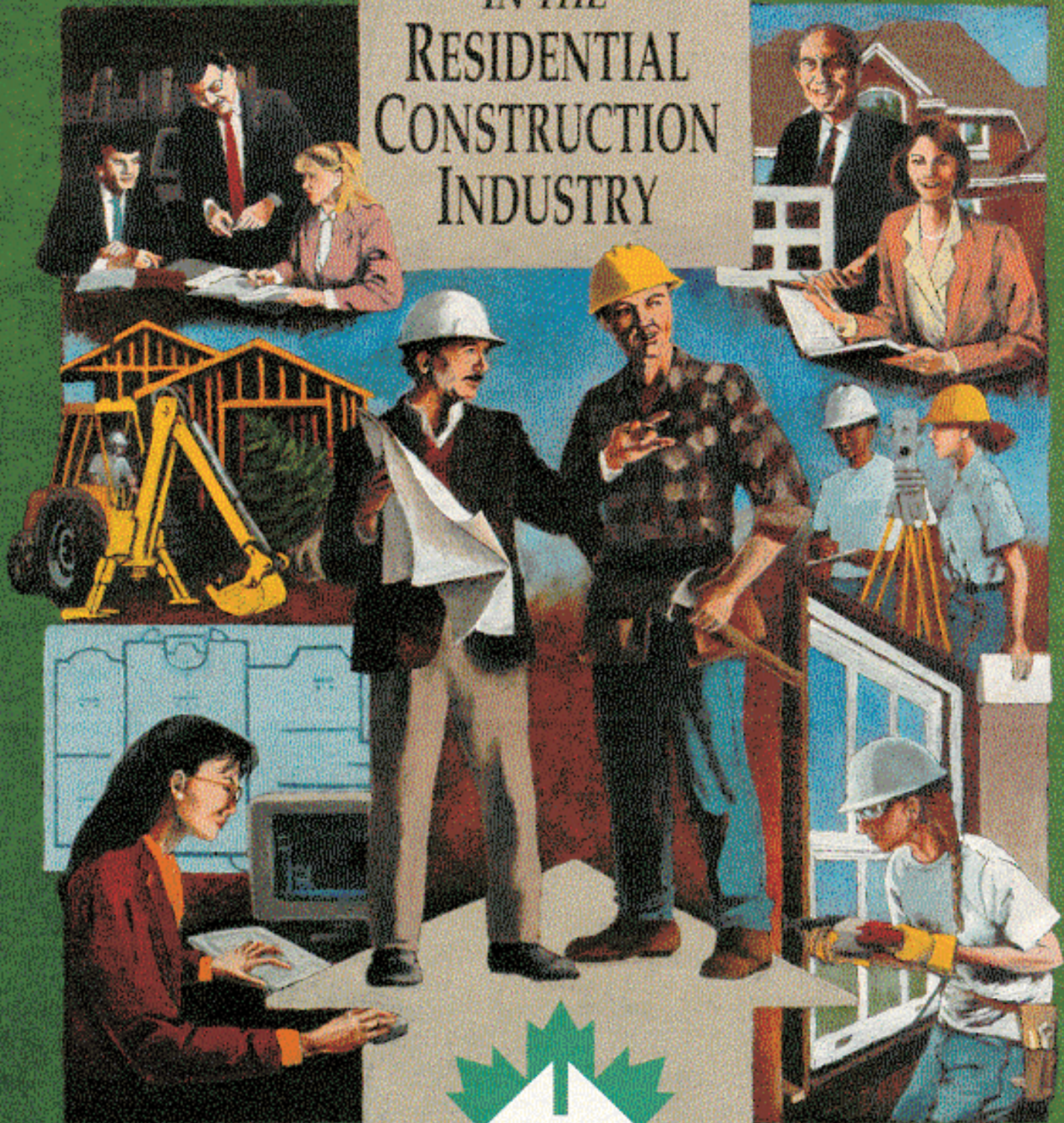


Canadian
Home Builders'
Association

CAREER PATHS

IN THE
RESIDENTIAL
CONSTRUCTION
INDUSTRY



CAREER PATHS IN THE RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

The residential construction industry in Canada is one of the nation's largest employers. The construction and renovation of Canadian homes provides a host of employment opportunities for many thousands of Canadians. Financially and personally rewarding job opportunities are available to individuals with the knowledge and skills required to:

- **Market and Sell;**
- **Engineer and Design;**
- **Finance;**
- **Build and Renovate Homes;**
- **Manage Successful Businesses Involved in the Many Facets of the Residential Construction Industry.**

All too often the construction or renovation of Canadian homes is typified as a job requiring a truck and some tools. In reality, the successful completion of residential building and renovation projects involves many people with many specialized skills working as a team. To meet the growing demands being placed on the residential construction industry, many new people are required — individuals who are seeking lifetime career options.

