Employability Skills Toolkit

Student Pack

Employability is the ability to gain and keep employment and employability skills are not the academic qualifications or vocational skills needed for a specific job role.



Within this programme you will find advice and help to develop your knowledge (what you know) and skills (what you can do) to improve your chances of finding the job you want in the automotive sector and to build it into a lasting career.

If you are still thinking about which job you want to aim for then have a look at the IMI Autocity website [www.autocity.org.uk](http://www.autocity.org.uk) to learn more about the great range of jobs available in the automotive sector.

The information used to put this pack together comes directly from the sector with employers telling us what they are looking for from young people applying for their first job or training place.

The Employability Skills Toolkit is split into six modules with sections for teachers and trainers, as well as students.

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How to use the toolkit

Each module contains information and case studies, plus exercises and activities for you to do.

At the end, there’s an ‘MOT’ to check what you have learned and suggestions for additional activities, websites and support.

THROUGHOUT THE MODULES YOU WILL SEE THESE SYMBOLS …



Where you see this symbol there will be suggestions for things

for you to think about and consider, possibly ideas which may

not have been thought of so far or decisions to make.



Here there will be suggestions for additional things to do such as small projects or investigations to widen knowledge and understanding of the automotive sector or improve a skill.



It’s always possible to learn from talking with others so here

you will find suggestions about who to talk to and ideas for

discussions and questions.

Remember, you can work through the modules in any order, but the checklist in Module 1: DIAGNOSTICS will help you if you’re not sure where to start.

Good Luck!

Module 1: Diagnostics – skills and knowledge review

**OVERVIEW**

This module takes you through some of the key points you need to think about when reviewing your current skills (what you can do) and knowledge (what you know).

It doesn’t look at the academic qualifications or vocational skills needed for a specific job role – this is covered in Module 6: The Route Ahead, but looks at ‘employability skills’, the things which will improve your chances of finding the job you want in the automotive sector and to build it into a lasting career.



Carry on reading this document and speak to your tutor if you have any questions.

Module 2: Rules of the road – understanding what employers expect in terms of behaviour and conduct when employed

**OVERVIEW**

Did you think of behaviour when you created your list of what employers will be looking for? You may think that only your behaviour during a job interview will be considered as that’s all a prospective employer will see.

Actually, there’s a lot you can do to build up your understanding and the skills needed by employers before you apply for that all important job. And by gaining experience you will be able to demonstrate it in your application.

How? Module 2: Rules of the Road will help you get a much better understanding of what sort of behaviour will be expected in a workplace and how you can learn to adapt your own behaviour to meet your employer’s expectations.

Employers will be looking for evidence that you know how to behave in the workplace and that can be provided in a number of ways. Have you had any part-time work yet? If not, how about voluntary work? You will be offered an opportunity for work experience before you leave school.

Any of these activities will do two things: give you the chance to understand and practice appropriate behaviour, and it could also indicate to an employer all sorts of things from simply being able to get out of bed and arrive at work on time (very important to an employer!) to understanding basic health and safety, working in a team etc.

Perhaps you will be able to provide a reference from an employer or work experience provider for any of these sorts of activities.

Why wait around until you start applying for training or a job before thinking about how to prove to a prospective employer that you know how to conduct yourself in the workplace? If you don’t have work experience yet start thinking about how to get some. And not just any job or work experience – think about what sort of job you may be interested in or what sort of organisation you want to find out more about.

Having experience in the automotive sector, even as a car washer at the weekend at a local car dealership, could set you apart from other job applicants and get you an invitation for interview for the job you really want.

Module 3: Sales Pitch – understanding who your customers are and how to build a positive relationship with them

**OVERVIEW**

Many employers put ‘customer awareness’ high on their list of expectations of new recruits. What do they mean by it?

Once again, Module 3: Sales Pitch will help you understand customer awareness in more detail but how about talking

to your friends and family. Everyone’s been a customer at some time and most people have been in a position of ‘selling’ something – even if it was ‘selling’ themselves at an interview!

What do you expect when you’re buying something? Good manners? Certainly. Also you’d probably expect the sales person to know about their products and have thought about what questions you may want to ask. What about your manager or boss? Have you ever thought about them as ‘customers’? They’re ‘buying’ your time and hard work so how should you behave towards them? Even if you’re not directly selling to customers you will still be expected to be aware of your role in relation to customers – can they see you working? Are you a positive representative of the company?

Try writing a list of skills that a customer is likely to expect you to be able to demonstrate when ‘selling’ to them. Does your list include both skills relating to the actual task of selling such as product knowledge and also people skills such as paying full attention, listening and talking in a professional and polite manner?

Have you done anything like this yet? As it’s one of the key expectations of employers, keep it in mind when you’re looking for part time work or work experience.

Module 4: Team working and effective communication

**OVERVIEW**

Nearly everyone works as part of a team so it’s not surprising that employer’s rate good team working very highly. But what skills do you need to be good at team working and do you have them? This is a skill area which most people can talk about as most people have been part of a team.

* What teams have you been in or are part of at the moment?
* Are they sports teams or quiz teams, possibly you’re already working or doing voluntary work as part of a team?
* Who are your team mates?
* When you think about who is in the team do you include your boss or team manager?

What makes a team successful? Obviously being good at

what you’re doing whether it’s a sport or working together

is important but employers are looking for more than that.

Talk to your friends and family and put together a list of what

skills each member of a team needs to help the team achieve

more than if the members all did their own thing separately.

You’ve probably thought of skills like helping and supporting each other, knowing each other’s strengths (what they are good at) and weaknesses (what they are still developing and may need help with), or getting on well together.

* Did you list good communications amongst team members?
* Employers rate being good at communicating very highly - so if good communication is important, how good are you at communicating?
* What do you think is meant by communication skills?

Write a list of the different ways in which you are likely to be

required to communicate in a job. Remember to include the many

different ways we all now use technology to communicate. Do you use the same sort of language when talking within a team and when talking to a customer? Would you use the same language when sending an email and when you’re writing a report for your manager to read?

How many of the team working skills or different ways of communicating you’ve listed do you have experience in? If you’ve only listed a few then working through the MOT in the portfolio and Module 4: Pit Crew, will help you get a better understanding of what employers are looking for.

Module 5: Workshop manual – problem solving, planning and good organisation

**OVERVIEW**

Everyone needs to be able to solve problems, so planning and good organizational skills will help you to do both. You’re doing it now! Whilst working through this first module, you’re identifying what sort of experience you’ll need to demonstrate to a prospective employer your employability skills – you’re solving a potential problem. By the time you’ve completed all six modules you’ll have a plan of what to do next to build your skills in readiness for applying for the job or training you want after education. Even this can show an employer just how good you are at organising your plans and achieving what you want to achieve.

SO JUST WHAT ARE THE SKILLS WANTED BY EMPLOYERS?

You will already have had lots of experience in problem solving and planning so don’t think it’s just something you do at work and nowhere else.



Think about when you’ve been asked to do something new or when something has gone wrong such as needing to be in two places at the same time. How did you work out what to do? Think of a problem you’ve had at home, school or possibly as part of a part-time job or other activity and write down how you sorted it out – step by step.

You’ll probably think of working out what must be done as separate from what could be done – you were setting priorities. Did you think of what the two key things are for any plan – knowing what you want to achieve (setting an objective) and knowing when it must be achieved by (deadlines)?

At school you will have been asked to write essays or undertake a project, sometimes on your own and sometimes in a small group. Usually you will be given an objective or key questions to answer and will always have a deadline by which it must be completed. This sort of activity will always need some sort of planning and organisation.



Talk to your classmates, especially those who you have worked with on a school project. How did you share out the work that was needed to successfully complete the project? Did you each agree who was best at each bit and how you would link it all together? If so, you were working as a team, planning and organising how you would get the job done together. Ask your tutor how well he/she thinks your team worked together.



Working on your own or with fellow students, write a list of the key things you need to be good at to solve problems in an organised and well-planned way. You’ve definitely had experience of this in the past, so how do you rate yourself?

When you start to apply for training and jobs being able to show prospective employers that you have experience in problem solving and are good at both planning and being well organised will really help your application. Working through your experience to date will help you identify what examples you can talk about or what you need more practice in. You’ll have a chance to do this in the portfolio section and the MOT attached to this first module.

Module 6: The route ahead – a guide to applying for the job or training you want and how to impress during that vital interview

**OVERVIEW**

Many employers are disappointed in how little young people appear to have researched their company, the

training to be undertaken, or even know much about the job they are applying for! Obviously, having had a part-time job or work experience in the automotive sector will help a lot when applying for work or training but isn’t essential. Your first step in securing that all important interview will be how you apply; your CV (a summary of your qualifications, skills and experience to date), a letter to go with it, and possibly completion of an application form.

Many young people create a single CV and write the same letter and insert the same information for every application they make. Wouldn’t it be better to customise each application to fit the job/training being applied for? How do you do this? It’s quite simple really. Do you remember the question at the beginning of this module?

Put yourself in the position of an employer with a job to offer. You may have had lots and lots of applications and need to pick out just a few to interview. How do you make such important decisions?

You need to know what the employer is looking for. The advertisement or details of the job/training you’re applying for will tell you the key qualifications needed and may even list other key skills which are required. But now you know even more – this programme is based on what lots of employers have told us they are looking for. Now you know more about what employers are looking for you will be able to make sure your job applications highlight your skills and provide real examples of where you have used them.

The MOT in the attached portfolio will help you to review your experience in applying for jobs/training. And Module 6: The Route Ahead, talks about this in more detail and gives you the chance to practise. It will also take you through the next big step – the interview. You may not have had a job interview before, particularly a formal interview with one, two or even three interviewers. A bit scary? It doesn’t have to be. By working through this programme you’ll be going into any interview better prepared and confident that you know what the employer is looking for.

Well done, you’ve now looked at each of the key skill areas employers are looking for. The next step is to build your knowledge and practise your skills in each by working through the modules. Once you’ve completed them all you’ll be ready to apply for the job and training you want to move forward in your automotive career.

Good Luck!

Module 1: Diagnostics – skills and knowledge review

**So you want to work in the automotive sector?**

It’s not surprising as there are lots of exciting career opportunities, the chance perhaps to travel and to meet interesting people. You could work in a wide range of different types of organisations and roles, from research and design, to logistics, repair and servicing, motor sport, driving, sales and many more. Or perhaps you’re not quite sure yet what you want to do when you leave education?

