!

Nancy Gosselin,

student in police technology and winner of the 2002 *Hats Off to You!* competition

“Usually, it’s the women who ask me how I’m going to arrest big strong guys. I always tell them the same thing: we have the tools and we learn the techniques, both physical and verbal, that we need to deal with a crisis. After all, there are small men in the police force too!”

Currently a third-year student at Cégep François-Xavier Garneau, Nancy is right in the middle of the most physically demanding year of the program: armed criminal situations, self-defence . . . No doubt about it, it’s a lot to handle! Yet, even though this dental hygienist is of average build, she has brains. It’s true; to get into the police technology program, having good marks is as important as getting through obstacle courses.

Nancy likes action, novelty and working with her hands and with the public. She is meticulous and admits to being inquisitive. That’s why, after finishing her training, she would like to become a forensic-evidence technician, a job that, until now, has been held only by men. Even without a female role model, Nancy is determined to succeed. Taking pride in pursuing a different career is what drives her to succeed. For now, her volunteer work with women victims of violence gives her a great sense of worth.

If she had to change something in her field, what would it be? “At school, the teachers don’t discriminate. Yet, the guys are still afraid to team up with the girls because they’re worried we’ll make more mistakes in emergency situations. It’s hard to believe that they still think like that in this day and age! In addition, when I start working, I would like to be involved in a work-family committee. I think it’s an issue that still needs to be resolved in my field.” And in many others . . .

Working

Working Girl

Amélie Pomerleau,

stone cutter and winner of the 2002 *Hats Off to You!* competition

“

“It all started when I found myself in front of an Egyptian temple at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. I was so impressed that I said to myself, ‘give me tools, give me stone!’”

Amélie Pomerleau got to work with her tools: first for three years, as she did a Bachelor's degree in sculpture, then during her training in the stone cutting program at the Centre de formation professionnelle du Granit. Since then, the young stone cutter has tried her hand at everything: building stones, ornaments, moldings, house fronts and so on. She even went to France for her *Hats Off to You!* practicum. It was this apprenticeship that enabled her to develop the centuries-old skills that have been passed on through generations of stone cutters. The atmosphere of spirited camaraderie between master and apprentice is etched into her memory.

Still, very few women work in quarries. Are they cut out for the job? “In some stone cutting companies, you don't use physical strength. There are travelling bridge cranes, automatic machines for lifting loads, etc. However, other companies still have a ways to go in terms of occupational health and safety, for both women and men.”

While doing a practicum, Amélie pointed out to her boss that using a water feed system (a technique used at her school) could help reduce the amount of dust the workers inhaled. This suggestion was appreciated and, a few months later, a representative from the company went to her school to find out how to install the system.

In the end, Amélie found her vocation in a company that produces headstones, where both her attention to detail and her artistic talents are used. Her mind is made up: she plans to be an entrepreneur. “Making a monument that commemorates the life of someone, now that gives meaning to what you do.” There is no doubt that the artist has found her place.

”

Fire, Guts, Bravado

Isabelle Jacob,
welder

“Trust me, after everything I've seen. . .” That's what Isabelle, a welder for 13 years and a journeywoman for three, could say. Listening to her recount her adventures, you can tell right away that she has seen it all.

At 28, Isabelle decided to become a welder because she didn't want to sit at a desk all day. The fact that she could work with her hands, earn a great salary and not have to spend too much time in school also appealed to her. This determined woman, who used to wear three sweaters to job interviews to appear stronger, literally wrestled her way into her first job. “The boss didn't want to hire me, he thought I wasn't strong enough. So I challenged him to an arm wrestle. I told him that if I won, he'd have to hire me, and I won!”

Fortunately, times have changed! If she had to give two words of advice to women today, it would be to set a goal and make sure you have what it takes to reach it. While waiting for her dream job, Isabelle did not hesitate to regularly change jobs. For six years, she worked for job placement agencies. According to her, there is no better way to acquire different skills, keep up to date and gain confidence and experience.

When she ran into a problem, Isabelle was never afraid to speak up. “If somebody is repeatedly disrespectful toward you, you have to tell somebody, either a co-worker, your boss or the union. If you don't tell anybody, you get stressed out and when it starts up again, everybody tells you that you should have spoken up earlier.” One day, an employee in her group overstepped the bounds of what is acceptable. Isabelle was not unionized. She went and sat in her boss' office and told him that she was not leaving until the problem was resolved. You can imagine what happened: the problem was solved!

A trailblazer among women, Isabelle has now found her calling in the construction industry. What will be her legacy for women entering nontraditional fields? “I think that by doing my job well, I'm doing the most valuable thing I could do to help further the cause of women.”