For individuals considering entering the residential construction industry — either as a first job or as a change in career — a variety of options and opportunities are available. This booklet is designed to make the reader aware of these rewarding career opportunities. It identifies how the individual can get involved in any of the rewarding careers within the Canadian building and renovating industry. The booklet illustrates different career paths involved in the industry and provides a road map to equip the reader with information about the knowledge and skills required to travel the route to success within the industry.

WHAT ARE THE CAREER OPTIONS?

There are many options available to the individual wishing to be part of the residential construction industry. Some of the tasks are highly specialized, requiring university degrees. Others may be learned in community colleges or trade schools and practiced over time on the construction site. In all cases the tasks must be coordinated by, and with, the owner of the residential building or renovation business. That person requires an understanding of the roles and functions of the individuals working in partnership with the business owner — and the knowledge and skills required to operate a successful business.

Projects must be marketed and sold:



Who markets and sells residential construction?

Marketing of housing projects and residential construction businesses is essential to the health of any business. When a project is built there is no guarantee that it will sell. Although the business may have the best trades, pricing and product, the market must know about the business and its product or no sales will occur. Furthermore, if people know about your product but don't buy — little is accomplished.

- **Marketing Specialists:** Individuals with the knowledge and skills required to effectively inform the consumer of the products available through the residential construction industry. Creative people who can identify target markets and make them aware of a business's services. People who know what message to use and how to ensure that the right segment of the population responds to the message.
- **Sales Specialists:** Individuals with the credentials and ability to meet the needs of the residential market and provide them with a business's product and services. People who can 'close' a deal effectively — to the benefit of both the client and the business.

Projects must be designed:

Who is involved in the design?



Every construction job has a design component. Whether the job involves the moving of an interior wall as part of a renovation, or the construction of a new custom residence, there must be an understanding of building design which balances structure, function and form.

- **Architects and Designers:** Individuals with the knowledge and skills to design spaces and projects meeting the needs of homeowners and renters. People who can balance creatively the required functions of the space with appropriate form. Individuals who know how people and houses/apartments interact.
- **Engineers and Technologists:** Individuals with the credentials and ability to ensure the structural and mechanical safety and performance of the completed project. Engineers and engineering technologists may be involved in site servicing, soils sampling, structural design, building enclosure, heating, ventilating and air conditioning, design supervision and inspections.
- **Drafting Specialists:** Individuals with the credentials and ability to translate the ideas and concepts of builders, renovators, architects, designers and engineers into a set of working drawings. These drawings, which increasingly are based on computer assisted design, represent the major communications tool in the residential construction industry.

Projects must be financed:

Who is involved in project financing?



Construction businesses and specific projects require some financing on the part of either the builder or the client. In determining financing arrangements the manager must determine the cost of construction and arrange, in conjunction with the client, for mortgage and/or bridge financing.

- **Cost Estimators:** Individuals with the knowledge and skills to estimate accurately the costs of a project — based on construction techniques and past company experiences. Accurate cost estimation is required by both the construction company and the home buying or home renovating client.
- **Appraisers:** Appraisers have the knowledge and skills to establish the value of buildings and projects. Evaluations performed by appraisers represent a key function in project funding.
- **Lenders:** Financing for construction projects is available through a variety of sources. Banks, trust companies and mortgage financing institutions all have specialists with a working knowledge of residential construction projects.
- **Accountants and Bookkeepers:** Projects and businesses require detailed recording of all expenses and income. Accurate accounting and bookkeeping are essential to the ongoing health of a business in the residential construction industry.

Projects must be managed:



Each project — without respect to size — requires management to allow for the project to proceed in the most efficient manner possible. Project managers must ensure that all components of the team are contracted, scheduled and paid in an orderly fashion. Construction managers and site supervisors may be responsible for overseeing the work of more than 20 different skilled trades on a single project. Without effective management and scheduling, cost overruns, product quality deficiencies and bad client relations can all result.

Who is involved in project management?



Projects have to be constructed:



What trades are involved in building or renovating?



Projects must turn a profit — allowing the business to stay in operation:



- **Project Managers:** Individuals with the knowledge and skills to plan, schedule, coordinate, and implement the plan— resulting in maximum efficiency of the resources employed in the construction project. The project manager must balance exceptional management and communication skills with a working knowledge of the residential construction industry.

- **Site Superintendents:** Site superintendents and supervisors are the individuals responsible for the day to day activities on a construction project. The site 'super' must have the knowledge and skills required to optimize company employees, trades, and construction materials in a safe and efficient manner. The site superintendent is often the construction companies first line of communication with the client, requiring good interpersonal skills.