Either way, you need to gather as much information as possible to help you make decisions about which subjects to study and how to make sure you’re the one that employers want to select for their team. This module will help you think about what you need to learn, practise or gain experience in, to put yourself in the best position when applying for training or a job in the future.

The Portfolio section provides a checklist for you to work through so that you can build yourself a plan of what to do to improve your ‘employability’ and give you the confidence to apply for the training and job you want.

**BY THE END OF THE MODULE YOU WILL:**

• understand what employers are looking for from young people applying for training or employment.

• have assessed your own level of employability skills.

• produced a plan of activity to improve your employability skills.

Let’s start by thinking about how an employer or training provider selects one applicant from the many who have applied for the job or training position available. How would you make that decision? Put yourself in the position of an employer with a job to offer. You may have had lots and lots of applications and need to pick out just a few to interview. How do you make such important decisions? Most jobs have very specific educational or vocational qualifications as a bottom line ‘must have’ so that’s the first step in reducing the number down. But after this - what else will an employer look for?



Write a list of what you would like to know about job applicants to help you select which to invite for an interview. You could ask your friends and family what they think of your list and if they can think of anything to add.

This programme is broken down into a number of modules, each looking at different areas of skills and knowledge employers in the automotive sector have said are important so let’s look at each in turn.

**Portfolio Activity/** MOT

Here’s a simple checklist, an MOT, for you to work through to help you to think about employability skills – what employers are looking for when recruiting young people for employment and training.

It asks you to identify:

• what employers may look for.

• how you can demonstrate you have these skills or

• how you can build your knowledge or skills in preparation for the future

A few examples are provided to get you started but you will need to think about other skills to add to the lists.

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| MODULE 2: RULES OF THE ROAD UNDERSTANDING WHAT EMPLOYERS EXPECT IN TERMS OF BEHAVIOUR AND CONDUCT WHEN EMPLOYED |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What sort of behaviour will employers expect?*** Good timekeeping
* Clean and tidy
* Keeps safe
* Positive attitude
 | X OR ✔ | **Which of these do you think you’re good at?** **Which do you have no experience of yet or know you’re not always good at?**  **Where have you developed these skills?** **How can you demonstrate it to employers?**  | **If you haven’t been able to practice these skills yet, what activity could you do to develop them?** \* Complete module 2  |

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| MODULE 3: SALES PITCH CUSTOMER AWARENESS UNDERSTANDING WHO YOUR CUSTOMERS ARE AND HOW TO BUILD A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What sort of behaviour will employers expect?*** Know who your customers are – people wanting to buy something, other companies, management and colleagues
* Polite and professional
* Good listener
 | X OR ✔ | **Which of these do you think you’re good at?** **Which do you have no experience of yet or know you’re not always good at?**  **Where have you developed these skills?** **How can you demonstrate it to employers?**  | **If you haven’t been able to practice these skills yet, what activity could you do to develop them?** \* Complete module 3  |

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| MODULE 4: PITCREW TEAM WORKING AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What sort of behaviour will employers expect?*** Good team player
* Helps others
* Builds trust/respect
* Able to communicate clearly and accurately
 | X OR ✔ | **Which of these do you think you’re good at?** **Which do you have no experience of yet or know you’re not always good at?** **Where have you developed these skills?** **How can you demonstrate it to employers?**  | **If you haven’t been able to practice these skills yet, what activity could you do to develop them?** \* Complete module 4  |

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| MODULE 5: WORKSHOP MANUAL PROBLEM SOLVING, PLANNING AND GOOD ORGANISATION |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What sort of behaviour will employers expect?*** Can spot when things are not right
* Can come up with good suggestions
* Meets deadlines
 | X OR ✔ | **Which of these do you think you’re good at?** **Which do you have no experience of yet or know you’re not always good at?** **Where have you developed these skills?** **How can you demonstrate it to employers?**  | **If you haven’t been able to practice these skills yet, what activity could you do to develop them?** \* Complete module 5 |

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| MODULE 6: THE ROUTE AHEAD A GUIDE TO APPLYING FOR THE JOB OR TRAINING YOU WANT AND HOW TO IMPRESS DURING THAT VITAL INTERVIEW |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What sort of behaviour will employers expect?*** Know how to behave at an interview
* Have researched the company & prepared a few questions
 | X OR ✔ | **Which of these do you think you’re good at?** **Which do you have no experience of yet or know you’re not always good at?** **Where have you developed these skills?** **How can you demonstrate it to employers?**  | **If you haven’t been able to practice these skills yet, what activity could you do to develop them?** \* Complete module 6 |

Module 2: Rules of the road – understanding what employers expect in terms of behaviour and conduct when employed

Do you know what sort of behaviour will be expected when you take up your first full time job or training place? Unless you’re self-employed, possibly running your own dealership or repair garage, you will have an employer so it’s good to know exactly what they value from a new employee or trainee. You may not have given much thought to how you conduct yourself in a job should differ from your everyday behaviour at home, with friends or at school or college.

This module aims to help you think through the issues of employer expectations and the extent to which you may need to change how you conduct yourself whilst at work or in formal training at a place of work.

By the end of the module you will:

* use what you have learned to identify positive examples of conduct from your life to date to highlight when applying for a job
* know the basic rules of behaviour in a place of work
* be able to identify changes you need to make and how to practise new skills



Firstly, think about the type of companies you could work at ...

there are many different sorts. It could be a large, national or

even multi-national company or a small local organisation with

just a few employees.

Will their expectations of you be different? A large company may have written guides and rules of behaviour but this isn’t always the case for small companies – does this mean that small companies expect less?



Do you know enough about the world of work? Where do your family and friends work? What’s it like? Have you already had or are currently working in a part time job?

Why not ask your boss what he or she expects from their staff... you could even ask them how you meet their expectations and what you could improve?

Have a go at the exercise in Module 2 of your portfolio.



This will help you to list what an employer is looking for in a new employee or trainee. Would you meet their expectations? Would you impress a new boss? What do you need to improve?

Once you’ve completed the exercise in your portfolio you will have a better understanding of how to conduct yourself during your application for a job or training as well as whilst learning the job as a new employee or trainee. It doesn’t stop there though. Employability is not just about getting the job you want, it’s also about keeping it. Once you’ve secured your first job remember to watch how other employees behave and how the managers and company owners respond and reward them. This way you will quickly learn how to become a valued and trusted member of the team – the first stepping stone to the career that you want.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY**

You can learn more about the many automotive jobs and what it’s like to work in a variety of automotive places of work at www.theimi.org.uk/worldofwork. Think about what you have done in the past and list those activities where you have demonstrated the positive behaviour likely to be expected by future employers. Have you mentioned these in your CV? Review your CV and add examples.

**Portfolio Activity**

Well done! You’ve applied for an Apprenticeship, been interviewed and been offered the job. Now it’s the day before your first day at work. You want to make the best impression. Why? Because first impressions last......

What do you think your new employer and your new colleagues will expect of you? You won’t be expected to know everything straight away but will be expected to learn quickly.

Here are three things to think about:

• Your first day at work

• Key information you need to know so you know what to do and what not to do

• Your ongoing behaviour and conduct – the model employee

|  |
| --- |
| CASE STUDY |
| Today is your first day as an Apprentice Light Vehicle Service Technician at a local car dealership. You met the dealership manager and workshop manager when you were interviewed and had a quick tour around the premises. It’s a new dealership and was only opened a few months ago. There’s a large showroom with a viewing area into the workshop, a parts department behind a counter, a small staff room, an administration office and a manager’s office.You’ve been told to report to the front office in the sales area at 9am. |

**YOUR FIRST DAY AT WORK**

Think about the case study above. List five things to consider before setting off for work.

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Discuss your answer with your tutor.

Did you miss anything? Make a note here.

**KEY INFORMATION YOU NEED TO KNOW SO YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO AND WHAT NOT TO DO**

Most organisations will have some sort of new employee induction training when you will be told about the company you have just joined, your role and where it fits into the organisation. Think about what other essential information you will need. You won’t need, or be expected to learn, everything on the first day but some things are very important.

List the sort of information you will need to know.

Check your answer with your tutor.

Did you miss anything? Make a note here.

Where are you likely to get this information from? List who you would ask and where you could look.

Discuss your answer with your tutor.

Did you miss anything? Make a note here.

**YOUR ONGOING BEHAVIOUR AND CONDUCT - THE ‘MODEL’ EMPLOYEE**

Discuss your answer with your tutor.

Did you miss anything? Make a note here.

|  |
| --- |
| CASE STUDY |
| You’ve now been working for three months with regular days at college. You’re getting to know the other employees and feel that you’re starting to be of use in the workshop. You’re still the one who makes the tea at break time but are being kept busy with helping the other technicians and keeping the workshop clean and tidy.You’re really enjoying the job and want to be well thought of and, even at this early stage of your career, you hope to progress with the company in the future. |

After three months you should be fully informed about any company rules and guidelines about behaviour at work and you will have seen how your colleagues conduct themselves. What sorts of behaviour and personal traits are well regarded and valued? Put yourself in the role of the manager. What are you looking for in an employee? What sort of apprentice would you be looking out for if you wanted to pick someone for future development?

Make a list of behaviours and traits likely to be valued by your line manager.

Check your answer with your tutor.

Did you miss anything? Make a note here.

MOT

**Question1**

List five things to think about before starting your first day at work and say what they say about you?

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Think about a time when you have started something new, meeting new people and in a new environment.

Were you well prepared? Did you make a good impression? Describe the activity.

What did you think about in advance and do well?

If you did the same thing again what would you do differently?

**EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION**

**Question 2**

List five things you need to know on your first day at work.

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Where will you get this information from or who would you ask?

Can you think of an example of when you have had to identify information needed to do something well? When / what was it? From where did you obtain the information?

**Question 3**

List five other things you also need to know – in the first few days.

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Where will you get this information from or who would you ask?

Can you think of an example of when you have had to identify information needed to do something well? When / what was it? From where did you obtain the information?