Bravado

Nontraditional Options

Abitibi-Témiscamingue

Regroupement des femmes du Témiscamingue

Telephone: (819) 764-9171, E-mail: <rfat@lino.sympatico.ca>

Vision Travail Abitibi-Témiscamingue

Telephone: (819) 797-0822 or (819) 797-6634, E-mail: <r-n@vision-travail.qc.ca>

Bas-Saint-Laurent

FICELLES pour l'accès des femmes au travail

Telephone: (418) 723-2205 or (418) 775-2226

Web site: <www.libertel.org/ficelles>, E-mail: <ficelles@globetrotter.net>

Capitale Nationale

Centre Étape

Telephone: (418) 529-4779, Web site: <www.centre-etape.qc.ca>

E-mail: <info@centre-etape.qc.ca>

Centre-du-Québec

Partance, centre d'emploi pour les femmes

Telephone: (819) 472-3351, Web site: <www.emploi-partance.com>

E-mail: <femmes@emploi-partance.com>

Services intégrés pour l'emploi

Telephone: (819) 758-1975, Web site: <www.siemploi.com>

E-mail: <sle@cdcbf.qc.ca>

Chaudière-Appalaches

Passeport travail de Beauce

Telephone: (418) 227-1550, E-mail: <ptbi@globetrotter.net>

Côte-Nord

Centre Émersion

Telephone: (418) 296-6388, Web site: <www.centre-emersion.org>

E-mail: <emersion@virtuel.net>

Estrie

Centre d'intégration au marché de l'emploi (CIME)

Telephone: (819) 564-0202, E-mail: <cime.sherbrooke@videotron.ca>

Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine

Regroupement des femmes La Sentin'Elle

Telephone: (418) 986-4334, E-mail: <cdflasantinelle@hotmail.com>

Lanaudière

Centre Lanaudière d'emploi pour femmes (CLEF) and Perspectives nouvelles

Telephone: (450) 755-3244, E-mail: <la.clef@qc.aira.ca>

Laval

Dimension travail, Programme options gagnantes

Telephone: (450) 667-1172, E-mail: <dimensiontravail@qc.aira.ca>

Mauricie

Centre Le PONT

Telephone: (819) 373-1273, Web site: <www.centrelepont.com>

E-mail: <info@centrelepont.com>

Montréal

Centre d'orientation et de formation pour femmes en recherche d'emploi (COFFRE)

Telephone: (450) 347-6101, E-mail: <st-jean@coffre.ca>

Options non traditionnelles

Telephone: (450) 646-1030, E-mail: <optionsnontraditionnelles@placerivesud.qc.ca>

Option Ressource Travail

Telephone: (450) 377-4949, Web site: <www.rocler.qc.ca/psj/>

E-mail: <p.s.jeunesse@qc.aira.com>

Femmes et métiers non traditionnels inc.

Telephone: (450) 730-0181, E-mail: <fmnt@qc.aira.com>

Passage vers l'emploi - Passage non traditionnel

Telephone: (450) 378-2212, Web site: <www.passage.qc.ca>

E-mail: <pnt@passage.qc.ca>

Montréal

Formation'Elle, Women's Centre of Montréal

Telephone: (514) 842-4776, Web site: <www.centredesfemmesdemtl.org>

E-mail: <formationelle@centredesfemmes.com>

Nord-du-Québec

Commission scolaire de la Baie-James, Centre de formation professionnelle

Telephone: (418) 748-7621

Outaouais

Option Femmes Emploi

Telephone: (819) 246-1725, Web site: <www.emploi nontrad.org>

E-mail: <nontrad@femmesemploi.qc.ca>

Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean

Accès-Travail-Femmes

Telephone: (418) 695-0834, E-mail: <atf@qc.aira.com>

Resources and Support Groups

Government Organizations

Commission des normes du travail

Telephone: 1-800-265-1414, (514) 873-7061, Web site: <www.cnt.gouv.qc.ca/en>

Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CSST)

Telephone: 1-800-668-6811, Web site: <www.csst.qc.ca>

Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse

Telephone: 1-800-361-6477, Web site: <www.cdpdj.qc.ca>

Regional Offices of Emploi-Québec

Web site: <www.mess.gouv.qc.ca>

Abitibi-Témiscamingue – Telephone: (819) 763-3226

Bas-Saint-Laurent – Telephone: (418) 723-5677

Capitale-Nationale – Telephone: (418) 687-3540 or 1-800-463-6837 (toll free)

Centre-du-Québec – Telephone: (819) 475-8701

Chaudière-Appalaches – Telephone: (418) 838-2605 or 1-800-463-5907 (toll free)