Most construction projects involve a variety of skilled trades. From foundation contractors through to finishing carpenters, the construction site involves many different trades each with their own set of knowledge, skills, and requirements. The competency of these trades enable the project to be completed in a timely and cost efficient process — ensuring that product quality meets the business standards. These trades provide financially rewarding work opportunities. Work which provides a balance between indoor and outdoor work, and between mental and manual skills. Work which allows for a maximum amount of independence within the building team.

What are some of the trades involved in building or renovating?

- Excavators
- Foundation Specialists
- Framing Carpenters
- Roofing Specialists
- Siding, Window and Door Specialists
- Insulators and Air Sealing Specialists
- Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning Specialists
- Plumbers
- Electricians
- Stair Installers
- Drywallers
- Painters
- Flooring Specialists
- Tile Setters
- Trim Carpenters
- Cabinet Installers
- Landscapers

Owning and managing a home building or renovating business requires a unique mix of skills, knowledge, experience and entrepreneurship. Financial problems will rapidly develop for the owner of a construction business who does not apply financial management skills. The owner of the residential construction business must ensure that profit is generated for the business — allowing for reinvestment in the business and providing a buffer against the cyclical nature of the industry.

The business owner must be competent in three major areas. He or she must have the required knowledge and skills to manage their business, to market and sell their product and to oversee the construction of the business product. The likelihood for success in the industry is reduced without the required skills in all of these areas.

The owner of the construction business must be capable of determining what the business requires to perform all of its functions — regardless of whether they are to be performed by the owner or by staff or subcontracted trades/professionals. When one aspect of the business's operations is disregarded, chances for long term success in the industry are greatly reduced.

WHICH CAREER IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Whether you are considering entering the residential construction industry from an entry level out of school, or whether you have decided to change your existing career, you need to assess your interests and skills in relation to the career options available in the industry.

Assess The Industry:

A strong knowledge of the residential construction industry is the first step in determining whether the industry can provide you with a rewarding long term career. Talk to business owners and employees about their jobs, and about your potential future in the industry. Spend some time on construction sites and in offices. Find out how the construction industry works in all of its many facets.

Assess Your Interests:

Determining your personal interests is a prerequisite to selecting any career. Many individuals have a long term interest in the building process, others want to exercise their creativity in marketing, selling or design, others like working with numbers, while still others have the entrepreneurial drive to run their own business. When careers are built around personal interests they are most likely to succeed.

Assess Your Skills:

When you have decided which part of the industry interests you, determine how your current skills line up with those required of the specific job and/or profession. In some instances the knowledge and skills you have used in one career may be transferred directly to the residential construction industry. In other areas you may find that your existing knowledge and skill levels require upgrading to meet the specific requirements of a given occupation.

Determine the Knowledge and Skills Required

When you have identified the type of career which interests you, you need to determine what knowledge and skills are required in performing the job. In many instances the knowledge and skills required are clearly established. Engineers and architects require degrees from universities and accreditation with a Professional Association. Trades need training offered through apprenticeship programs. Real estate agents require accreditation through industry based training programs. Guidance counsellors in schools, colleges and universities represent a valuable source of information about these career paths.

In other instances specific accreditation may not be required. For instance there is no 'school' for the owners of a residential construction business. But there does exist a listing of the specific knowledge and skills required of the individual performing this role. The "Occupational Analysis - New Home Builder and Residential Renovation Contractor" identifies the knowledge and skills required in the operation of residential construction businesses.

The Canadian Home Builders' Association provincial and local affiliates develop and deliver a wide range of education and training programs in partnership with other agencies involved in the residential construction industry. Universities, community colleges and vocational schools offer a wide range of programs for business professionals and trades.

WHERE DO YOU TURN?

The Canadian Home Builder's Association through its more than 70 provincial and local affiliations throughout Canada represents a good first step in an effort to better understand the industry. The staff and member companies of the Association are committed to enhancing the professionalism of the home building and residential renovating industries.

Employment and Immigration Canada is responsible for the development of occupational analysis of many of the professions and trades involved in the construction industry. Their employment counsellors can help individuals to identify education and training opportunities.

Professional Associations of industry groups can provide information on how to get involved in their respective industries. Engineering, architecture, accounting, real estate, surveying, technologists and technicians are but a sampling of professions with active and informed associations — capable of providing direction to individuals.

Guidance Counsellors in high schools, colleges and universities have access to a variety of resources to assist students in career planning. They can also direct you to education and training programs which can provide you with the knowledge and skills identified within your career path.

Sourcing Information:

Addresses of Key Associations:

For further information:

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