Find Meaningful Work

Ryan Murphy is NOT a man

Health & Fitness: Physical work doesn't equal physical fitness

Natural Building

The Importance of Tax Planning
Through sharing the stories of other women working in the construction industry or with a craft, we hope that you will find what you need to get to work or tell another woman about what you’ve learned.

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Be true to who you are. We have to fit into this other world and be true to who we are. That’s the challenge.

These words were spoken to me only months ago by an amazing Journeyman Plumber/Pipefitter, and advocate for women in the trades, Tamara Pongracz. Although I wish I had been able to hear these words when I started my journey into the construction industry, I’m elated that other women can now read them and embark on a personal challenge to join this amazing industry filled with upcoming opportunities for students, employees, and especially, business owners.

Working in the construction industry isn’t easy. A pink portable toilet and pink hard hats haven’t eliminated the fact that the industry itself is cyclical, and like the economy, it isn’t as predictable as we would like to believe it is. When it’s good, it’s good. However, in a time of recession or downturns, it’s a struggle. While pregnant with my first son, I was let go from my position as a tile setter (yes, it’s legal to do this!) just a few hours shy of earning my Journeyman certification. Although it was a good decision, considering the fumes from paints and spray foams from the commercial environment I was working in, it kicked this mama bear into survival mode. Quickly I realized that there must be a way to stay positive, involved in the industry, and also answer the questions from all the women who asked me about what I do, and how I got there.

And so, during my back-to-back maternity leaves, Women in Work Boots was born. The challenge of being a female Journeyman tile setter, educator and trying to create a network for women in the trades was tremendous. And then I became a mother to two amazing little boys—phew, two full time jobs!

But this need for our stories and experiences as women in the construction industry to be shared and told in a positive light to encourage more women to consider the industry as an auspicious career option was overwhelming, as was the request for more information, more resources, more stories and more support.

Now, our Facebook page has grown to more than 700 followers, our website has had thousands of hits, and we are still so happy to be able to help and support women who currently are our desire to be working in the industry. We’re also growing to support trades people who are in business, or want to build a more solid business (more information about this will be coming out in the next couple of weeks in our website and Facebook page, so keep checking in!)

After spending eight years in more than 20 countries, I began my career as a tile setter because I was so enamored and interested in the infrastructure in other countries. These infrastructures were built hundreds and thousands of years ago and were still standing. Today, that is my hope with Women in Work Boots. The stories on the website are inspirational, motivating and powerful enough to enthuse those that are still generations away. I want the women who follow me down the path of the trades industry to read about the amazing women I have met and interviewed—women who love their work, love the careers they’ve created for themselves and love the environments they work in, they want to tell others about the journey they each took to get where they’re at now, helping women find education programs, apprenticeships, employers, businesses and create meaningful work. And now that this infrastructure has been created and built through these stories and experiences; it can be built upon and still be here in hundreds of years.

I welcome you to the first edition of Women in Work Boots Magazine, and THANK YOU for joining us!

Jill Drader

Please follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/womeninworkboots and tell us what you like and want to see more of!

To contact Jill Drader, feel free to email her at jill@womeninworkboots.ca.
The best way to be informed about trades training is to do your research. Read carefully, attend information sessions, call student advisers, speak with past students or participants, talk to instructors, and/or interview tradespeople working in the field. Do whatever you have to do to make the most informed decision you can when it comes to your education and future certifications.

1. SOUTHERN ALBERTA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (www.sait.ca) is a polytechnic in Calgary with various campuses across Alberta. Check out their Apprentice Registration and Trades programs and courses. If you’re not a registered apprentice but want to be, maybe their Pre-Employment or Pre-Apprenticeship courses are what you’re looking for.

2. SASKATCHEWAN INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SIAST) (www.siasat.ca) is a polytechnic with a unique course offered on the weekends for women thinking about changing careers. Their Women In Trades Exploratory Course gives you the option to explore the carpentry, welding, machining, and automotive trades to determine if the industry is the right fit for you. Check out www.gosiast.com and search for the course code CEXP 1600.

3. INDUSTRY TRAINING AUTHORITY (ITA) (www.itabc.ca) manages the trades and apprenticeship programs for British Columbia. They have a Women In Trades section on their website and it’s a wealth of information. It also shares which programs are funded with their support and some are for women only.

4. MOMENTUM (www.momentum.org) is based in Calgary, Alberta. Momentum has a trades training program for Immigrants and/or Aboriginals who wish to participate in a pre-apprenticeship program to become a carpenter, glazier (works with glass), heavy duty technician, or plumber/piped fitter.

5. WOMEN BUILDING FUTURES (www.womenbuildingfutures.ca) Based in Edmonton, Alberta, this school is leading the way for trades training for women. They have a rigorous application process and limited seats for their programs, but that’s because their programs produce successful, well-trained women who get right to work. Their Journeywoman Start Program might be the right program for you.

6. Trade Winds to Success (www.accessfutures.com) is a Calgary training program for Aboriginals looking to take a Pre-Apprenticeship course in the following trades: Boilermaker, Carpenter, Electrician, Ironworker, Millwright, Plumber, Steam/Pipe fitter, or Welder. Check out their programs at www.tradewindstosuccess.ca.

7. NORTHERN ALBERTA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (www.nait.ca) is a polytechnic in Edmonton with various campuses across Alberta. They offer Pre-Employment and Pre-Apprenticeship programs and courses that can start your trades career without having to be a registered apprentice to attend. They also offer a weekend course called Becoming a Master Instructor for those skilled in a trade, or specializing in a craft and want to learn how to prepare a class or workshop and teach a group of adult learners.

8. ACCESS IS THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY CAREER EMPLOYMENT SERVICE SOCIETY (www.accessfutures.com) operating around the Vancouver area. They have trades training programs posted for 2013 and 2014 in welding, machining, metal fabrication, piping, and electrical industries. Check them out at www.accessfutures.com.

9. UNIONS Many unions have their own training schools and most operate in every province. There are too many to list here, but start your research under the Resources section of the (www.journeymaninc.ca) website where the Canada’s Building Trades Unions are listed. Journeyman is a network of Women of the Building Trades in Canada.