**THE MODEL EMPLOYEE**

**Question 4**

What personality traits and behaviour will a manager be looking for in a young trainee or employee? List five and say what they show about the individual.

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Think about what you have done in the past. It could be part-time work, school, college, voluntary work, sports etc. Give examples of the positive personality traits and behaviour you have demonstrated in the past explaining the situation. Which types of behaviour do you already demonstrate?

Which types of behaviour will you work to improve?

Now check your answers with your tutor and tick if correct. How did you do? Check the module again for any area where you could improve your score.

Module 3: Sales Pitch – understanding who your customers are and how to build a positive relationship with them

You probably think you already know about customer awareness. After all you are a customer yourself - in the local shops or possibly on the Internet. Each of these activities involves you as the customer, probably purchasing something, and if you don’t like the product or the service provided, you’re not likely to buy from the seller again. Simple, isn’t it?

From the buyer’s point of view, yes, this is what happens. But is this all there is to it? Now that you’re starting work or formal training, is every customer actually buying from you? Does each customer interaction mean money changes hands? If you’re working behind the scenes and not meeting the public as part of your job, what customers do you have?

This module will help you to think about your relationship with customers and, in particular, who your customers are and how you should best interact with them.

BY THE END OF THE MODULE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO:

• identify who your customers are.

• understand and anticipate their expectations of you.

• build a positive and rewarding relationship with them.



Let’s start by thinking about who your customers are. You may be already working in a part-time job, had one in the past, or undertaken work experience. Was it obvious who your customers were? In a shop or delivering newspapers it may be obvious at first – the public who come into the shop to purchase something or the homeowner you are delivering the newspapers to.

But what about your employer? Have you ever thought about an employer as a customer? An employer is ‘buying’ your time, effort and expertise – doesn’t this make them a customer? In return for their ‘investment’, they expect you to provide a service – that makes the employer your customer just as much as the public you’re selling or delivering to.

In larger shops where each employee has a specific role such as checking stock and replenishing shelves, other team members will be relying on you to do your bit. This will certainly be the case when you start your training and full-time employment. Your team mates and colleagues will be ‘investing’ their time and effort in helping you to develop your skills and become an effective member of the team – yet another group of customers you may not have thought about.

Try creating a list of the different types of ‘customers’ you can think of. It might help to start with a list of types of organisations you have been in touch with in the past couple of weeks. Can you identify the different types of jobs which will be in each organisation? You will have had direct contact with quite a few job roles but what about those members of staff you don’t meet as a member of the public. Who will their customers be? If you have already researched the jobs available in the motor industry think about those jobs – who are their customers?

When thinking about members of the public as customers – what sort of people will there be? What age range? Will they be fully aware of what they want or not? Will it be the first time they have bought from your company? Remember to include both external customers such as members of the public or companies and organisations buying from your organisation, and internal customers - team members, other departments of your company and your employer or manager.

You will probably have listed a wide group of people who are likely to be met personally in a working day. What about beyond direct face-to-face contact?



Have you considered telephone and Internet contact? As an employee, you may be part of a sales team dealing with the public when they come into a sales room or telephone with an enquiry but you may also be ordering stock or arranging an MOT or service with the workshop for a customer. In this case you are dealing with your colleagues but acting on behalf of the customer – in effect you are the customer. Will this mean you communicate differently at different times when interacting with your team members?

Ask other students, your friends or relatives about their experiences of good and bad customer service. You’ll probably be told about lots of instances where there has been a problem which has not been sorted out to their satisfaction; poor quality of goods provided, things breaking down, rude or inattentive staff etc. It’s well known that anyone who has had a problem as a customer is at least twice as likely to tell others about it, than when they have had excellent customer service. That could mean not just losing that particular customer for the future but also the potential customers who have been told about the bad experience. With internal customers, your team members, employers etc. this could mean a loss of confidence in your ability, strained and uncomfortable relationships at work, perhaps even losing a bonus! Module 4: Pit Crew looks at team working and communication in more detail.

Most people recognise that problems do occur. They may not like it but, if they complain and the resulting actions are dealt with politely and efficiently, then their negative opinion can often be turned to a positive one. Ask other students, your friends or relatives what made their experience either particularly bad or good. Was it just the initial problem? How was the problem dealt with after the issue had been raised? As a customer yourself what do you expect when discussing potential purchases or actually buying a product or service? If you understand and anticipate the expectations of your customers you are more likely to meet, or even exceed, them!

Write two lists. Firstly, of what you expect from an organisation or individual demonstrating good customer care. Perhaps they made you feel welcome, were immediately attentive and not finishing off a conversation with a colleague or answering the telephone whilst you were with them. You’d be surprised by how often little things like this affect your customer’s opinion of you and your organisation. Good customer care is about anticipation so having information readily available about alternatives, if they can’t fulfill your need at that time, would be useful. Certainly better than simply saying “We don’t have it in stock at the moment”. Then write a list of what you would consider as bad customer service, such as being asked to wait whilst your vehicle service is being finished but no one informed you it would take longer than originally scheduled. Or, there’s nowhere to sit down, or the member of staff you are dealing with keeps hold of their mobile phone throughout your conversation and keeps looking at it as if reading a message.

Now, as an employee, how do you think you can demonstrate the positive examples you’ve listed? Remember, you may not be the one in direct contact with the customer but you could still influence the customer’s experience. You may want to talk to the team member dealing with a customer – remember the customer comes first so wait and don’t distract them. You may be behind the scenes but responsible for ensuring availability of products on time and in the right place. You could be the one responsible for ensuring a vehicle is ready on time for when the customer is scheduled to collect it. You may just simply be visible in the background, possibly via a window overlooking the administration area or workshop. How you are dressed, how you are interacting with colleagues, what you are doing will all be noticed and will influence the customer’s opinion of your organisation.

Compare your lists with your fellow students or discuss with your tutor. Can you add more to your list? Think about what you have done in the past and list those activities where you have demonstrated the positive behaviour likely to be expected by future employers. Have you mentioned these in your CV? Review your CV and add examples.

Although this module is called Sales Pitch, customer awareness is much more than simply selling as much as you can to every customer. A satisfied customer is much more likely to return than one who feels they have been pressured by a sales representative. Internal customers will enjoy working with you and will want to see you develop your career. By building positive relationships with customers and colleagues they will respond more positively to you and the customer, your colleagues and yourself will benefit through increased personal and professional development and by enjoying your time at work.

Ultimately, satisfying your customers makes good business sense as they will come back again and again – and that’s good business!

**Portfolio Activity**

You’re now starting work and formal training and want to impress your boss, your college tutor and your new colleagues. From the very first day you’re likely to have some sort of customer contact so you need to make sure you’re ready for it.

What will you need to think about? This section will help you to be prepared by considering:

• who your customers are

• what they will expect of you

• how you build a positive and rewarding relationship with them

|  |
| --- |
| CASE STUDY |
| You’ve been invited for a job interview at a local vehicle rental agency for the post of trainee receptionist / administrator. You see this post as a way of learning more about the vehicle rental and leasing sector and are already thinking that you’d like to develop a career in fleet management. You know that you’ll often be the first contact for members of the public when they come to pick up a rental car so expect the manager will be looking for someone who will provide good customer care. |

**INTERVIEW**

Think about the case study above. What will the manager be looking for? Make some notes below.

Hint - remember to include what you look like and how you behave as well as how you will demonstrate your understanding of customer care.)

**NOTES**

You’re likely to be asked about dealing directly with customers. How would you answer the questions?

What experience of dealing with the public by telephone or face to face have you had?

NOTES

How would you deal with an unhappy customer who’s arrived to pick up a vehicle but the wrong type has been provided?

NOTES

Discuss your answer with the class or your tutor. Even if you’ve never worked with the public you have experience as a customer yourself so you could talk about your experience from the customer’s point of view. This will allow you to highlight what you think good customer care looks like. If you think you’ve missed anything, add more information to your notes.

**WELL DONE - YOU GOT THE JOB!**

|  |
| --- |
| **CASE STUDY** |
| Today is your first day at work and you’re very nervous but want to make a good impression. The company is a busy organisation, specialising in short-term car rental with many customers arriving at a local airport or train station. Some have pre-arranged their car rental and staff take vehicles to these places for collection, others telephone on the day and often arrive by taxi. Quite a few customers arrive wanting a car immediately without previous arrangement. There is another receptionist who’s very experienced, a busy vehicle maintenance team working behind the scenes, a small administration team of finance staff and the manager. |

Make a list of your customers – who are they, why? Think about age range, knowledge level, new and repeat customers. Remember to include both internal and external customers.

NOTES

|  |
| --- |
| **CASE STUDY** |
| Here’s a different sort of job. You’ve just started work as a Trainee Motorcycle Maintenance Technician. You go to college one day each week and to work four days each week at a large motorcycle sales business where they stock a wide variety of makes and models of motorbikes. They also undertake MOTs, diagnose technical bike problems and provide a full repair service. |

Will your list of customers be the same as for the Receptionist job? Draw up a list of customers for this role, thinking about what sort of relationship they will have with you.

NOTES

Discuss your answer with the class or your tutor.

In addition to the customers with bikes needing an MOT or repair, who did you include? Your boss and various colleagues both in the workshop and sales area? What about who you might need to deal with on the phone, perhaps ordering parts etc? What about a representative of the Department of Transport checking the standards of the MOT testing?

Look back over the lists you’ve made about customers. Think about how you are likely to interact with them. Which communication methods? In what ways will you be representing your company? List these below.

**NOTES**

Discuss your answer with the class or your tutor. Have you included email and the writing of notes and reports in the potential methods of communication? Think about the sort of written work you may be required to produce for customers.

Module 4: Pit crew Pit Crew looks at internal communication in more detail. Would you use the same sort of language style and words for members of the workshop team, bike owners and buyers, and the company manager as you do with friends?

If your employer is a large company or part of a national or even multi-national group of companies they may have protocols; rules and guides setting standards about how to communicate. They may want you to answer the telephone in a particular way such as “Good morning, ABC Motorcycles, how can I help you?” Very different to how you answer your own telephone at home or your mobile phone. Similarly if you’re sending a text to a friend to tell them when to call to see you you’ll probably use ‘text speak’ or shortened words, even slang. You may be asked to text a customer to tell them their bike is ready after an MOT – what would a customer think if you used ‘text speak’ for this message?