Côte-Nord – Telephone: (418) 295-4020 or 1-800-463-6443 (toll free)

Estrie – Telephone: (819) 569-9761 or 1-800-665-1732 (toll free)

Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine – Telephone: (418) 360-8661

Lanaudière – Telephone: (450) 752-6888 or 1-877-465-1933 (toll free)

Laurentides – Telephone: (450) 569-7575

Laval and the suburbs of Montréal – Telephone: (450) 972-3133

Mauricie – Telephone: (819) 371-6422 or 1-800-567-7959 (toll free)

Montréal – Telephone: (450) 773-7463 Information centre: 1-877-714-8433 (toll free)

Montréal – Telephone: (514) 725-5221

Nord-du-Québec – Telephone: (418) 748-7643 or 1-866-722-7354 (toll free)

Outaouais – Telephone: (819) 772-3035

Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean – Telephone: (418) 549-0595 or 1-800-463-9641 (toll free)

Regional Offices of the Ministère de l'Éducation

Web site: <www.meq.gouv.qc.ca>

Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Nord-du-Québec – Telephone: (819) 763-3001

Bas-Saint-Laurent and Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine – Telephone: (418) 727-3600

Capitale-Nationale and Chaudière-Appalaches – Telephone: (418) 643-7934
Côte-Nord – Telephone: (418) 964-8420
Estrie – Telephone: (819) 820-3382
Laval, Laurentides and Lanaudière – Telephone: (450) 430-3611
Mauricie and Centre-du-Québec – Telephone: (819) 371-6711
Montérégie – Telephone: (450) 928-7438
Montréal – Telephone: (514) 873-4630
Outaouais – Telephone: (819) 772-3382
Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean – Telephone: (418) 695-7982

Central Labour Unions

Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ)

Telephone: (514) 356-8888, (418) 649-8888, Web site: <www.csq.qc.net>

Centrale des syndicats démocratiques (CSD)

Telephone: (418) 529-2956, Web site: <www.csd.qc.ca>

Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN)

Telephone: (514) 598-2121, Web site: <www.csn.qc.ca>

Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ)

Telephone: (514) 383-8000, Web site: <www.ftq.qc.ca>

Employment Insurance, Support Group

Mouvement autonome et solidaire des sans-emploi (MASSE)

Telephone: (514) 933-0101, Web site: <www.ntic.qc.ca/~masse/>

Labour Standards Support Group

Au bas de l'échelle

Community group advocating the rights of non-unionized workers

Telephone: (514) 270-7878, Web site: <www.aubasdelechele.ca>

Sexual Harassment, Support Group

Groupe d'aide et d'information sur le harcèlement sexuel au travail de la province de Québec inc.

Telephone: (514) 526-0789, Web site: <www.gaihist.qc.ca>

Working Women's Rights Group

Femmes regroupées en options non traditionnelles (FRONT)

Telephone: 1 877 273-7668, Web site: <www.front.qc.ca>

Click on "Consultez nos cybermentors" to view profiles of our cybermentors

E-mail: <nontrad@front.qc.ca>

Action travail des femmes du Québec inc.

Telephone: (514) 768-7233, E-mail: <actionf@cam.org>

Conseil d'intervention pour l'accès des femmes au travail (CIAFT)

Telephone: (514) 954-0220, Web site: <www.femmesautravail.qc.ca>

Helpful Web Sites

Coordination à la condition féminine at the Ministère de l'Éducation

Web site: <www.meq.gouv.qc.ca/cond-fem/>

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

Web site: <www.hrsdc.gc.ca>

Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ)

Web site: <www.ffq.qc.ca>

Inforoute de la formation professionnelle et technique (Québec's Vocational and Technical Training Network)

Web site: <<http://inforoutefpt.org>>

Vocational and technical training leading to nontraditional occupations and trades

Web site: <http://inforoutefpt.org/dgfpt/metiers_nt/default.asp>

Hats Off to You! and cybermentorship with the winners

Web site: <www.meq.gouv.qc.ca/chapeau>

Click on "Cybermentores"

Québec Skills Competition

Web site: <www.competchesquebec.com>

2004-2005 Competition

Hats Off to You!



ELAINE DENIS, welding and civil, Centre d'Études technologiques Saint-Jacques

www.meq.gouv.qc.ca/chapeau

Register at your educational institution

Québec



Prizes:

- 2 grand prizes of \$5 000
- 22 cash prizes of \$2 000
- 2 cash prizes of \$1 000
- 4 career development trips to France
- 1 paid practicum
- regional prizes from \$5 000 to \$1 000



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