10. OKANAGAN COLLEGE (www.okanagan.bc.ca) offers a program called Gateway to the Building Trades For Women through their Women In Trades Training Initiative. The programs are delivered through their campuses in Vernon, Kelowna, and Salmon Arm. This is an excellent way for women to get a start in the trades.

Do you have a program that you want others to know about? Please share it on our Facebook page for our growing community.

www.facebook.com/womeninworkboots
We named our 8” multi purpose work boot after the famous Amelia Earhart; noted American aviation pioneer and author. Ms Earhart was the first woman to receive the US Distinguished Flying Cross. Ms. Earhart also wrote best selling books and was instrumental in the formation of The Ninety-Nines, an organization for female pilots. This moxie woman was fearless.

Typically a flower of divine beauty that survives from the mud and grows toward the light. We named this boot after our contest winner Barb Gordon shared some thoughts on the strength of women and the symbolism we share with the divine lotus flower.

The name of our light weight but heavy duty work boot is inspired by a woman with a light hand and a heavy foot. Danica Patrick is the most successful woman in the history of American open-wheel racing, being the only woman to win the IndyCar Series as well as holding the highest finish by a woman at the Indianapolis 500 of 3rd place. She started her career with kart racing, raced Formula Ford and then moved up to Indy Cars. Most recently, Danica has moved to NASCAR. We think she has MOXIE!

To date, Okanagan College has provided funded training opportunities for careers in skilled trades, for over 500 women in British Columbia through the Women in Trades Training (WITT) Project. Women in Trades Training (WITT) at Okanagan College is funded through the Canada-British Columbia labour Market Agreement, and is targeting unemployed and underemployed women. The goal and vision for this project is to increase the number of female apprentices in the Province of BC. Ultimately it is the intention of Okanagan College to encourage, support and inspire women to choose non-traditional employment that is rewarding, profitable and satisfying in an experiential learning environment.

Right now, Okanagan College is gearing up for another fantastic year, with programs running up and down the Okanagan Valley from Kelowna, to Vernon and Salmon Arm starting in September 2013. These three locations will offer the 12 week, gateway to the Building Trades for Women program which is an exploratory program providing students with both practical and theoretical experience in a wide variety of trade sectors. Students will gain the hands on experience and firsthand knowledge required to make an informed decision about which trade to enter, as well as learning practical skills and industry requirements for a variety of trades and will explore how to secure employment and further training.

Another fully funded training option is available to women who have already chosen which trade they would like to pursue as a career. Sponsorship includes tuition, books, mandatory tools and personal protective equipment, and there are now more than 13 different trades programs to choose from at Okanagan College!

Supporting students is a priority for Okanagan College and the WITT Team is committed to building compassionate and inclusive relationships with our students. With mentors on staff to assist participants through the program as well as funding for tutoring and other supports to our valued students, their success is our success and Okanagan College works hard to foster a student centered experience and supports the enhancement of their personal support networks and connections.
When speaking about being a woman in the trades, Kate Braid, who started in construction as a labourer in 1977 and got her Journeyman ticket in 1980, provides the world with one of few sources of literature on the subject. With fifteen years of experience as one of the first women to enter the challenging, rewarding realm of trades work, Kate Braid has crafted elegant prose and poetry capturing the complexities of personal identity, the joy of fulfilment, the hardships of passion and the struggles of being a woman in what is seemingly a man’s industry.

Braid’s keynote speech during the TRADE UP! Women in Trades Conference held at Okanagan College’s Kelowna Campus on July 6th, 2013, was inspiring, memorable and delved into the internal anxieties and external difficulties experienced by many women in the trades. And although Braid, a Red Seal Carpenter, has found deep satisfaction and enthusiasm working in the trades, she begins her keynote speech by confessing that the path her life took was not an expected one.

The following is an edited version of Kate Braid’s keynote speech:

“I never planned to be a carpenter. I was raised in the 1950s and in those days they said, ‘If you aren’t going to get married and have babies (because that’s what nice girls are supposed to do), then you can be either a nurse, a secretary, or a teacher.’ There were no other choices… Well, maybe waitress. And if you read the results of the latest Canadian census, not a lot has changed. The vast majority of women today still work in low paying clerical, sales and service jobs. I suspect that today a smart, physically active young woman might be directed toward a job — perhaps not as a secretary — but as a fitness trainer, or a gym instructor. Not boiler maker or welder or plumber. So, I picked secretary. I was awful as a secretary. And it was quite by accident, years later, that after trying many of the traditional women’s jobs (I was a receptionist, I was a childcare worker and so on), I stumbled into construction — quite literally.

“It happened in 1977. I was living on Pender Island, and told some of my men friends at a party one night that I was going to have to leave the island (which I didn’t want to do), because I was running out of money. One of the guys had just quit his job as a carpenter building the local school, which was a huge project for a small island, so he asked, ‘Why didn’t I apply for his job?’ This was 1977, and none of us had ever heard of a woman ever doing this kind of work. I said the first thing that came to my mind, which was, ‘I’ve never built anything.’ And he gave me the best advice I ever got in construction: lie […] The foreman hired me the next day, not as a carpenter but as a labourer, only because the guys had been slowing down on the job and he thought if he hired a woman they would speed up to show off. He didn’t reckon that I would fall in love, totally smitten, with construction work. That was the beginning of fifteen years of an amazing and life-changing career […]

“I loved what most of you who have had a taste of the trades also love. I loved being outdoors, using my body, being fit and active, and mechanically competent, and confident. Well, confidence mostly came later. Also, on the good days, I loved working with a crew of men. But it isn’t as if I never thought of dropping out, sometimes on a daily basis. The first time that happened, I’d been working for almost two years as a labourer. I loved what I was doing and one my bosses said, ‘Have you ever thought of apprenticeship?’ I’d never heard of apprenticeship; it wasn’t nurse, secretary or teacher! So, I applied for a pre-trades course, but then one night at the pub I got into conversation with some of the guys I’d been working with, about ceiling tiles. Then I turned aside and joined the women in a conversation about decorating or relationships. And then I panicked. I felt as if the earth was opening under me and I thought: Who am I? Am I male or female? How is it possible to be so at home, to love both of these very different worlds? So, before starting my pre-apprentice course at BCT (which was then PVI), I did my MA thesis on women in trades in B.C., and found that in 1977 we were 2-3% of the trades (not counting chefs and hairdressers). Soon after I finished my pre-apprenticeship course I started working. We soon began a Vancouver Women in Trades group that
worked to change the numbers. We lobbied government and industry, we worked as role models, the foremen didn’t say, ‘What’s the matter with your labourer?’ He says, ‘What’s the matter with you?’ And you’re soon off the job. So one day I was coming out of the lunchroom each week when my labourer made another one of his stupid, put-down comments to me. Before I could answer, the carpenter immediately stepped up, he was a foreman who knew me from a previous job, said, ‘You can’t say that casually. Lay off two words. But for my labourer it was as if the sky had opened and God had spoken. From that day on, that labourer couldn’t do enough for me. It was the only time in fifteen years that a man spoke up for me when another man was giving me a hard time and the effect was dramatic.