What other differences could there be when communicating with customers or personal friends?

NOTES

Discuss your answer with the class or your tutor. Did you put yourself in the position of the different customer types to see what their expectations are likely to be? Did you think about the impression customers will get from the way in which you communicate with them?

MOT

**Question1**

List five different ‘types’ of customers and how they might relate to you as an employee.

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

**Question 2**

Think of the different customers you’ve listed in answer to Q1 and list what each will expect of you as an employee demonstrating good customer care.

**Question 3**

What sort of behaviour or activity should you avoid so that you don’t give a negative impression?

**Question 4**

How could you make public customers feel welcome and project a professional image of you and the company?

**Question 5**

Think of the different customers you’ve listed in answer to Q1 and list five different methods of communication you may have with them. For each communication method list how you could project a good impression of you and your company?

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Module 4: Pit crew – team work and effective commination

**WHAT TEAMS ARE YOU IN?**

You may play football, cricket or another sort of sport. Possibly you’re in your school quiz team or dance crew. These are the usual type of teams that come to mind when we’re asked this question. If you have, or have had, a

part-time job or voluntary work, did you think about your colleagues and work mates? Even if you’re hoping to be self-employed once you’re working, it would be unusual if you’re not part of some sort of work-related team in the future.

**ARE YOU A TEAM PLAYER?**

This module will help you to understand team working and your own role within any teams you may join. It looks at the different methods of communication needed for effective team working and will help you to get the most out of your learning and work-based team relationships.

BY THE END OF THE MODULE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO:

* understand the characteristics of a successful team
* recognise your own team style and that of others
* identify and use the most appropriate communication method for effective team working
* build and develop your communication and team working skills

**WHAT IS A TEAM?**



Think about a team you’re a member of. What sort of team is it? The first thing which usually comes to mind is what the team members actually spend their time doing or aiming for, e.g. playing football for the local community team, trying to win the annual local league championship. But who do you think of as team members? What about the coach or whoever sorts out the booking of playing fields or transport? Who cleans the team strip? Are they members of your ‘team’? If there are several levels in your club and you’re in the 2nd team, what about other teams? What about the full sports club membership?

It’s perhaps not as obvious as you first thought. There may be several ‘teams’ within a larger organisation and sometimes even the various ‘teams’ may come together to create a bigger team. Teams are therefore changeable given the immediate task in hand and possible wider objectives.

Another way to look at teams is to think about who has the ‘power’? Who makes the decisions? Is everyone equal? Sometimes, especially in a work situation, there may be a team of people all with the same job such as a Telesales/Customer Adviser in a motor parts factor business supplying parts to trade customers, local repair garages etc and individual retail customers. There may be four or five in the team and each has an individual target for taking telephone enquiries, making sales calls and a sales target All the team members are paid in the same way depending on reaching their targets.

Take a look at the Parts Factor section on [www.autocity.org.uk](http://www.autocity.org.uk) Is this a team or will everyone be working individually to reach their own target? Are there any benefits of working together more co-operatively?

In this situation the team members may choose to simply work as individuals but there are problems with this. What happens when you want to take a week off? You’ll probably not reach your sales target that month and could miss out on a bonus. But if your team members work extra hard then the overall sales may hit everyone’s collective target and perhaps you could negotiate with the manager that you get your bonus after all. Why would the other team members do this for you? Well, they too will want holidays and an individual bonus so if everyone does this then everyone benefits – you, team members and the business.

Even if everyone has the same job some members will be more experienced than others, perhaps they’ve done the job longer or are particularly good at researching specialised or obscure parts. If you work as a team, knowing who is good at what, who has any problems etc can assist in helping to develop individuals’ skills and sort out issues. The overall team efficiency will improve and a positive and supportive atmosphere within the team is likely to develop. Everyone benefits.

Not all teams are made up of equals with every member doing the same job. Most companies have a number of different teams and these will often contain a number of different jobs. Most will have a team leader or manager who is responsible for ensuring objectives are met and they may be the one who allocates work out to individual team members. These teams may be fixed with clear roles within the company which don’t change very often but some teams come together for a short time, possibly to undertake a specific project or major piece of work. Members of such a project team may be drawn from other teams and will return to their original teams once the project is completed.

Many businesses will have a chart to show how different staff members fit together and the business is organised. Here’s one for a Motor Parts Factor business similar to the earlier example.

CREATE AND ADD IMAGE FROM PAGE 35

**AS A TELESALES ADVISOR WHICH TEAM(S) ARE YOU IN?**

Hopefully you’ve thought of three:

* the Telesales Team led by the Telesales Team Leader
* the Sales team led by the Sales Manager
* the whole business

**WHY ARE YOU PART OF MORE THAN JUST THE SMALL TELESALES TEAM?**

Ask other students, your friends or relatives about their experiences as members of teams. List a few different types of teams. Drawing organisation charts like the one on the previous page may help you get the feel for how simple teams often fit together to form larger ones.

**WHAT MAKES A GROUP OF PEOPLE A TEAM?**

Some teams you join voluntarily because you want to take part in something specific or to be part of a group of like-minded people who enjoy the same things you do. When undertaking formal training or in employment, you’re likely to be placed in a specific team with people you will not previously have known, may be of very different ages and backgrounds, and who you would not previously have chosen to spend time with. What will make you a team and, more importantly, what would make you a great team?



Think about why a group of people in a work situation could be labelled a team and write a list.

HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS ...

* All team members report to the same manager
* All team members have the same job
* Team members have different roles but are jointly responsible for achieving something

You will probably have thought of other ideas. Clearly, as some statements contradict other statements then not all characteristics apply to every team. The basic characteristic is that they share something in common and, in a work environment, it’s probably going to be about producing or delivering something a customer wants. And that achieves your targets. However, just because you’re in a team it doesn’t mean you’re a team player. For that you need to contribute to what the team is to achieve collectively and, if everyone does this, the team will probably achieve much more than they would as a number of individuals working independently – this is called synergy - achieving more or maximising output by all working together as a team.

**WHAT MAKES A TEAM A GREAT TEAM?**

Any good manager will be looking to develop his or her team to best advantage and, with a bit of thought, you can often understand how they go about this. Obviously it is the responsibility of the team leader or manager to make sure the team has all the skills and resources required to do the job needed, but once the principles of good teamwork are understood then you can make sure you can identify your best role in any team you are allocated to.

Once again, ask other students, your friends or relatives about their experiences as members of teams or think about your own past activity. List skills and behaviour you think will help a team become a great team. You could try splitting your list into two headings: task related and interpersonal or ‘people’ related.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| TASK RELATED | PEOPLE RELATED |
| Team members have all the skills needed Team members have all the resources needed Full understanding of outcome and timescale Full understanding of quality, legal and ethical standards expectedRecognise individual strengths | Motivated and enthusiasticAll willing to contributeWell-organisedFlexible and adaptableAware of any weaknessesMutual respect and trustConfident and creativeWilling to listen to each otherAgreed understanding of decision making process – will abide by any decision of senior team member or agreed group decisionEnjoy working together and achieving the required outcomes |

This list is not exhaustive but, as you can see, there are more points on the ‘people’ side than the ‘task’ side – did your own list look like this?**WHAT’S YOUR USUAL ROLE IN A TEAM?**

Not everyone is good at everything, especially when it comes to personal skills. Some people are more confident and outspoken than others, some are shy at speaking out in a group, and some people always come up with lots of ideas really quickly. This is where team working can really pay off. If your team can work together, helping every team member to contribute and take on those activities they are best at, both task and people related, then the team will be a great one.

Managers will often try and match employees to make up a well-balanced team but as an individual you too can develop your team skills by understanding the strengths and weaknesses of your team. Even if your team isn’t very big or you are all very similar in how you behave in team situations you can still be a great team. You just need to recognise those strengths which may be missing and make sure you all, as a team, make an extra effort to take on the missing roles, e.g. if you don’t have any one who likes to check every detail is completed you can always draw up a checklist or go back and double check work done to make sure every last detail has been attended to.

To do this effectively, you need to know what your own, and your team mates’ skills are when working in a team. Once you think about how everyone has something to offer, then you and your team can work out how to get on with whatever it is you need to do, discuss and agree the best way forward, and to make sure everything is done, on time, to the best possible standard, and get satisfaction from achieving it.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

All this sounds very easy but what helps all of this is good communication skills.



Have another look at the ‘people related’ team skills you listed earlier. You will already have spotted that having respect for each other, listening well, being willing to contribute to discussions and activities yourself, and showing support for team members are all important team working skills. There will also be times when you disagree on a work-related issue, you may receive or want to give criticism or challenge a suggestion.

So how do you communicate all this? Think about how you like people to communicate with you. Here’s a list of things to consider:

* Who do you want to communicate with? Colleague, team leader, senior manager etc?
* What situation are you communicating in? One to one, face to face, as part of a team meeting or in an open space with other people around?
* Is the communication formal or informal? Verbal or in writing? If written, who will see it? Could it be kept and read again in the future?
* What is the key point you are trying to communicate? Criticism, complimentary, trying to persuade or change their opinion, seeking agreement or giving instruction etc?
* What is the likely response? Can you guess their likely response? Will they be pleased? Could they be upset etc?

Not all communications are face to face. Think about the different types of employers and workplace situations.



Have a look at the World of Work pages on www.autocity.org.uk

Which different methods of communication are there?

