

# Learning can be self-directed

Oliver Howey

Office Workers Career Centre, or OWCC, is a conveniently located learning/employment service designed to ensure that Office—read administrative—workers have access to a variety of learning opportunities in a format that they self direct.

Now I know that this may seem a little strange for a college teacher to suggest that learning can be self- initiated and self-directed; however, let me clarify that I'm an instructor in Adult Learning at George Brown College. I am convinced that in today's world of accelerated knowledge and skill growth, we need to take charge of fulfilling our own needs for learning.

## Why Office Workers Career Centre?

The office environment today creates two major challenges that hinder both employed and unemployed administrative professionals.

1. The nature of office work is more technology-driven than ever before and this creates expectations from employers for advanced skills, multi-tasking capability and speed.
2. When we are working in this "hyper" environment it is hard to break away from our day to day tasks to learn new things.

Partially for marketability purposes and partially because we have learned things informally, the OWCC was created to help unemployed office workers gain a series of new knowledge and skill sets, while doing their job search.

## What services does OWCC offer?

OWCC offers three types of services for office workers.

1. **Computer Laboratory** with at least 15 computers with self-directed tutorials, exercises and testing for clients to use in two hour segments.
2. One of the best equipped paper **resource centres** for administrative workers in Toronto along with Internet access, job postings, telephones and faxes.
3. **Monthly workshops and seminars** on the new world of office work and how to access it properly and productively. One of our more popular workshops is a 10-day career exploration course called **Professional Office Works**.

**How** do you take advantage of this service?

Check out our Website for details but essentially we are located in the downtown area (365 Bloor East) and serve people from all over the GTA. If you are an Administrative Worker (at least 1 year in the last 10 years) and are in job search mode, we can help. Call 416-925-7155 or [www.officeworkers.org](http://www.officeworkers.org)

**What else** should you do if you are unemployed?

In addition to using our services you should keep in mind that your plan should be written down, goals should be created in a 3 to 5 pattern (days, weeks and months), you should be searching using a variety of methods (15 percent Internet, 10 per cent newspaper ads, fifteen percent temp agencies and recruiters and the balance through your network of contacts and connections). Also, you should consider how up to date your skills are and how you can make yourself more marketable.

OWCC serves hundreds of administrative workers every year and are ready to help you.

*Oliver Howey is Executive Director of OWCC and, part time lecturer at George Brown College .*

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