

Chapter 2: Trends & Changes in Career Development

The ever-changing landscape can make navigating the career world confusing. Yet by being aware of the major trends impacting career development, you'll better understand the realities of today's world of work. The reflection questions in each section of this chapter will help you explore how these trends might impact you and your future career. So, let's jump in!

GLOBALIZATION & DIVERSITY

Today we live in a global economy, where there is an interdependence for goods, services, and various resources between countries. This increasing connection and dependence amongst economies, governments, and populations is called **globalization**.

Due to globalization, organizations are no longer confined to competition or decision-making at the local or national level. Instead, they must continually reinvent themselves to remain competitive in the global business arena and manage complexity and change on an ongoing basis. For example, some businesses now operate 24 hours a day to stay competitive across different time zones.

Additionally, organizations now deal with more diverse stakeholders (e.g., competitors, customers, employees, governments) than ever before.

Diverse cultural values, beliefs, and practices among people can become both a source of global opportunity and strife when the ambiguity of information, misunderstanding, and conflict is involved.

Many organizations have adopted policies and employee training programs on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), and the push for companies to incorporate these considerations continues to grow.



NOTE:

Diversity includes characteristics such as culture, race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, family status, education level, socioeconomic status, religion, and ability.

Beyond simply seeking to diversify the workplace, EDI initiatives are expanding to focus on cultivating environments where employees feel included, supported, connected to their colleagues, and valued for their uniqueness and insight. An organization's approach to EDI can play an important part in considering how well a role will fit with one's personal identity. Careers that we feel reflect and make space for our personal identity lead to an increased sense of belonging, job satisfaction, motivation, and overall sense of self (Weir, 2024; Luong et al., 2019).

It can be important to think about your identity and background, and how these contribute to your values, when considering the kind of workplace, compensation, and accommodations that you want to pursue. Not only that but, to work effectively in an increasingly globalized and diversified world, individuals will need to continuously develop skills such as:

- Managing complexity and change
- Understanding and embracing cultural differences
- Self-awareness
- Adaptability
- Communication
- Open-mindedness and tolerance
- Effectively leading and working on global remote teams



DEFINITION:

Diversity and inclusion mindset: valuing the diverse range of human differences and viewing them as strengths.

REFLECTION:

What skills do you think you need to develop to work effectively with diverse individuals (e.g., colleagues, customers, clients, or students)?

How do you think globalization impacts your career options?

THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

The **knowledge economy** (also referred to as the learning economy or the information economy) reflects the idea that knowledge is now viewed as a key commodity.

With the exponential advancements and availability of technology, we also have quicker and more frequent access to unprecedented amounts of information. Many roles will require employees to manage and manipulate information in order to be successful.



Occupations that require some form of post-secondary education or training now account for nearly two thirds of total employment. The current estimation is between 2022 and 2031, 88.8% of Canadians exiting school and entering the workforce will have some form of post-secondary education and that over this time, university graduates will be the segment with the largest growth (Statistics Canada, ESDC 2022 COPS Projections).

Healthcare, technology, finance, and logistics/supply chain are all industries experiencing growth due, in part, to the knowledge economy.

Consider a few of the new positions created in recent years:

- chief information officers
- product managers
- learning and development specialists
- freelance relationships officers
- health information specialists



While post-secondary graduates are and will continue to be in demand, there are also many jobs that don't require diplomas or degrees. On the job training opportunities such as apprenticeships and shorter-term job specific skills training will also be valuable for certain in-demand occupations related to the trades, labour and manufacturing, trucking, retail, and food services. These fields are all currently experiencing worker shortages.

In recent years, the technological advancement at the forefront of the knowledge economy is the incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into our careers and daily lives. Not unlike the growth experienced in various industries due to other advances in knowledge and technology, it is expected that AI integration in the workforce will create and increase job opportunities rather than “take” jobs from people.