You’ll probably identify the following methods:

* Direct face to face with one other person
* Direct face to face in a group setting
* Telephone
* Email
* Electronic – social networking, texting etc
* Written – reports, notes to managers or colleagues
* Written – informal notes
* Written - formal documents which may be recorded and available to others, the public etc

In Module 3 Sales Pitch, we look at communicating with customers in detail but some of the basic rules are just the same. Here are a few questions to think about:

* If you are working as an apprentice technician in a small local garage workshop which is a branch of a large company, would you use the same sort of language style and words for members of your workshop team as you would for the regional manager who’s just dropped in on a visit?
* Would you use the same language and style for a formal report to the team leader on a vehicle you’ve just checked over as you would when sat in a team meeting discussing work allocation and staff rotas?
* If your employer is a large company or part of a national or even multi-national group of companies they may have protocols; rules and guides setting standards about how to communicate. They may want you to answer the telephone in a particular way such as “Good morning, ABC Servicing and Repairs, how can I help you?” It’s very different to how you answer your own telephone at home or your mobile phone. Similarly, if you’re sending an email to a friend, you’ll probably use ‘text speak’ or shortened words, even slang. You may be asked to email a colleague in a different department to pass on a piece of information. What would they think if you used ‘text speak’ for this message?
* What about if your employer rings you? Do you have a polite answer phone message or is it a bit funny, or even slightly rude? Remember not everyone who rings you will share your sense of humour. Similarly, if someone rings your mobile phone whilst you’re at work (if it’s OK to take calls whilst working), what sort of ring tone does it have? It could grab your attention but actually be really annoying to others.
* For any written communication, what does it say about you? Is the style of language used appropriate? Is the grammar and spelling correct? If you’re not sure, check. Always use an electronic ‘spell checker’ or a

dictionary if available, not just to get it right this time but to make sure you get it right when you use the word again.

What other differences could there be when communicating with your close team members or senior management?

You’ve thought through the way in which you’re going to communicate, so now you’re ready. But how best to do it?



Think about how you like other people to communicate with you and list the words which come to mind.

Here’s a checklist to help:

* Use the most appropriate method of communication - formal/informal, spoken/written.
* Be clear about what you’re going to say – explain yourself accurately and concisely.
* Show respect for the person/group – listen and acknowledge what and how they respond to you.
* Keep calm and reasonable – don’t show any frustration or annoyance, keep the discussion professional and avoid an emotional response.
* If complaining or criticising, be positive.
* Remember to give credit when due and tell people if you think they have done well or you’re grateful for any assistance offered.
* Remember to offer support and assistance.
* Be willing to take on board any feedback, be flexible and willing to move your position if persuaded to change your mind.
* Finally, check any written work again before submitting it or check the other person has understood what you have been saying if face to face.

This all sounds very complicated but it’s not really. You’ve probably got quite a few of these skills already.



Ask some your friends or members of any teams which you’re currently in how good a communicator you are. What do they think?

Employers always value good team players – people they know will contribute and support team activities as well as do their own job well. Think about what you have done in the past and list those activities where you have demonstrated good team working. Have you mentioned these in your CV? Review your CV and add examples.

**Portfolio Activity**

In this module you’ve considered team working and your own role within any teams you may join. Also you’ve looked at the different methods of communication needed for effective team working and how this can help you to get the most out of your learning and work-based team relationships.

You will now be able to:

* understand the characteristics of a successful team
* recognise your own team style and that of others
* identify and use the most appropriate communication method for effective team working
* build and develop your communication and team working skills

Let’s have a go at using what you’ve learned.

|  |
| --- |
| **CASE STUDY** |
| You’ve successfully applied for an Apprenticeship and are working four days each week at a local service garage which is part of a chain of similar workshops in the region. Today is your first day at college where you’re studying one day each week to be a Vehicle Service Technician. You haven’t met any of the other students before.Your tutor has told you that in four weeks’ time you’ll be given a project to undertake in groups and that you should consider which four students you’d like to work with, and, if possible, organise your own teams. The project will take three months to complete fully and the teams will be expected to work together in class and in your own time. There will be the need to undertake independent research, to design a questionnaire, and seek information from each team member’s line manager. At the end of the project, each team will submit a single written report and will be required to deliver a presentation to the full class. 20% of your individual marks for the year will come from this group project. |

**WHAT TEAMS ARE YOU IN?**

There will be your team of workmates at the service garage where you are employed, your class at college and now the smaller project group. There could be others as well. As the garage you work at is part of a chain, you may get to meet staff from other workshops or the apprentices from each workshop may be asked to meet together occasionally. Can you think of any others?

**NOTES**

**NOTES (Cont’d)**

For the college project to work it will be important to pick, and be picked by, the best individuals for the group project.... but you don’t know anyone yet!

Think about what will be important if you are to work well together. What skills will be needed?

Did you think about the task that is likely to be required? What about the ‘people’ skills and if you will be able to get on well together? Did you include these?

Which of the skills you have listed are you good at? Which are you not so good at?

**NOTES**

How could you find out more about the other students before the team has to be formed? It will be important to get on with this quickly as other students are likely to be thinking the same thing.

**NOTES**

Remember you need to be able to work out what skills the other potential group members have and if, as a team, you will have all the skills needed as well as enjoy working together.

|  |
| --- |
| **CASE STUDY (Continued)** |
| You’ve now agreed a team of five, including yourself. Everyone seemed to get on well at first and seemed to be enthusiastic and well-motivated to do a good job. At the first couple of meetings when the group had to discuss the project, each team member agreed their role and it was agreed that the group would meet every two weeks in the local café after college to review progress.One team member has missed two meetings and it’s not clear if their share of the project has been done. As a result, one of the others, who tends to take the lead role in each meeting, wants to throw them out of the team. |

Should you go ahead with this suggestion? After all, it would be wrong for everyone to get the same mark if not everyone has contributed the same amount of effort. What do you think? What might your tutor think about kicking someone out of the team at this stage? Can you think of any alternative actions? Do you have enough information to make a decision? What are you going to suggest to the group as a way forward?

**NOTES**

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| --- |
| **CASE STUDY (Continued)** |
| Everyone is now contributing to the project and have each written a section. You’ve read through it all and think that, although all the content is good, the report doesn’t read very well due to the very different styles used by the different team members. You want to suggest that it is now re-written by a single member of the group. Also, you think one particular member should do the re-writing as he seems very good at it. |

What do you think the team members might think of your suggestions, especially as you’re not volunteering to do the work yourself? Some members may take this as a criticism. The one you think would be best at it may feel they have already done their ‘share’ of the work.

How will you explain your suggestion?

**NOTES**

Which ‘task’ and which ‘people’ team skills will be important when making your suggestion?

**NOTES**

Discuss your answers for the case study so far with other students and your tutor. Think about how you could develop your own team working skills for the future – how to develop your own team strengths and any areas of weakness so you can adapt and contribute effectively to different teams. Can you think of anything to add to your notes?

|  |
| --- |
| **CASE STUDY (Continued)** |
| Back at your place of work, you’re starting to know your way around the workshop and, in addition to helping to keep the place clean and tidy, the other technicians are beginning to get you involved with their jobs. The Service Manager has told everyone that your college activity schedule will be detailed on the team notice board and all staff should make sure that you are given every opportunity to be shown related jobs as appropriate vehicles come in for service. The Service Manager has told you that he will be required to review your progress each month and report back to your college tutor.He has asked you to come up with suggestions how this could be done. |

Think about the team(s) you are in. The information from one team (at work) is likely to be shared with other teams (college / head office).

Who will you recommend you communicate with? Why? What do they need, or you would like them to know? What format would be most appropriate for each person or team?

**NOTES**

Now you’ve thought about this for a while, write some notes below about what you’re likely to recommend to

your manager.

**WHO? WHY? WHAT INFORMATION? WHICH METHOD OR FORMAT?**

Now, finally, write yourself a checklist to remind yourself how best to communicate. Remember to include both formal and informal communication and also verbal and written.

**NOTES**

Discuss your answers for the case study so far with other students and your tutor. You may want to check back in the content area of the module to see if you missed anything before having a go at the MOT.

MOT

**Question 1**

List five different teams which you are a member of. Include both teams you have voluntarily joined and those which you are required to take part in.

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

**Questions 2**

Think of the different teams you have listed in Q1. Are any part of larger organisations? Select one of these and list the different teams this makes you a part of.

**Question 3**

Think about the teams you are in. Why are you a team? List the possible characteristics of a team.

**Question 4**

What are the two areas of skills needed for a team to be successful?

**Question 5**

List what task-related issues need to be met for a team to be successful.

**Question 6**

List what people-related skills and behaviour will be needed for a team to be successful.

**Question 7**

List five methods of communication likely to be used at work.

**Question 8**

List eight things to consider before any communication.

Think about what you have done in the past. It could be part-time work, school, college, voluntary work, sports etc. Give examples of the positive team working and good communication you have demonstrated in the past explaining the situation.

**NOTES**

Which types of positive behaviour do you already demonstrate?

**NOTES**

Have you mentioned these in your CV? Review your CV and add examples.

Which types of behaviour will you work to improve?

Now check your answers with your tutor and put a tick in the boxes if correct. How did you do? Check the module again for any area where you could improve your score.

Module 5: Workshop manual – problem solving, planning and good organisation

Do you have times when everything seems to go wrong? Deadlines arrive out of nowhere and you haven’t done all the things needed? You probably had every intention to do the work, even intended to work really hard and do really well but ... you just ran out of time, or something else cropped up which was even more important at the last minute.

What you need is a guide, some sort of checklist or set of instructions to help you sort things out. How about a workshop manual for you and all your activities?

This module will help you to look ahead and plan what needs doing so that you can do your best every time. It will help you to organise your time and recognise when things are not going well so that you can do something about it before it becomes a bigger problem.

**BY THE END OF THE MODULE YOU WILL:**

* identify and prioritise your activities
* set targets and plan activities
* review achievements and revise plans
* be confident you can sort things out when you hit a problem

**WHY PLAN?**

Everyone plans, often without even thinking about it – even you! You probably have a school or college schedule or timetable to remind you what class you’re due to attend, where and at what time. That’s a basic plan.

You may even have a system which allows you to add a list of things you need to do in advance; homework, project deadlines, kit or equipment to take, etc. Or perhaps you keep a diary, written or electronic, to remind you of key dates and events. All of these are basic plans. Do you use them? Be honest!



Think about when things have gone wrong in the past. Times when you’ve suddenly realised that you have a key deadline for a piece of homework – tomorrow! Or you realise you promised to be in two different places on the same day. What do these things have in common? An unpleasant surprise and lots of stress. Once you get into the habit of planning and organising a bit better, then there will be fewer unpleasant surprises and more time to get on with things you really want to do. On top of that your family and friends, tutors and employer will know they can trust you to get on with things without feeling they need to constantly check your progress.

As you move into further and higher education and employment, you’ll be expected to organise your activities yourself a lot more than at present, and are likely to be given tasks and objectives which require you to sort out how you go about achieving them. Your success or failure will matter more than ever before, as your chosen qualification or career could be on the line. A bit scary? It can be, but a bit of organisation and planning will go a long way to help you achieve what you want to achieve.