"Second story."

Years later, I was giving a talk at a local high school where the shop teacher was worried because he had very few young women in his classes. After the talk, I got up the nerve to say to him, ‘Every time someone – anyone – is being harassed on a crew, I’ve come to realize that everyone knows it. It makes them uncomfortable, but no one ever says a word. The teacher said, ‘Yeah, that’s right’ So I said, ‘Why don’t you speak up?’ He looked at me in amazement and said, ‘Because that would be implying you couldn’t look after yourself on the job.’ It was my turn to be amazed, but it made perfect sense. Man sense (pardon me, guys, if I generalize for a bit here).

“When women walk onto a construction site, we’re walking into a man’s world. It’s like walking into a different culture, a male culture. You’re the only one who’s written a lot about that past. We women can and must learn to get a long in that culture (I call it, being the East Coast girl, the West Coast girl). The men don’t learn our culture, why should they? There’s only one of us. In that male culture, looking after yourself is the equivalent to looking after your pride, your manhood. So, of course, someone else interfering is seen as demeaning. But in most women’s way of thinking, in a woman’s culture, speaking up for you is seen as a kindness, as caring. On top of that, some women take it personally. I know I did. So if a guy passed me and the others didn’t say anything, I didn’t speak up for me, I thought it was because he hated me. Of course, I’m useless. I shouldn’t be here. It took me years to learn that wasn’t the case. They didn’t speak up because in man thinking they were doing me a favour.”

"The fourth story."

Vancouver friend of mine was looking for a welder for his ship-building company and I recommended the wonderful Hilary Peach. Hilary spends half of the year working up in the North, welding on pipelines, and the other half arranging poetry events on Gabriola Island. Later, she told me that one guy in that shop, an old man who didn’t know a lot about the high-tech equipment she was using, made a disparaging comment to her related to being a woman. And a younger man near by told him to be quiet. That, Hilary said, was shock enough. But then not only did the other man call her in the next day and apologize, and tell her that his in shop everyone gets treated with respect, but the older guy himself came and apologized to her. Unbelievable. She told me, ‘Kate, it was huge. The old man was giving me a hard time and the effect was dramatic.”

"With the help of good foremen and forewomen, site managers and owners, we will one day see a lot more women, First Nations, and people of color, share in these deeply rewarding careers.”

Look at Ed over there. Sixty if he’s a day and the man looks more graceful than a goddamned crane. Nails him for it. Nails him all around him like some Eastern palace. Ed knows.

Those little lines of steel can talk, tell you what kind of wood you’re dealing with, how thick and whether it’s wet or dry. You feed ‘em to your hammer like this. Are you right-handed? Hammer in the right, nails in the left. Don’t look! Just finger those nails and roll them like cigarettes.

Place them one at a time fast, right where your hammer is waiting, poised at the top of the next swing to give them a love tap or two.

Got the rhythm, kid, you got it now? You’ve got to love a job that’s got this much rhythm, this much swing.”

(IN Turning Left to the Ladies, Palimpsest Press, 2009) Ending with a powerful poem, Kate Braids’ passion and devotion to the trades is inspiring, while her experiences are eye opening. An accomplished writer, Braids has published several books of poetry and prose highlighting the world of a tradeswoman, with her most recent book being a memoir, “Journeywoman: Swinging A Hammer in a Man’s World,” which can be purchased at local bookstores. It tells Braids’ story of courage and ambition as she breaks down barriers and chart her own course for herself in an industry that is still – for now – male-dominated.

For more information on Kate Braid, please visit www.katebraid.com

Written by Jennifer Sintime

Lesson One: Nails.
Anyone hearing your company’s name for the first time would assume that “Ryan Murphy” is a man. What made you choose this name, and do you think it helps to attract the business of those who may be skeptical about working with a construction company owned by women?

We definitely chose the name based on the assumption people would think it was a man. It was an intentional play-on-words that actually makes for great conversation (and probably doesn’t hurt in an industry that largely employees men!). As far as it giving us more opportunity, that’s tough to say as no one has told us straight up they wouldn’t work with us because we were women— at least not to our face!

Ryan Murphy Construction Inc., a Calgary, Alberta-based construction company, would fool most of those who would assume that it is male owned and operated. A clever illusion, Karen Ryan and Lara Murphy have found a witty way to place themselves into what many would claim as a male-dominated industry. Fortunately, Karen and Lara have taken the masculine image of construction and, for lack of a better term, owned it.

Laura Murphy & Karen Ryan
Left to right.
What made you guys decide to get into business together?

We met on a job site in Banff during the boom in 2007. At the time, things were incredibly busy. As the only two women working on the site, we struck up conversations that lead to the potential for an opportunity in business together. We tried a few smaller projects together and in 2008, Ryan Murphy Construction Inc. was formed!

What kind of work do you guys specialize in, and of the services you offer, what are the majority of contracts you take?

We are general contractors, working in commercial, retail and residential construction. We also have a division that is dedicated to home modifications for families and individuals with special needs.

Since the floodwater hit Alberta in June, our residential side has really gained momentum. Currently, we are constructing a holistic clinic, residential wheelchair ramps and a Tommy Hilfiger store. As you can see, it’s a mixed bag. Our mantra is “No job is too small, and no job is too large!” We do it all!

What are some of the challenges you have had to face being women in the construction industry?