New developments in technology have always redistribute where demand lies in the workforce, and AI is no different. In 2024, McKinsey Global Institute projected that while roles that are highly comprised of repetitive tasks, data collection and elementary-level processing may decrease, demand for technological, social, and emotional skills will rise, with a focus in critical thinking, creativity, and teaching & training. In particular, jobs in healthcare and STEM are expected to see the largest growth at up to 30%, while office support and customer service roles may see the largest decline around just under 20%.

The good news is that AI automation increases company resources and capacity, and many organizations have reported a higher interest and investment in providing training and development opportunities for employees to learn and utilize new technology, rather than outsourcing these tasks, to expand their skillsets and transition their job descriptions to complement the integration of AI.

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In addition to the shifts towards a knowledge economy and the continuing rise of required post-secondary education, the **digital economy** is undergoing a transformation at an unprecedented speed.

This transformation results in economic activity from billions of daily online connections among people, organizations, and machines via the Internet, mobile technology, etc. The digital transformation is changing the conventional ways organizations are structured, how they interact, and how consumers obtain goods, services, and information.

As digital technologies enable new jobs, individuals and organizations must adopt a “life-long learning” approach and continuously learn new technology-relevant skills (e.g., digital literacy).

These new jobs also call for soft skills (i.e. people skills) that have little to do with technology and more to do with interpersonal abilities. For example, the higher volume of digital information in organizations requires stronger leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, communication, planning, and efficiency.

REFLECTION:

The knowledge, education, and specialized skills required for many of today's careers continues to increase. Do you think you have the knowledge and skills required to begin your new career? Why or why not? If not, what further education and/or training are you considering?

STRUCTURE OF WORK

Until recently, holding more than one job was often viewed negatively by employees and employers. However, it's becoming increasingly common as the economy, labour market, and role of work in people's lives continue to evolve.

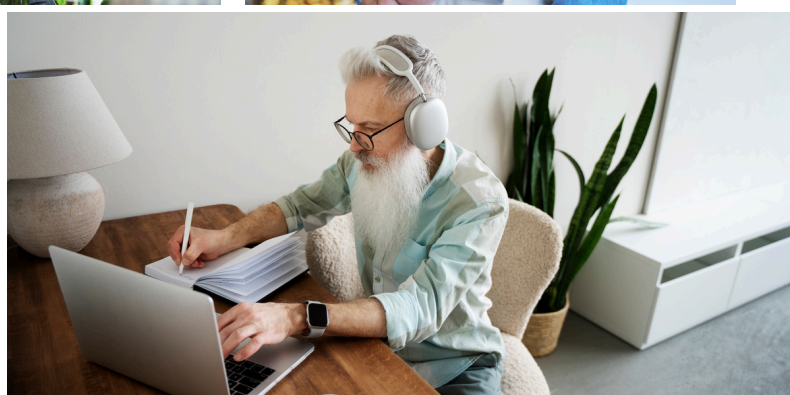
Simultaneously holding more than one job is referred to as multi-tracking and can be done in either the same or different industries.

Individuals may choose to multi-track for several reasons, including:

- financial necessity
- limited full-time opportunities
- desire for variety
- strategic moves: the chance to develop a portfolio of skills or create flexible, self-driven career opportunities.

Multi-tracking is more common today, partly as a consequence of the increase in contract work and self-employment. This is referred to as the **contingent workforce** — an on-demand labour pool made up of consultants, contractors, freelancers, and seasonal/casual workers.

The various roles that comprise the contingent workforce share the elements of agility and engagement but differ in many ways.



- **Consultants** are experts in their field and have either technical or knowledge-based expertise that they draw on to provide advice to companies on a temporary basis.
- **Contractors** are individuals or companies that work on a designated contract to provide a specific service or job.

Some contractors work as **independent contractors**. These contractors are self-employed, do not work on salary, and are responsible for managing their own taxes and benefits.

- **Freelancers** are individuals who work for multiple companies simultaneously or at different times rather than having one job.
- **Seasonal workers** work on a temporary basis, either related to weather or the season and within an industry (such as the holiday season in retail).