**REMEMBER – IF YOU FAIL TO PLAN, YOU WILL PLAN TO FAIL!**

**ORGANISATION PAYS**

OK, so where’s the checklist?



Have a look at your school timetable or diary, or any other way you currently keep track of what you want/need to do. What do they have in common?

Two things are usually top of the list – what needs to be done (objectives) and when it needs to be done (timescale).

**OBJECTIVES - WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE**

How do you remember when an important piece of homework or project in due? Do you write ‘Hand in project’ on your timetable, diary or PC? Is this enough or will you suddenly realise you had to gather some information from the library or on the Internet first, or intended to have a chat with a tutor to make sure you knew exactly what was wanted.

Let’s think about how you could write an objective to make sure there are no surprises. Let’s be smart and write SMART objectives.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **S** | Specific | Be precise about what needs to be done |
| **M** | Measurable | Note how you will know that it has been done |
| **A** | Achievable | Is it really possible? Don’t be over ambitious |
| **R** | Result based | Make sure your objective will give you the result which is needed |
| **T** | Timed | Set a time or date for completion |

So, instead of writing ‘Hand in Project’, you could write …

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **S** | Specific | Complete project and hand in |
| **M** | Measurable | Check the project meets the project specification set by Mr X |
| **A** | Achievable | Make sure no other homework outstanding for the week before the project is due |
| **R** | Result based | Double check what’s needed with Mr X – ask what would be needed for an ‘A+’ marking |
| **T** | Timed | Complete by 8th March (so time to review and amend if needed) and hand in the project by 4pm on the 10th March to Mr X |

**TIMESCALE - WHEN OBJECTIVES NEED TO BE DONE BY**

Think you’ve got everything sorted? Nearly....

It would be great if you only had one thing to think about at a time but that rarely happens. And some things can’t be done at a single time. You’ll probably have several projects and activities overlapping so keeping track of your time is really important.

For big projects, when you probably do a bit one day then need to wait for a piece of information or to meet up with other students or the tutor, you could easily lose track of things. Large projects can also look a bit scary which could lead to you putting them off until it’s too late to do them well. Don’t try and ‘eat all of the elephant’ at once, break it down into bite-sized chunks and set a number of target dates for each section. Much less scary!

Even smaller pieces of work or activity can be done better if you break them down into a number of pieces. So instead of making a note to write an essay you could make a number of notes to:

* call in at the library
* research on the Internet
* review coursework to date

To do this, look at what you need to meet the objective and work backwards. How much time will you need to read the books from the library? How long will it take me to write my first notes or draft essay? Make sure you have planned in enough time for each small ‘chunk’ of work.



Think about a piece of work or project you’re currently involved in. Does it need you to do a number of things first before you can complete it? Could you just sit down and write it? Possibly yes, but could you do it better if you did a bit of preparation first? Think about what you could do to make the activity easier for you to do it really well and then make a note ... a SMART plan!

**WHAT SHOULD A PLAN LOOK LIKE?**

When you start work you’re likely to have a company plan and timetable to help you keep track of work, possibly more than one for different activities. It will be even more important that you keep on top of everything so that all the stuff you must do is sorted and all the stuff you want to do is planned so you can fit it all in and have a great time. There’s no set rule for how you keep your own plans or what they should look like – just as long as they are SMART.

You could ask your family and friends how they plan. Do they keep a detailed diary or a list which they simply add to and cross off as things come and go? Perhaps they keep a chart on their PC, laptop or Smartphone? It doesn’t matter how you do it as long as it makes sense to you and gives you all the information you need. Charts, lists, colour coding – it’s up to you. It doesn’t have to be complicated but should be easy to change as you revise it and new things need to be added.

There’s no need to become a slave to your plan. Don’t see it as something to dread looking at but a way of getting all the ‘must do’ stuff done to the best of your ability and on time, and then you can relax and do the stuff you want to do as well.

Also, you may have more than one plan. Perhaps a really detailed one for everyday activity and another which you look at less often where you plan for the future – what job you want, what qualifications you will need, what you want to save for....a plan for your life. You should be SMART about your life so you don’t miss opportunities and achieve want you want to achieve. (Module 6 looks at planning a career in more detail).

There’s no point in having a terrific SMART plan if you don’t use it. Get in the habit of regularly checking, perhaps once a week for diaries and school plans and certainly every time you add a new entry, in case it conflicts with another activity or eats into your time to prepare for something important. Revising a plan is not a failure, it’s just part of keeping on top of things and spotting any problem ahead in enough time to sort it out before it becomes an even bigger problem.

**PROBLEMS, PROBLEMS!**

There will always be times when your well-laid out plans seem a waste of time due to an extra piece of work being needed or a deadline being shortened etc. But even then, your efforts won’t have been wasted. The further ahead

you plan, the more likely it is that you will need to revise it. This doesn’t mean planning is a waste of time. Good planning will mean you have fewer unpleasant surprises and a lot less stress.

Not all problems come from planning issues. You may think of a problem no one else has spotted at work, in college or in your family or social life. Your manager may ask you, on your own or with work colleagues, to look at a problem and come up with a solution. Also, not all problems are negative. It may be a problem for a company to get a really big order from a new customer but, if you are able to provide what the customer wants, then the company could get even more orders. Good for the business and everyone working in it.

How different people tackle problems will vary. Some will just dive straight in and want to get on and ‘do’ something. Others will want to take time to think about things carefully; to gather information, consider ideas, even go away and research similar problems. Some will really enjoy sorting out every little detail but others will not be interested in detail, just getting the job done as quickly as possible. Some people like new ideas and love the challenge of a problem when others will pretend there’s not really a problem and try to ignore the whole thing. What sort of person are you?

**In Module 4: Pit Crew, we look at working as a team so here we’ll look at the problem of having a problem!**

Think of a problem you’ve had to sort out recently or need to sort out now, and make a note of it. As you read through the next section, make notes about how you could have come up with a solution more quickly or easily, or even a better solution.

If you can’t think of your own problem you could discuss this with your tutor and other students. Once you’ve read through the section, discuss how you could use the guide to come up with a solution.

There are a few easy steps to take when you have identified or been given a problem to solve.

* Understand the problem
* Think of different ideas and solutions
* Select ‘best’ solution
* Plan (SMART) and take action
* Check and revise

Although these look like a straightforward list to work your way through, it won’t always sort out the problem first time. When you get to what you think is the final stage, check and revise. You may spot something which hasn’t worked as well as you hoped and have to work through the list again. Think of it as a circle or cycle, going around and around, until everything that needs to be achieved is achieved.

**PROBLEM SOLVING CYCLE**



Let’s look at the circle in more detail and remember to think of any limitations – what can’t you do?

**UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM**

* What is the problem?
* What needs to be achieved? By when? To what standards?
* How will you know if it’s been sorted or the required outcome is achieved?
* Do you have all the information?
* What resources (people, material, money etc.) do you have?
* How did you get the problem? (You may need to think about how to avoid getting the same problem again in the future)

**THINK OF DIFFERENT IDEAS AND SOLUTIONS**

* Be positive and enthusiastic
* Has the problem occurred in the past? How was it solved then?
* Be creative and play around with ideas no matter how wild and silly they may seem at first
* Any limitations – what can’t you do?
* Make notes and don’t lose any ideas

**SELECT BEST SOLUTION**

Cross out any possible solutions which could create other problems? List all other possible solutions in order of:

* most likely to achieve the best results
* will use least resources

Remember to think about how to avoid the problem in the future. If you’re in a group, don’t be upset if ‘your’ idea isn’t the one picked to take forward. Be willing to discuss all options positively – you may need to use your negotiation and influencing skills but remember everyone is different. Everyone is likely to look at the problem differently and everyone’s contributions should be welcomed – they just may spot something you haven’t thought of!

**PLAN ACTION AND TAKE ACTION**

Create a SMART plan.

Check the plan with anyone who may have an interest, could offer advice or will make the final decision. (At work this could include colleagues, manager, even a customer. You will need to make sure you know who you should talk to about the problem/solution so always check with your manager). If your plan is approved, take action and start working on it.

**CHECK AND REVISE**

Did you remember to build a number of small steps into your SMART plan?

Check against the plan – is everything going well?

Will the required outcome be met?

If no, what action needs to be taken? Go back to the ‘Think of different ideas and solutions’ part of the cycle.

**And finally... when you’ve achieved what was needed – celebrate!**

**SO FINALLY, HERE’S THE CHECKLIST...**

Objectives – remember to make them SMART

Priorities – what must you do versus want to do, order of importance etc

One bit at a time – break each task down into bite-sized chunks

Review – regularly and also every time you add a new activity

Problem solving - use the problem solving cycle to sort out any problems

Celebrate – every time you meet a deadline or achieve an objective

So that’s it – plan, organise and be confident in your ability to tackle problems. Remember the phrase ‘Fail to plan is to plan to fail!’ Employers will always value employees who they can trust to be well-organised. Not only so that they are happy to let you get on with the job in hand, but also because they know that any problems will be spotted and sorted out quickly and efficiently.



Think about what you have done in the past and list those activities where you have demonstrated good planning and organisation skills. Even when things didn’t go well in the past, how did you sort it out? Effective planning and problem solving will be a quality looked for by future employers. Have you mentioned these in your CV? Review your CV and add examples.

Portfolio Activity

In this module, you’ve had a look at organising and planning as a way of improving your time management and ability to meet deadlines without stress and last minute hassle. You’ve also looked at how to approach any problems you identify or are given by your tutors or managers at work.

You will now be able to:

* identify and prioritise your activities
* set targets and plan activities
* review achievements and revise plans
* be confident you can sort things out when you hit a problem

**Let’s have a go at using what you’ve learned.**

|  |
| --- |
| **CASE STUDY**  |
| You’ve secured an apprenticeship at a local car dealership to train as an Electrical Installation Technician and have recently started at the local college one day each week to learn how to install and repair security, audio and navigation equipment. There’s a company system for logging jobs from the sales team for equipment to be installed in new cars ready for collection by customers, and jobs from customers wanting to upgrade their electrical equipment or have a fault which needs looking at. You’re not expected to be allocated work from this system until year two of your training but will be assisting qualified colleagues as they undertake the various tasks.Your manager has told you she wants to start planning your work and training for the next year, and she has put aside an hour at the end of the week to discuss this with you. You want to be ready for the meeting and want to impress her so think you’d better start a plan for the year ahead. |

If you’d like more information about what an Electrical Installation Technician does or what sort of company they are likely to work in, see [www.autocity.org.uk](http://www.autocity.org.uk)

How are you going to start your planning? Can you remember the two essential things which you will need to put together a useful plan?