Interestingly enough, we haven’t had many negative experiences at all (only one client thus far asked us about a “hen party”). Overall, it’s been a positive experience; perhaps it’s largely to do with the fact that we don’t dwell on the gender card, but use our energy working. No one can argue with a job that’s completed on budget and on time!

What demographic do the majority of your customers belong to, and why do you think this is?

On the commercial side we tend to do work for local business owners here in Calgary. Many of our clients are repeat customers and the demographic would be 40-somethings, including franchisees. In terms of residential, there’s also a wide demographic; we do work for a lot of female designers, architects, and business owners.

What do each of you love most about your job?

Lara: The people and the wide range of opportunities available. For example, we sponsored a team for the Calgary Scotia Bank Marathon in May 2013, in support of Cerebral Palsy. We did this in honour of a little girl named Piper Jackson, the daughter of one of our home modification clients, allowing three year-old Piper the ability to freely move about her house with her special walker. Participating in this event was very rewarding for all involved… Not to mention the money we raised!

Karen: I love that there’s something new and challenging everyday (as I’m sure you can gather, I’m the quieter one of the Ryan Murphy team)!

What are the biggest challenges you’ve faced?

Changing the perception and reputation of the construction industry by moving forward in a positive way with our team, making ourselves 100% as accountable as the people working on our sites. Owning it.

What have you learned as female entrepreneurs in the construction industry?

To go out of your comfort zone everyday, network, find a mentor and to learn how to ask questions.

Where do you guys see yourselves in five years?

Our business has grown every year and we’d like to continue that trend with an even more productive team to help us accomplish our goals. One goal in particular would be with our charity work. With charity, it isn’t just about revenue but learning to give back to the community, city and youth. One of the most rewarding experiences from this past summer was taking on a summer student from the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP). Although she was only fifteen years old, she opened our eyes to the many possibilities in construction. The perception of trades in the industry is changing, and it’s nice to experience that first hand with the younger generation.

What would you say to any women interested in starting their own business in a male dominated industry, like construction?

I’d say that anyone looking to start your own business, in any field, has to know that what you are taking on is something that you not only believe in, but also are willing to make (and take) the time to build forward. There are ups and downs everyday; you need to have a thick skin and confidence in knowing that on any given day you might fail more than you succeed. By surrounding yourself with like-minded people, you will push forward. Oh, and above all else, trust your spidey senses!

For more information of Ryan Murphy Construction Inc., feel free to visit their website at www.ryanmurphyconstruction.com
You’ve finally done it. You’ve conquered the Freshman Fifteen, the endless all-nighters, the cram sessions and the uncompassionate professors who don’t necessarily find much favor in it. Fortunately, regardless of what degree you have, there’s always one career path that’s ready to absorb your skills, passion and ambitions—the trades.

Both Carly Slade and Heather Noakes, owners and entrepreneurs of their own respective businesses, have been down the rewarding path of University education, only to find that they’re doing something outside of the realms of their degrees. Carly Slade, part owner of 2Stone Designer Concrete (a Calgary, AB based design firm, specializing in pre-cast glass fiber reinforced cement—I know, a mouthful!) and ACAD graduate, finds that her post-secondary education has deeply benefited her whilst working in the trades.

"A lot of things you learn at school, at least at ACAD, were how to write a submission, how to do photos, websites and online marketing," says Slade. "I do all of the writing that 2stone does—the website, all of our blogs, anything that goes out. I definitely learned how to properly format and write well at school, so I think going to school brings professionalism to what you do. Likewise, at school I was using wood, clay, glass, rubber and fibreglass. And though I was using all of these materials in an artistic sense, now I have the knowledge of how to use all of those materials, and then it comes into a practical sense when I use it here at 2stone."

With a degree in Ceramics from ACAD, it seems that the jump to working with concrete wasn’t difficult for Slade. “I think I’ve always liked working with my hands, and I’ve always liked creating something out of nothing. And, being a ceramic artist, it’s all about working with mud and getting dirty. When I transitioned into concrete I found that it was very similar to clay. It has a lot of the same terminology and a lot of the same steps, like making a recipe to get what you want, building molds and building forms; they just share a lot of the same aspects.”

But when it comes to the freedom of being an artist, there are some reservations to be had when working in a different industry. “I’m not just getting to make whatever I want and whatever comes to mind the same way I would with an art piece,” remarks Slade. "Here it’s more predetermined with what I have to make. So, in that respect it isn’t completely fulfilling, but it is still kind of the same ideas. And I get the same satisfaction of making something.”

Holding a similar educational background as Slade, Heather Noakes attended ACAD for two years before she finished her open-ended Fine Arts degree at the Emily Carr University of Art and Design. Co-owner of Dirt Craft Natural Building, a small business based in Calgary, AB, Noakes (and her partner Ashley Lubyk) aimed to “inspire a new movement around building attainable shelter.” In order to do this, Heather Noakes combined her love of nature and artistic abilities. “I really value nature,” Heather begins. “It’s always been a strong theme in my life and I think we can do a better job with building that relationship, and I think that it’s a healthy one to have in our lives. I think using natural materials just re-establishes that.”
appropriate here [in Alberta]. So, we build houses from that, but it's just not cob mostly. On the West Coast [we] are more focused using observation of nature and patterns (can we provide to that system?), and permaculture.

“Permaculture is basically looking at the joys, passions and flexibility of working as a self-employed entrepreneur in the trades industry, but nothing so great as to deter an ambitious woman. Aside from drowning in the abyss of work-life balance (which, to be fair, could be said of any career), when speaking of the challenges of being a female working in a male-dominated industry, Slade expresses her opinions, ‘I think a lot of it is just assumptions that people have. That kind of creates an anxiety...’

Heather Noakes found similar challenges. “People are so excited to learn [at our workshops] that gender doesn’t play a role. However, when we show up on site where there’s multiple trades-people working, maybe where there’s people who don’t know so much about natural building, I think it’s more the natural building that throw people off than the fact that I’m a woman,” Noakes laughs. “But often people will remark, ‘Oh, you guys do know what you’re talking about’.” However, I’m definitely not taken seriously at first, and I feel like I have to prove myself.” Noakes also notes that when compared to her male co-owner, at times she feels she isn’t treated with the same amount of respect. And although she finds it frustrating, “it hasn’t impacted me to the point where I feel like I’m really inhibited in terms of getting work done.”