The increase in contract type work has paved the way for the **gig economy**, a labour market characterized by the prevalence of short-term contracts or freelance work instead of full-time employment with a single employer.



Similar to how entertainers move from gig to gig, contractors move from contract to contract. The gig economy requires that contractors be familiar with their skill set and assume responsibility for marketing themselves and identifying leads.

This type of work requires a skillset common to **entrepreneurship**, which is similarly on the rise.

The term entrepreneur has evolved to be inclusive of many different forms of innovation that reflect the complexities of our current labour market.

Entrepreneurial career paths allow for a high level of control and autonomy in how individuals design and carry out their work.

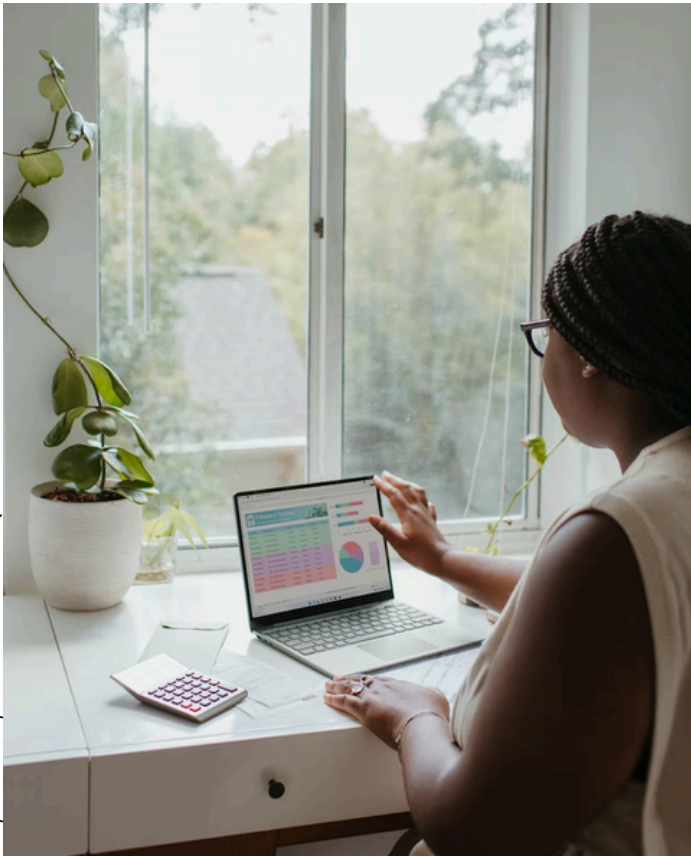
Typically, entrepreneurs start, run, and grow their businesses or ventures, sometimes hiring contractors or employees along the way.



Intrapreneurs behave much like entrepreneurs in that they promote inventive ideas and approaches but do so while working within an organization.

The **agile workforce** describes the ability of employees and organizations to quickly adapt and maintain productivity in the face of economic, cultural, or political change. Workforce agility is becoming more prevalent as the world of work continues to transition to a greater reliance and focus on the gig economy.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the most significant shift to work structure was the rise of **remote work**.



Remote work can also be referred to as:

- teleworking
- flex work
- work from home (WFH)
- distance working
- work from anywhere (WFA)

This type of work involves offsite working arrangements for employees facilitated by various technological supports (e.g., e-mail, video conferencing).

This setup allows individuals to work when, where, and how they are most effective and efficient and can take place for select days each week or on a consistent basis.

Many organizations are adopting “hybrid models” to allow people a blend of working from the office and home. These arrangements may also allow for the flexibility of living in a different location from one's employer.

A few other ways that the structure of work can be adjusted include:

- **Job Sharing:** An alternate work schedule where two or more employees share the responsibilities, time commitment, salary, and leave of one or more positions.
- **Talent Pools:** Typically formed by individuals with similar interests or complimentary skills and knowledge. Members assist each other to identify leads and/or work collaboratively on projects. Talent pools may take place when the group does not wish to enter into a full legal partnership yet benefit from shared resources and support. Other terms for a talent pool include “consortium” or “joint venture”.
- **Compressed Work Week:** Working more hours in a day in exchange for a regular day off. For example, an individual may work four 10-hour days as opposed to five 8-hour days.