**NOTES**

Perhaps you’ve started with a simple list.

How are you going to start your planning? Can you remember the two essential things which you will need? If not, try writing a list of the various things you think may need to be done over the next year and then add a date to each to show when they must be completed or will take place.

**NOTES**

You could start with the term times for college so you can tell your manager when you will be available to work all week without a day off for study. How about any exam dates or other key college dates, possible visits to other companies etc? Can you think of anything else which may be useful for your manager to know about your college studies?

****Think about how and what you’re going to study. What else might it be useful to tell your manager? If you know when you’ll be learning about specific types of electrical equipment or your course is broken down into a number of small modules, then it may be useful for your manager to have details so that she can make sure you get the chance to practise on those items at work at the same time as at college?

OK, so that’s basic college stuff sorted. There will be other things to think about but this is a good start.



Once you’ve added everything you can think of to the list, re-arrange it into chronological order; earliest date first and last date at the end.

**NOTES**

**Now you’ve got the basis for a good plan, what has to be done and by when? Now’s the time to get SMART about it!**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **S** | Specific | Be precise about what needs to be done |
| **M** | Measurable | Note how you will know that it has been done |
| **A** | Achievable | Is it really possible? Don’t be over ambitious |
| **R** | Result based | Make sure your objective will give you the result which is needed |
| **T** | Timed | Set a time or date for completion |

Compare your list with other students or discuss with your tutor. Did they think of anything you may have missed? Pick out a few of the items on the list and turn them into SMART objectives. Do any need breaking down into more manageable bits? Make a note of them below. Pick one out which you think could be complicated or likely to take quite a long time and split it up into a number of chunks, each with a SMART objective.

**NOTES**

Remember this is only a draft and you may not have all the information you need about some items to add them to your plan straight away. What can you do to make sure you don’t miss them out completely?

**NOTES**

You could keep a separate list of questions you need to ask or you could insert the points into your draft plan e.g. ‘By next Friday, ask manager if there’s a particular busy time during the year so I can avoid it when booking my annual holiday’. That’s a sure way to impress her!

Have a final look at your draft plan. You have everything you think must be done in it. How about what you would like to be done as well? Do you have a really important project due at some point for college? It may need more time than usual. What about the time you’ll need for revision just before your exams? You could add in some time off work for these and highlight them in a different colour to remind you to talk to your manager about it and try to negotiate a bit of extra time off.



Can you think of anything else? Perhaps asking if you can go and visit one of the suppliers of the electrical equipment you’re training to install? There are probably lots of other things you can think of.

Now you’re fully prepared for your meeting. All you have to do is make sure you can make sense of it when you’re in the meeting and to ask all those questions you’ve listed. A plan is no good unless you can see quickly and easily what needs to be done and when. Your manager may ask to see it so make sure it’s tidy and well laid out.

Remember it may be your plan but it’s still a draft until your manager has agreed to it... and probably added quite a bit more to it!

|  |
| --- |
| **CASE STUDY**  |
| The meeting with your manager went really well. She seemed impressed by what you had already thought of to ask her and liked the draft plan you’d prepared. Well done! She especially thought your request to go and visit one of the electrical equipment suppliers was a very good idea and promised to see what she can do.Your manager has now told you that she’s got the OK for you to accompany a senior manager on a trip to a major manufacturer of satellite navigation equipment. The visit had already been scheduled but, when you check your plan, you realise it’s on the same day as a group presentation of a project at college. You don’t want to say no to the chance to go on the visit, particularly as it was your idea, but know that you will be letting your project group down if you don’t take part. You may possibly lose some marks for your college work. |

This sort of problem isn’t that unusual. No point in putting off sorting it out so let’s see what you can do about it.

Let’s start by think how you could tackle the problem. Can you remember the five steps for problem solving?

* Understand the problem
* Think of different ideas and solutions
* Select ‘best’ solution
* Plan (SMART) and take action
* Check and revise

You don’t have to sort this out yourself. What about involving your manager and/or your tutor in solving it? Explain the situation to each of them (and your project group at college) so they know there’s an issue and that you are trying to find the best solution. Don’t just give them the problem. Explain what you’ve thought of so far and ask them for any other suggestions you may not have thought about yet.

Think about either what you know or what questions you need to ask and list them under the first two headings.

***UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM***

**NOTES**

***THINK OF DIFFERENT IDEAS AND SOLUTIONS***

**NOTES**

Once you’ve got all the information and discussed the problem, a way forward may be obvious. Alternatively, your college tutor or manager may suggest a way forward which the other agrees with, and allows you to still meet your commitments to your student friends in your project group. Maybe you could rearrange your presentation date to your tutor, or take a greater share of the preparation needed for the project and not attend the presentation?

Whatever the agreed solution, make sure everyone knows about the action being taken and agrees with it. Add your preferred solution to the next heading. Add the sort of SMART details to your plan that the solution is likely to need, e.g. build in more time for the project, and add details of when, where, how for the visit to the manufacturer.

***SELECT BEST SOLUTION***

**NOTES**

***PLAN (SMART) AND TAKE ACTION***

**NOTES**

And finally, what sort of checks and revision could you add to complete the problem solving cycle?

***CHECK AND REVISE***

**NOTES**

Did you think about checking everything is on track for a successful presentation a couple of days before your own deadline? How about checking everything is still Ok for the visit also a few days in advance?

Great. You’ve sorted your problem and impressed everyone at the same time. Well done! Discuss your answers for the case study with other students and your tutor. You may want to check back in the content area of the module to see if you missed anything before having a go at the MOT.

MOT

**Question 1**

What are the two essential elements of a good plan?

**Question 2**

What five letter word summarises a good plan?

**Question 3**

What do the five letters remind you to check in any plan?

**Question 4**

What are the five steps in the problem solving cycle?

**Question 5**

List some of the actions you could take in each step of the problem solving cycle?

**Question 6**

What can you remember from the checklist? There are six things to remember. How many can you list?

Think about what you have done in the past. It could be part-time work, school, college, voluntary work, sports etc. Give examples of the good planning and problem solving you have demonstrated in the past, explaining the situation.

**NOTES**

Which types of positive behaviour do you already demonstrate?

**NOTES**

Have you mentioned these in your CV? Review your CV and add examples. Which types of behaviour will you work to improve?

**NOTES**

Now check your answers with your tutor and put a tick in the boxes if correct. How did you do? Check the module again for any area where you could improve your score.

Module 6: The route ahead – a guide to applying for the job or training you want and how to impress during that vital interview

Well done, you’ve worked through the full programme and now know exactly what sort of skills employers are looking for from young people at the beginning of their chosen careers. You’ve worked through all the exercises and passed the MOTs. You’re ready for the next step... but where are you aiming for and which route will you take to get there?

This module takes you through a journey. You start with thinking about the sort of job you want. You don’t need to make your mind up immediately as there are lots of things you can do to help you to get a better idea of the wide range of careers available and to learn more about what sort of job you’ll really enjoy. Next, you’ll learn about the different ways you can start your career and build your qualifications and vocational skills – the skills and knowledge which are specific to the job you want to do. After this, you’ll learn about how best to present yourself to training providers and employers so that you’re the one they pick for the job or training.

BY THE END OF THE MODULE YOU’LL BE ABLE TO:

* work out what sort of job you will enjoy and be able to build a successful career in
* find out more about the range of jobs you might be interested in
* understand the different routes into the training and further education you will need
* complete application forms, write a CV and letter of application with confidence
* prepare for and perform well at an interview

WHERE AM I AIMING FOR?

So, what do you want to do when you leave school? I bet you’re tired of being asked this question already! Well now’s the time to really think about it.

You may already have a good idea about what sort of work you want to do but that will be based on your experience to date; what jobs your family members do, what you’ve seen on TV or the Internet etc. You certainly don’t know about every job there is and, with new technology developing faster and faster each year, probably haven’t thought about the new sort of jobs which haven’t even started yet.

First of all you need to think about yourself. What do you enjoy doing? What interests do you have? How do you like to spend your time? Do you enjoy making and mending things, doing practical activities? Do you enjoy meeting new people and new situations? Would you like to work in a small organisation or a large one, possibly with sites overseas and the chance for international travel? Perhaps you want to be your own boss eventually? How much do you want to earn? Yes, everyone wants to be paid as much as possible but some jobs pay more than others, especially at first. It may seem a long way off but thinking about what career promotion opportunities there may be in the future for any job you’re thinking about is a good idea.

You may already have made choices about which school subjects to take qualifications in or will be making these decisions soon. Which subjects are you good at and getting good grades in? Are you thinking about going to university or looking to leave school?

A lot to think about? Yes, but there’s lots of help out there. The portfolio and MOT takes you through a checklist of questions to start your career planning. Remember, you’ll be spending a large part of your life at work so it’s worth making sure you pick one which you’ll really enjoy.

Once you’ve got a good idea about what sort of job you want, you’ll need to check your list against a wide range of jobs. There are hundreds to choose from so now’s the time to do some serious research.

The Explore Job Roles pages on [www.autocity.org.uk](http://www.autocity.org.uk) give descriptions of a large number of different jobs there are in the retail automotive sector. It also includes a number of videos of people explaining what they do in the job they currently have and about the sort of organisation they work for.

You’ll also need to think about where the jobs are. Is that sort of work available in your area or are you happy to move elsewhere to get a job or training? How many jobs are there now and how many will there be in the future? This sort of information is called ‘labour market information’ and the IMI website includes regularly updated information about each English region, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

All this can be very scary but don’t worry, just take one step at a time.