If there’s anything that can be gained from the experiences of these women working in the trades, it’s that the challenges of working in a male dominated industry aren’t anything to be scared of. In fact, Carly Slade has some words of advice for those who may feel uneasy at the thought of figuring out how to behave whilst working in the trades:

“I think the biggest thing with working in the trades is that you have to treat it as a professional business, just like anything else. You show up on time, you need to conduct yourself well, you don’t bring your drama to work and dress appropriately. Some pitfalls that I have seen in other women are showing up with a face full of make-up and stopping every twenty-five minutes to reapply. This isn’t the place for looking pretty; this is the place to get your job done, and I think that’s important to still be professional. I know in being a manager and hiring people, I’ve been kind of astonished at how poorly some people apply for jobs and conduct themselves in interviews. Some people walk in here smoking and swearing, are late and all a mess; they can’t spell properly and can’t punctuate. No showing is really common too. I think a lot of people don’t take the trades seriously.”

Whether it’s a love of nature, a joy of building things with their hands or even the artistic and creative side of creating something, both of these women love what they do. And if there lies any uncertainty about where to start, what to do and how to get where you want to go in the trades, both Heather Noakes and Carly Slade leave off with some helpful advice.

Noakes: “My advice would be to find a mentor, or maybe a couple of mentors. I have women that I turn to when I have strictly business questions, whether that’s bookkeeping, marketing or business structure. It’s really important to have someone to turn to because I think it’s really overwhelming. To do it on your own is ridiculous. I often spend a lot of time trying to do it myself, and then I realize I should just ask for help, and it goes so much quicker; people are really happy to offer mentorship.”

Slade: “My biggest advice would be to say, ‘Do it.’ Stop second-guessing yourself and just do it. It’s going to be a lot hard work. You’re not going to be able to buy groceries some months, you might run out of toothpaste, but the rewards are worth it.” The biggest thing to me is professionalism. Set yourself professionally.

Written by Jennifer Sintime
I spent so many years as an ironworker, I was a personal server. I loved that the work was exciting and challenging and working with the boys. I loved the physical labour immediately it was what I wanted to do. I loved the physical labour and working with the boys. It was exciting and challenging and I loved that the work was nontraditional. I started to brainstorm ways to promote women in trades. I didn’t want anyone to miss out on the opportunities, benefits of unions, apprenticeships, and paid training. As the years went by I thought up more and more ideas that I shared with a few people.

Soon after I went down to my acquaintance of mine suggested I look into being an ironworker. I was a personal support worker and bartender server. I spent so many years doing things I didn’t love. An acquaintance of mine suggested I look into being an ironworker. I looked into being an ironworker. Soon after I went down to my local union hall and signed up. Once I started ironworking I knew immediately it was what I wanted to do. I loved the physical labour and working with the boys. It was exciting and challenging and I loved that the work was nontraditional.

It took a few pushes to get me to finally put my ideas into action. In March of 2012 Journeyman was born. I put together a letter to submit to anyone I can think of that could offer me resources. Almost immediately the Canadian Building Trades Unions, Infrastructure Health and Safety Association of Ontario, Ontario Construction Secretariat, Comstock Canada & Jacobs Industrial offered different types of support.

Within six months, Journeyman, was trademarked, a Facebook page was under way with a healthy following, and the website was running. I was getting lots of positive attention and feedback.

In October 2012 the Canadian Building Trades began to give me guidance and support. Together we worked on a proposal to present to the fourteen affiliated unions under the Building Trades umbrella at their annual meeting in January of 2013. All 14 trades unions unanimously agreed to a partnership with Journeyman!! It was an exciting day. Journeyman was now a national women in trades program through the CBTU.

As a proud union ironworker I love my job but I am not a business person. The CBTU has allocated some of their time to help. They bring my ideas to life.

The CBTU has so many resources and are able to take Journeyman to new heights.

We have been working on branding and a new website to create content such as information packages to help promote, recruit, mentor, and retain women in the building trades unions. We also plan to feature biographies of women working in the unionized construction trades from all walks of life.

Working with the CBTU has been amazing. With the business side being taken care of I now have the liberty to go out and be the face of the initiative by promoting the CBTU and Journeyman by attending trade shows, career fairs, mentorship dinners and other events. Sharing my story has become a great passion as it helps others.

The best thing is that I still have freedom to continue to do what I LOVE most by being an active ironworker/welder and working on the tools. This has all been such an incredible experience. I invite you to join us on the journey and help us to promote exciting and rewarding career opportunities for women in construction.

Journeyman is a Canadian Building Trades initiative supported by fourteen affiliated international unions. To learn more about Canada’s Building Trades Unions and our 14 affiliates, please visit buildingtrades.ca for more information or email.
Catherine MacMillan is the founder of Smart Trucking, an online resource and network of truckers who are passionate about their work. Here she shares her story of how she became an entrepreneur in an industry that has been traditionally targeted to men. 

There's just no doubt about it, the trucking industry is a man's world. Big rig trucks, diesel engines, CB radios, loading docks, heavy equipment... these are all part of the world of trucking that has traditionally belonged to the men. But, in recent years, the number of women in trucking is slowly increasing.

There's bound to be some challenges for a gal, no matter what her role, in any industry that is seriously dominated by males.

As the owner of a small produce-hauling fleet, I’ve tripped across a few interesting situations in the early days of my involvement in trucking. Mostly the men were surprised and voiced, ‘Why would a woman have anything to do with trucking?’

Honestly? It never really did cross my mind that I was any different than anyone else in the trucking industry. I never once thought I had to try any harder than a man to be successful. It was all about doing the job.

I believe the key to success in any job, is to have the confidence and the drive to do the job and do it extremely well. Gender has absolutely nothing to do with job success. My advice is keep your nose to the grindstone and stay focused and true to your goals.

WHY TRUCKING?

I grew up around trucks... my grandfather was a trucker, so I knew a lot about big rigs. Way more than most others girls... but they're not just male skills, just skills.

Today, intelligence, creativity and training are highly valued, most of the muscle is provided by machines. The members of the Building Trades are working smarter, not harder. Modern technology and equipment have provided us with a mechanical advantage to make our workplace less hazardous and more ergonomically friendly. Technology has opened doors for women to join a once male dominated workforce and bring home a substantial pay check. Now women from all walks of life are joining union apprenticeship programs and becoming successful, respected journeymen.