REFLECTION:

You've read about several ways that the structure of work has shifted over time. Our goal at Canada Career Counselling isn't to position these changes as good or bad – we simply want you to be informed and aware as you move forward with your career planning and decision making.

What is your initial reaction to the idea of becoming part of the contingent workforce or multitasking? What impressions do you have about these work arrangements that may have influenced your decision to consider these types of roles?

How do you see remote work being a fit for you, personally? What are the advantages or disadvantages?

If you are curious about how to become part of the contingent workforce or multitasking, our job search advisors can help you with finding this type of work!

STRUCTURE OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

As it was noted earlier in this chapter, more and more individuals are choosing to obtain post-secondary education in order to stay competitive in today's world of work.

In Canada, there are **four** types of post-secondary schools:

- Universities
- Colleges
- Institutes
- CEGEP (Quebec)

In Canada, most post-secondary schools are broken down into **two** main semesters, with an optional spring or summer term.

These include:

- Term 1: September to December
- Term 2: January to April
- Optional spring/summer term: May to August



It's important to pay attention to whether a school is certified by its province so you know your education will be recognized as credible to meet employment standards.

A **recognized** school can grant:

- Degrees
- Diplomas
- Certificates
- Other qualifications

Colleges and institutes usually offer shorter programs than universities (1 to 3 years). Instead of degrees, they issue diplomas and certificates that qualify graduates to do specific jobs in different industries.

In regulated professions (e.g. medicine, law, etc.), students must complete an internship or pass a standardized test (or series of tests) after getting the degree. You can't work in these professions until you get the degree and pass the tests.

Source: canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/education/types-school/post-secondary.html

EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS

The following table is a general guide of different educational options and should not be treated as factual for every program, as programs and outcomes vary widely. It's always best to look up programs in your area and start a table of your own like this!

ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE	WHERE TO COMPLETE	CAREER BENEFITS
Journey person Certificate	1 to 4 years	College & On the job training	Recognized as skilled professional in your trade.
Certificate	Weeks/Months/ Up to 1 year	College, Institutes, & University	Enhances career options through skill development linked to a specific occupation.
Diploma	2 to 3 years	College & Institutes	Finish with skills linked to a specific occupation.
Bachelor's Degree	3 to 4 years	University	Helps you develop broad, transferrable skills, not necessarily linked to a specific career path. May include applied learning experiences (e.g., labs, co-operative education, practicums and/or internships) to increase work readiness.
Master's Degree	1 to 3 years (post bachelor's)	University	Finish with advanced, specialized knowledge and skill in a chosen profession. Can assist in obtaining managerial positions.
Doctoral Degree	3 to 4 years (post master's)	University	Designed for college/university graduates who are interested in doing original and applied research that tests theory and adds to the existing knowledge in their particular field or discipline.
Professional Degree	3 to 4 years (post master's)	University	Designed for working professionals who have practical experience in their field and want to increase their knowledge, advance their careers, and translate their work experience into a higher position of credibility, leadership, and influence.

IN-PERSON VS HYBRID VS REMOTE LEARNING

Given advances in technology it's likely you will be required to complete at least some education online. You may even choose to complete most of a program via distance education.

The **three** major aspects to effectively learning from home have been summarized as:

- Technological (effectively leveraging technology)
- Behavioral (completing tasks and managing your time effectively)
- Managing relationships (making connections, communicating effectively, and asking for help)



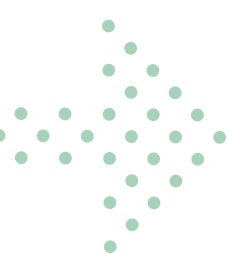
Here are some questions to get you thinking about your readiness to succeed in remote learning:

- Do you have the technology required and are you prepared to budget for adjustments needed along the way?
- What kinds of technology are you already using competently and with ease (messaging apps, video-conferencing, etc.)?
- Are you prepared for self-learning?
- Do you have routines established for organization (e.g., regular habits of checking email, using lists, calendars)?
- Do you have established routines for physical health and wellness? Emotional wellness?
- What is your comfort level with asking questions? For being proactive in gaining feedback from others (instructors, classmates) if you are feeling stuck?