As forecasted by BuildForce Canada, between 2013 and 2021, Canada's construction labour force will need to increase by 42,000 to meet demands as construction activity rises and by another 210,000 to replace retiring workers. These replacement requirements may be partially met by an estimated 152,000 new entrants to the workforce but this leaves an estimated gap of 100,000 workers who will need to be recruited from outside of the construction industry to meet labour requirements.

Canada’s Building Trades Unions is the national voice of organized construction workers in Canada. Our mission is to represent all workers in the building, construction fabrication and maintenance industry to foster safe, improved working conditions and to better the quality of life for those workers and their families.

Our fourteen affiliated International Unions represent over 400,000 skilled men and women working from coast-to-coast in every craft. Members of our affiliates are the most highly skilled construction workforce in the world. They produce the best product, give the best value and enhance the owner's investment by their work on the job.

To learn more about Canada's Building Trades Unions and our 14 affiliates, please visit buildingtrades.ca for more information or email lamundsen@buildingtrades.ca.

The SKY IS THE LIMIT!

BY: LINDSAY AMUNDSON

Journeyman is a Canadian building trades union initiative is a national program promoting, supporting and mentoring women in the skilled construction trades.

The Building Trades are making tradeswomen a priority in their mandate; all fourteen affiliated unions unanimously hopped onboard when presented with an opportunity to launch a national women in trades initiative. They recognize the significance and importance of representing women working in the industry and promoting, fulfilling and rewarding careers in the trades.

Studies have shown that women who are exposed to trades and technology while young, have role models in the industry and prepare for a male-dominated workplaces have long and successful careers in the trades. The Building Trades are doing this by investing in Journeyman, which was introduced by a ten year hardworking member of the Ironworkers local 736, Jamie McMillan. Their passion, enthusiasm and creativity are the key to success in promoting careers for women in the trades. She loves her job, and she wants women out there to know that they can do it too. Journeyman plans to promote careers in the trades through various events including trade shows, career fairs, mentorship dinners and local events nationwide. Journeyman currently has an active Facebook page and is in the development stages of a website to connect women currently in the trades as well showcase some of the many opportunities available for those interested in a career in construction.

Currently women represent approximately 4% of the construction trades. For some trades the representation is around 1-2% (plumbers, gasfitters, carpenters) whereas others have shown significant increases in percentage of women (tile setters, plasterers, drywallers/finishers, insulators ironworkers and drill blasters). We certainly have a lot of work to do when it comes to promoting construction as a career choice for women.

BETWEEN 2013 AND 2021, CANADA’S CONSTRUCTION LABOUR FORCE WILL NEED TO INCREASE BY 42,000

Construction is not just a job for the boys; today many women are enjoying great careers in the trades. These jobs take skills, but they’re not just male skills, just skills.

Today, intelligence, creativity and training are highly valued, most of the muscle is provided by machines. The members of the Building Trades are working smarter, not harder. Modern technology and equipment have provided us with a mechanical advantage to make our workplace less hazardous and more ergonomically friendly. Technology has opened doors for women to join a once male dominated workforce and bring home a substantial pay check. Now women from all walks of life are joining union apprenticeship programs and becoming successful, respected journeymen.

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WHY TRUCKING?

I grew up around trucks... my grandfather was a trucker, so I knew a lot about big rigs. Way more than most others girls as I found out!

After owning a truck for several years again, back when there was good money in trucking and the industry wasn’t so heavily regulated as it is now, I made the decision to take the whole thing to the next level. My entrepreneurial spirit was calling out to me in spite of the fact that my two university degrees were completely unrelated to trucking.

Slowly but surely, as the capital was generated, more and more equipment was added to my fleet. The hard work and long hours started to pay off. I was able to build up a successful small fleet, specializing in produce hauling.

Trucking has been a big part of my life, and thus a great passion. Two days in this business are rarely the same and that’s one of the things I love about it.

I’d certainly encourage any woman to pursue a career in trucking whether it be the role of a dispatcher, a truck driver, a fleet owner, or warehouse worker. If you’re able to master the skill set required for the work, go for it. Being a woman in a male-dominated industry is a non-issue in my books.

Trucking has been a huge part of my life for many, many years. Along with the successes, there were trials and tribulations too. The Smart Trucking website and other associated social platforms have been great ways to pass on my experience and lessons learned to others in the industry. This networking came to be a way for me to ‘give back’ to the trucking community.

As the creator of the Smart Trucking website, my interactions add a whole new dimension and richness to my life. I interact with truckers, fleet owners and other industry employees. It’s awesome to share stories and information with others in the business and share how professionals continue to grow in their field.

Check our website at www.smart-trucking.com and read about Gals and Their Rigs, one of our feature sections showcasing women who love their careers in the trucking industry.
on’t ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself what makes you come alive. And then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive. - Howard Thurman

Is it possible to make money and make progressive changes in the world? And what about that feeling we all want of passion and connection to our work? We are living in times of rapid economic change, employment uncertainty, and a growing awareness on the urgency to respond to social and ecological crises. With crisis comes opportunity for a people of all ages to become involved in finding creative solutions to the greatest challenges of our times. Whether we are looking at building better cities, improving renewable energy technologies, or growing food, fuel and fibre more effectively, we can learn from the wisdom of our elders, from modern-day researchers and innovators — and from Mother Nature herself.

In this brave new world of challenge and opportunity, there is no single road map for the shift to a cleaner, greener world. We are creating the future as we go along. Aligning what we do to make a living with the urgency of changing the world is the surest way to make tangible, long-lasting change.

WHAT MAKES ME COME ALIVE?
Faced with questions about what I could do to align my values and my work, my frustrations in seeking satisfying and rewarding work, and growing interest in social and economic trends toward green jobs and social innovation, I embarked my quest for meaningful work.

Since 2009, I have been working on creating an educational program called The Meaningful Work Project (MWP). Through MWP, I have been organizing and hosting learning programs, conducting academic research, and partnering with a variety of organizations to develop custom programming and deliver various consulting projects.

WHAT IS THE MEANINGFUL WORK PROJECT?
The Meaningful Work Project is an educational program, and an opportunity to learn new skills, get connected to a stronger sense of community and expand personal networks.

Creating MWP is part of my own response to the urgency I feel in transitioning our society and economy. By bringing people together to envision a better future, learning from inspiring professionals and each other, and sharing skills and knowledge, we can start moving on creating the kind of meaningful work that will take care of people and the planet.

Our educational programs help individuals and communities progress toward living within resilient ecosystems and a thriving local economy.
We incorporate leading research about social innovation, green jobs, transformative learning and permaculture to create interesting, fun and effective learning programs.

WHAT CAN THE MWP WEBSITE OFFER TO WOMEN THINKING ABOUT GETTING INTO THE TRADES OR STARTING THEIR OWN BUSINESS?

For women thinking about getting into the trades or starting their own businesses, we offer:

1. **Experiential educational program** for individuals seeking meaningful work that sustains people and ecosystem integrity. The Meaningful Work: Green Jobs + Social Innovation Retreat takes place October 25-27, 2013 in Canmore, AB. We also offer targeted workshops specifically aimed at organizations, conferences, and more.

2. **Storytelling as a source of inspiration**. The Trailblazers Series showcases inspiring stories of individuals living into their own stories of meaningful work, and showing a broad range of what is possible. We would love to hear your story too!

3. **Community of Practice**: Creating a stronger sense of community and support for individuals who are interested in pursuing work of service to people and planet is our key priority. We are striving to create a stronger community of practice, a group of colleagues who are actively supporting each other in working for change. Through programs such as the LifeJAM, a group process that supports social innovators, we strive to encourage seekers of meaningful work to feel more confident and empowered to pursue their goals. Also connect to us through social media on our website.

WHAT IS THE LIFEJAM?

Women In Work Boots founder, Jill Drader and I first met in an advanced French class at Mount Royal University a decade ago. Our lives have meandered in many ways, and by spring 2012, Jill was ready to launch her business, but wanted to pull together her friends, colleagues and family members to better support her as she ventured out on her own.

We decided to organize a LifeJAM, a facilitated group process that provides a structure that helps individuals gain clarity and catalyze action to move their meaningful work forward. By inviting in the “host” – the individual with the question to explore, along with supporters of the new project or question, we are able to pool the wisdom, support and intelligence of the community to support each other in moving forward.

Since that LifeJAM in Jill’s living room in June 2012, I completed the rest of the LifeJAM pilot and have written a draft of the LifeJAM handbook.

This is still a new idea that is in the “beta” phase. We are gently continuing to develop the LifeJAM into a service that we could offer on a wider scale. Find out more at www.MeaningfulWorkProject.ca/LifeJAM.

WHAT’S AHEAD FOR MWP?

Looking forward, we are excited to organize and host the next Meaningful Work Retreat in October, to complete the LifeJAM handbook and continue to develop our business model. We know we’re on to something big with hosting and facilitating the quest for meaningful work, but are still figuring out where this quest will take MWP and all the people who have been involved – including myself, as the founder and director.

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JANE COOPER IS A CERTIFIED LIFE COACH IN CALGARY, ALBERTA, AND THE FORMER MANAGER OF A TRADES PROGRAM FOR WOMEN THAT WAS A PARTNERSHIP THROUGH THE YWCA OF CALGARY AND VERMILION ENERGY.

T he construction industry needs workers who are skilled and safe. Women are an untapped labour force who are ready willing and able to learn new skills and apply them safely.

As a community we need to see the trades person before we see their gender and as women we need to see the opportunity before we see the barriers.

Construction jobs can be dangerous, especially when we are distracted.

A tool that I learned in my coach training and one that I have embraced in all of my life areas is something called the FEEL-THINK-DO loop.

Feelings are in the present moment and validating them keeps you in the present moment. If feelings are avoided and you are thinking about an argument you had with your spouse, colleague or child – then you are not present and not safe to be working.

Labeling it is the THINK.
DEBBIE MASTEL
THE ‘T’ COVER LETTER

Do you keep applying for roles online without getting any response? Well you’re not alone! Being on a recruitment team, it’s probably the number one hurdle I hear from job seekers. If you feel that your resume is falling into that black hole, the reality is, Recruiters aren’t making the same connection as to how your background is a match for the role they’re looking to fill. How do you bridge this gap? One way is by submitting your well written resume along with a ‘T’ Cover letter.

What is a T Cover letter? To make things easier for you, we’ve included a template for you. Once you’ve had a chance to download it and take a look, you’ll be able to understand how it got its name. You’ll notice that it’s a bulleted letter so will get read more often than a paragraphed letter.

Job seekers ask why they even need a cover letter because the rumor on the street is that Recruiters don’t even read them. Could this be true? I’ve asked many Recruiters if they read cover letters and can confirm, that more often than not, the answer is “No”. Rumor confirmed. Still, I believe that writing a T Cover letter can increase your chances of making it to the next step in the recruitment cycle. Why? Well the T Cover letter serves 3 main purposes.

1. It assists the Recruiter, especially if they’re junior to bridge the gap as to how your background is a match for they need to fill.
2. When a recruiter is using keywords to score resumes, it gets you to use exact wording from the posting, helping you to score higher. Because of volume, sometimes recruiters rely on systems to rate resumes. According to Right Management, 94% of the top 500 U.S. companies are now using computer programs to evaluate resumes. Canada is sure to follow suit.
3. When you’re using transferable skills to obtain a position, the T Cover letter gives you the opportunity to explain them. Countless times I’ve received resumes from people clearly using transferable skills but I can’t make the connection. I remember a colleague of mine once getting the resume for a fellow who groomed ski hills and had mentioned she didn’t see him fitting anywhere. Luckily it was brought to her attention that he might be a fit for a Heavy Equipment Operator position. We ended up hiring him as that but other people aren’t so lucky.

Most people hear that they should customize each cover letter and are unsure of how to do this. By using this format of a cover letter, it makes it easier to do this. You can download a copy template for the T Cover letter right here to get you started. Although it may help you make it to the next step, make sure you’re interview skills are also polished should you get called in for an interview. Happy job hunting!