DEFINING CAREER SUCCESS

The notion of the **career ladder** still pervades common ideas about career progression and success. The term career ladder is commonly defined as vertical movement, with increasing pay and responsibility.

However, organizational structures are moving from hierarchical, multi-level structures to flatter ones, which provide less opportunity to meet the traditional expectations of career advancement and promotion.



The move to flatter organizations encourages individuals to make lateral transitions (a move to a different job with essentially the same title, pay and role either within your current place of employment or with a new company) or move into new roles in other industries.

Additionally, with the increase in workforce diversity, there is a broader range in how individuals define career success. The basis for the definition of career success often stems from an individual's beliefs and values.

While it's typical for you to compare yourself and your career to the experiences of others (especially those people who you admire and look up to and whose opinion you value), be aware that different career experiences and values can and do exist. Chapter 7 will give you an opportunity to clarify your values and give you an opportunity to translate your values into actions!



These comparisons, and when individuals believe there is only one right path for a career or one right path to success, can **negatively** impact self-esteem.

Brousseau and Driver (1998) suggest that how people typically view career can be summarized by **three** fundamental differences:

- 1. Stability:** Should my career change or stay the way it is? (e.g. responsibilities, employer, industry)
- 2. Direction:** In what direction should my career go? (e.g. upward, lateral)
- 3. Duration:** How often should I make career changes?

Based on how an individual answers the prior questions, Brousseau and Driver developed four **career concepts** to account for how people view careers. These are described as:

• **EXPERT CAREER CONCEPT**



This is the most common and traditional conceptualization of career.

It emphasizes the lifelong commitment to one profession, mastering knowledge and skills in a particular field (e.g. teacher, nurse, firefighter).

Individuals with this career concept often value commitment, quality, security, and specialization. It is a high-stability, upward-directed, long-duration career concept.

• **SPIRAL CAREER CONCEPT**



This is much less traditional and is characterized by lateral (and potentially upward) change, typically every 5-10 years.

Individuals with this career concept tend to develop a much broader skill set. Each transition builds upon existing skills. The term spiral illustrates how career evolves, spiraling outward from a core set of knowledge, skills, and abilities, with the application of these attributes to new environments.

Individuals with this career concept typically value variety and personal growth. It is a mid-stability, lateral and sometimes upward-directed, mid to long-duration career concept.

• **LINEAR CAREER CONCEPT**



This career emphasizes upward movement consistent with the idea of the career ladder.

This concept is characterized by an increased level of responsibility, influence and status (e.g. accountant, lawyer).

Individuals with this career concept typically value leadership, competitiveness, and achievement. The linear career concept is a low-stability, upward-directed, long-duration concept.

• **TRANSITORY CAREER CONCEPT**



This is the least conventional of the concepts and is characterized by the most change.

Others may not even view this pattern as a career, as a person with this concept consistently seeks change.

Individuals with this career concept typically value variety, independence, and flexibility and often work as contractors due to these values. This career concept is mid to low-stability, lateral direction, and mid to low-duration.



REMEMBER:

The trends described throughout this chapter do **not** constitute an exhaustive list of all trends affecting your career! Some industries will experience unique trends (e.g., the cyclical, “boom and bust” nature of the oil and gas industry).

Trends can come and go quickly and have profound impacts on your career, especially if you’re not monitoring these shifts in the world of work.

It’s important to periodically identify and monitor changes, reflecting on how they have and might impact your career.

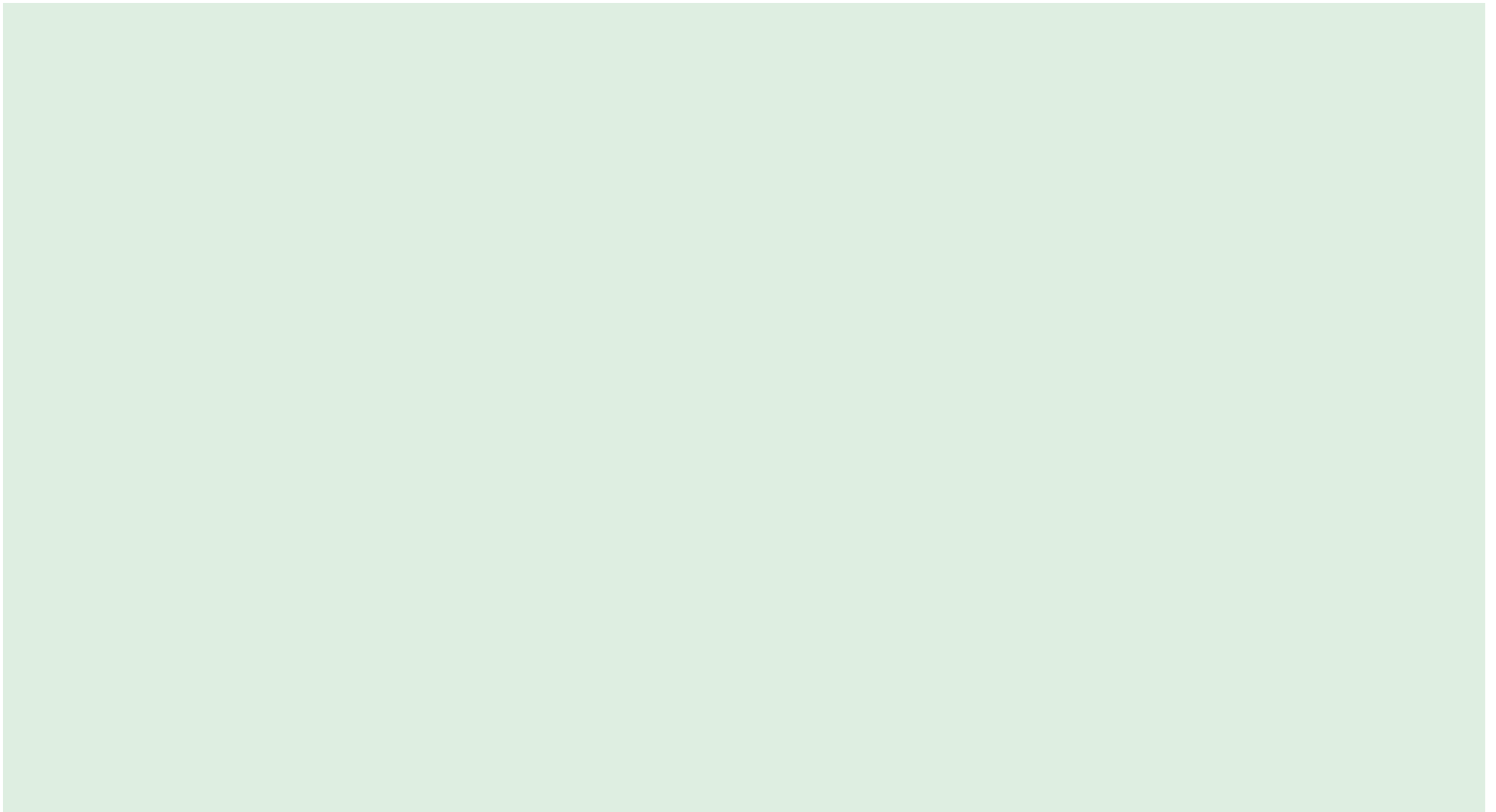
Doing so will help you capitalize on trends and manage your career through informed decision-making. While you can’t always control a particular trend, you can control your response and opportunistically position yourself once you’re aware of the trend and its potential impact.

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REFLECTION:

How do you define career success?

Which of these career concepts would you like your future career to resemble? Why?

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