Debbie Mastel is a Talent Acquisition Professional with Devon Energy in Calgary. She has her Bachelor of Arts degree from Augustana University College in Camrose, is a Registered Professional Recruiter and is one of less than 1,300 certified LinkedIn Experts worldwide.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

**************************************************************************PLEASE NOTE- ONE PAGE COVER LETTER ONLY PLEASE!!**************************************************************************

Name
Address
Phone: 403-***-****
Email:

Date
Dear Sir/Madam:

Please regard this as an application for the position of _______________ that was recently posted on your website.

Based on the requirements stated in the posting, I possess a unique mix of experience, knowledge, and skills that can definitely help your company in ______________. Specifically I have matched them according to your posting as outlined below:

___________(Company Name) Requirements My Aligning Skill and/or Experience

•

•

•

•

•

•

I am confident that my ability to _______________ will benefit _______________(company name) and its clients as it has my previous employers.

After you have reviewed my resume, I would welcome an opportunity to discuss this position and the value that I can bring to _______________.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Enclosure
Consult a
accountant
before
you register and/or
incorporate your business. Planning is the most
important step you can
take. It’s different for
everyone. Your best
tax planning strategy
will depend on your
unique relationships,
partnerships, family,
and upcoming large
purchases, like a home.

Most people
don’t know
what they can
or cannot write off. An
accountant can help you
figure out what you can
expense and how you can
organize your papers and
receipts so that at tax
filing time, you don’t have
to spend money having
someone go through your
shoeboxes of receipts.

Keeping your
money is going
through the year and
make cuts in certain areas
if you have to.

Revenue Canada
can ask to go back 6 years
during an audit of your
files. You need to have
paper copies of all your
claims. In this day and
age with electronic files
we think that everything
will be accessible when
we need it, but that’s not
always true. It’s not up
to the utility or phone
company to keep your
records, that’s up to you.

Getting business
insurance is as
important as tax
planning. Shop around for
the best rates. Try AMA,
a local broker, or whoever
manages your home/
vehicle insurance.

Ask your friends
and business
acquaintances
about their accountant. Find out what they like or

These usually
cost the hourly
rate of the
individual or firm. Krista
charges $100/hour, and
other larger firms can
be upward of $300. No
consultation should take
more than one hour. Some
accounting businesses
lack customer service
and your unique needs
are not their priority.
Make sure you find a firm
that is interested in you,
your business, and your
ultimate goals.

Contact
Krista
Zeidler
403.452.7022
for more info or to
book a consultation

KrisTa Zeidler is the owner of k-bri-Z
accounting and financial management in Calgary,
a small business which specializes in personal and
corporate tax planning, budgeting, forecasting, and
filing. If it has to do with money and taxes, she does it!
HEALTH & WELLNESS

JARI LOVE

PHYSICAL WORK DOESN’T EQUAL PHYSICAL FITNESS. READ OUR INTERVIEW WITH JARI TO FIND OUT WHY.

1. How do you think maintaining a healthy body influences work productivity?

Our physical and health plays a huge role in productivity. Studies by the Public Health Agency of Canada have found that adults who aren’t physically active have fewer injuries and are much less costly to companies. Maintaining a healthy body influences all aspects of our lives. When we are healthy we have more energy, stamina, strength and endurance to do all the things required of us at work, home and at play. By eating healthy and exercising regularly, not only are we more physically fit; we are more mentally fit. Healthy habits help improve our mood, mental clarity and focus.

2. What is the importance of building core strength? How would building core strength help prevent back and knee injuries?

The muscles of the core are paramount to our health and for preventing injuries. A strong core helps us maintain good posture, stability and improves our ability to respond to stresses. A strong core helps us avoid putting undue pressure on the knees by maintaining proper alignment. Having a strong core also helps us avoid back pain/injuries by effectively supporting our spine.

What are some stretches you would recommend for woman who works in the trades?

For those who are on their feet, lifting, moving and performing laborious tasks throughout the day, I would recommend stretching the major muscles of the legs as well as the back:

- **Calf Stretch**: Standing on stairs, drop one heel off the stair and hold for 15-30 seconds per leg.
- **Quad Stretch**: For a greater stretch, flex the foot of the extended leg. Hold this for 15-30 seconds per leg.
- **Hamstring Stretch**: Extend one foot out in front while pushing your hips back and tilting your upper body forward. Hold this for 15-30 seconds per leg.

Do people often assume that doing physical labour counts as staying physically healthy? Would you agree or disagree? Why?

Yes – many people come to me saying that they are active every day because their job requires them to move around and be on their feet. The question is though – do they ever get their heart rate up? If they do, how long does it stay up for? According to the American College of Sports Medicine, adults should be getting at least 30-60 minutes of moderate-intense cardio exercise, five days per week. Moderate to intense equates to your heart rate being between 60-90% of its max. It also states that adults should be weight training 2-3 times per week performing a minimum of 8-10 separate exercises and doing 8-12 repetitions of each.
Nutritional Snack Ideas

Registered Dietitian and Nutritionist Sarah Remmer recommends these nutritional snacks for your toolbox.

A homemade trail mix of unsweetened dried fruit, nuts of choice, and a high fiber cereal. Almonds are a great source of protein, healthy poly-unsaturated fats and fiber, and are rich in vitamin E, B vitamins and phytosterols. Milk, soy or almond or dairy, in a shelf stable packaging.

From the Ground Up
28 Days is All It Takes

Are you doing side-jobs, a subcontractor, or an apprentice who knows a profitable business idea that could be a success? Whether you have a lucrative business brainchild, don’t have the means or time to take weekend or evening classes, or are a journeyman who simply thinks it’s time to put your business skills to use, this October, Women in Work Boots is proud to offer a set of courses allowing entrepreneurs to turn their business dreams into reality.

So, How Do We Build a Solid Business Together?

Sign up for our course!

- You’ll get 5 modules in audio files + worksheets for you to tackle
- Audio interviews with industry leaders in branding, marketing, accounting, social media, and sales.

With ‘Footings: A Solid Business Blueprint’, I will show you how to build a solid business from your trade, your craft, your side jobs, or your existing (but legally non-existent) business.

Get ready to take your skills one step further from budgets and branding strategies, to investors and swot analysis. Women in Work Boots is here to get your business laid out and organized in the time it takes to cure concrete—28 Days.