1. Work out what sort of job you’re looking for

2. Select a few jobs which match your list

3. Think about where the jobs are and what opportunities there are likely to be in the future

**THINGS TO DO AND SOURCES OF HELP**

* Work through the attached portfolio and MOT
* Discuss your ideas with your teacher, careers teacher or Personal Adviser at school. They will be able to help you to review your ideas and suggest additional things you can do to research training and job opportunities
* Learn more about working in the automotive sector by getting some work experience (see below)
* Internet research #MotorCareers on www.autocity.org.uk

**WHAT ROUTE SHALL I TAKE?**

There are not many jobs around with good prospects which don’t require some sort of training, further education or higher qualifications but these can be undertaken in a number of ways. At some point, you’ll be able to choose a work experience placement and you could use work experience to help you to decide on your job choice and training courses after school. Remember, you must stay in some form of education or training until your 18th birthday if you were born on or after 1 September 1997 (England). Remaining in education or training includes staying at school, going to college or going to work in a job or work-based training where you can work towards a vocational qualification, so there are still lots of choice.

Here’s a list of different routes into employment. They won’t all be available for every job you may be interested in but you need to know what they are as this might influence your choice of job. Most jobs will require a specific training route or qualification, or level of achievement in school qualifications, so make sure you know what the jobs you are interested in require.

**WHILST STILL AT SCHOOL**

Work experience – any opportunity to experience a work environment is always useful as it adds to what you know and understand of what it’s like to work, to learn more about the sector and jobs you may be interested in, and the chance to talk with people who may already be doing the job you want. You can do this whilst still at school in a number of ways. As a young person, you should always discuss your work experience ideas with your family and careers teacher before accepting work.

• A part-time job or a job during the school holidays

• Voluntary job or helping out in an organisation

• Formal work experience (usually in Year 10)

• Enterprise activities in school - many schools undertake enterprise projects where students set up small ‘businesses’ in the school or compete in enterprise competitions. These can be useful in building your understanding of commercial business – product/service design, planning, manufacturing, marketing and selling, profit and loss!

**SCHOOL QUALIFICATIONS**

* GCSEs - A GCSE/CSE course usually involves studying the theory of a subject, combined with some investigative work; some subjects also involve practical work. GCSE/CSEs are usually studied full-time over Years 10 and 11.
* Vocational-related qualifications – increasingly, school students can study vocational subjects at school leading to formal qualifications. GCSE subjects such as Design and Technology are useful in lots of sectors but there are a lot of other qualifications, such as Diplomas, which may be focused upon a specific sector and are therefore very useful if you know that you want to work in that sector. Some courses may lead to BTEC, City & Guilds, IMI Awards/IMI or OCR National qualifications rather than GCSE / CSEs. These will be mainly at Entry level or level 1 or 2 – your school will be able to tell you more about these, and if they’d suit you. The automotive sector has several vocational qualifications which may be available in your school.
* Diplomas – these offer a more practical, hands-on way of learning and getting skills. You would take a Diploma course instead of a full range of GCSEs. It might be possible to do a Diploma at your school at Foundation or Higher Level. Ask your school for more information or talk to your careers teacher or Personal Advisor. He/she is your careers expert and will be able to give you advice on what career choices are open to you if you take a Diploma. The Engineering and Retail Diplomas each have links with the automotive sector.
	+ A Foundation Diploma is a Level 1 qualification equivalent to GCSEs D-G
	+ A Higher Diploma is a level 2 qualification equivalent to GCSEs A\* - C / 9 - 4
* A Levels / Baccalaureate / Scottish Highers – you can study both academic and some vocational-related subjects at this level. You may study these at school, a sixth-form college or a further education college.

Remember each school is different, so you need to check which courses your school can offer. Make sure you get a copy of their Options booklet and talk to your subject teachers and your school’s Personal Adviser.

**AFTER SCHOOL - WHAT NEXT?**

**Apprenticeships**

An apprenticeship is a work-based training programme. It provides you with practical skills through on-the-job training combined with theoretical knowledge and off-the-job learning, usually at a local college part time. You will usually have to apply for an Apprenticeship place by formal application and interview with a local employer who will then pay you whilst you complete the Apprenticeship.

If you are looking to get a career in the automotive industry, an Apprenticeship is an ideal way of doing so. It gives you the best of both worlds - learning and working, enabling you to earn money whilst gaining a qualification. Apprenticeship programmes are available in all four nations of the United Kingdom; England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, however they do vary slightly from nation to nation. More information is available at: www.apprenticeships.org.uk

**Further Education**

Colleges offer a wide range of courses including:

* educational – where you can re-sit any school exam if you didn’t achieve the grade you wanted
* foundation courses which provide extra support for subjects like maths, English or IT if you still have difficulties
* A level and other Level 3 courses
* vocational qualifications either as an Apprentice, with other support from an employer, or as an independent learner. (This is likely to require fees to be paid but some areas offer financial support – you would need to check with the college)

**Gap Year Projects**

Taking a year out to get a basic job and earn some money (perhaps in readiness for going to university) or to go abroad and gain new experiences, is often attractive to young people, especially if you’re not sure yet which career route to follow. There are many organisations, often charities, which help organise such activities so you’ll need to do a lot of research before you decide. Check out the Internet and discuss your ideas with your family and advisers.

Pre-university experience schemes like ‘A Year in Industry’ – these are a bit like a gap year but are more organised and often led by universities or the industry sector. They usually are available to young people with A level or other Level 3 qualifications and provide a one year job with pay and support. They are useful for gaining experience in the sort of sector or job you may be thinking about for your career ahead.

Universities provide a wide range of qualifications - not only in lots of different subjects but there are also different types of degrees, graduate diplomas and certificates. Even after three or four years study to obtain a degree, you may want to continue, or return later in your career, to take a post graduate qualification, often called a PhD or a Doctorate. Many university courses now include a placement year where you will be placed in employment, usually between the second and third year of a degree course.

You may want to go directly to university after school or college, in which case you will need to research which qualifications you want to aim for, which universities provide your chosen subject and how you are going to fund your learning. Fees vary between universities and support may be available so it’s important to do plenty of research. Some employers will help to fund university qualifications either straight from school or after you’ve worked for them for a while and want you to gain higher level qualifications to help your career and their organisation. Your teachers and Personal Advisers will help you work out which is best for you depending on the career you have in mind.

**HOW TO WIN THE CAREER I WANT?**

**Applications and Interviews**

OK, so you’ve decided which job or training you want to apply for and now’s the time you have to do it. The employer or training provider is likely to have lots of applicants so you’ll need to ensure your application is one of the ones which are picked for interview.

Remember – you only have one chance to make a good first impression!

***CV (Curriculum Vitae)***

A CV is simply a summary of what you have done so far, what experiences, skills and knowledge you have, what your interests are and what you want to achieve in the future. There is no right or wrong way of writing a CV but there are a few simple rules:

* The CV should be only one or two pages long – remember it should summarise or list information. You’ll get the chance to add more detail at an interview.
* Include the following headings:
	+ Personal details – just name, address and contact details – telephone and email if appropriate
	+ Education – provide brief details of qualifications gained and at what level – GCSE, NVQ, A Level etc. Also include any specific skills such as IT or relevant training courses you’ve attended even if no formal qualification was obtained.
	+ Work experience – always list the most recent first as this tells the employer what you currently do and how it may relate to the job being advertised. Briefly describe the job and try to include some specifics about the job, such as the ability to work in a team, working to tight deadlines, the ability to complete work in a manufacturer’s specified time etc.
	+ Hobbies and interests – this will help the employer get a better idea about you but be brief. You could include any ambitions you may have for the future – as long as they don’t conflict with the employment or job you’re applying for.
	+ A personal statement – this is an opportunity for you to tell the employer what a valuable employee you would be. For example hardworking, flexible, confident etc (you may want to change this for each separate job/training you apply for so you can highlight the qualification or work experience which that specific employer is likely to value) .
	+ References – it’s usual to provide the names and contact details of two referees. One of your most recent employers (if you’ve worked at all) and one may be a close friend or other previous employer. Alternatively you could ask a teacher or leader of a club or sports team you’ve been a member of to be a referee.
* Be accurate and truthful
* Don’t leave any gaps in time – explain any time when you haven’t been in education, training or employment
* Check all spelling and grammar ... then double check it
* Ask someone who knows you well to read it before submitting it. They may notice something that is really obvious that you may have missed

The portfolio to follow will also help you to have a go at writing your own.

***Letters of Application***

Often called a ‘covering letter’ as they are usually sent with either an application form or your CV. This letter gives you the chance to say a surprising amount about you – without you writing a lot. It demonstrates how good your

English is and, if you include the right sort of information, will tell them if you have researched the job or training on offer. Once again there are just a few points to remember:

* It should be written in the correct style – a business letter
* It should be short and to the point
* It should not say the same as you’ve said in your CV
* It should state what job/training position you are applying for and where you saw the advert or heard about it
* Say why you want the job/training – this is your chance to show you know something about the employer or trainer
* Say why you feel you will be good at it – just one key reason.
* Check all spelling and grammar ... then double check it
* Ask someone who knows you well to read it before submitting it. They may notice something that is really obvious that you may have missed
* Always post in good time and consider hand delivery, if local, or recorded delivery if posted (the Post Office will track / guarantee delivery). If emailing the application, ask for confirmation of receipt

There’s one in the portfolio for you to have a go at writing.

***Emailing***

If you’re emailing your CV or application then you will need to ensure that your email is professional and concise. If you’re not sure exactly who to email it to then ring and find out – don’t email the ‘enquiries’ section of a website unless instructed specifically to do so. Entitle your email appropriately with something like ‘Job vacancy ref ......... (Own Name) and state in your email where you saw the vacancy advertised and that you’d appreciate a brief acknowledgement so you can be sure it was received.

Don’t forget to attach your CV / application!

Also, what sort of email address do you have? Is it professional sounding or a bit comical, perhaps relating to your nick name? If so, you should consider creating a new email account just for job search and training/work-related communication.

***Application Forms***

Many employers, colleges and other organisations ask you to fill in an application form when applying for a job or training. It may be simpler for you to just pop a CV and a short letter in the post or send an email, but if an application form is provided don’t be tempted to ignore it. They could be expecting lots of applicants and may have lots of vacancies so if every applicant provides the same information in the same style it is likely to save them lots of time when comparing the different applicants’ details. If yours is the only application without an application form, what do you think they could do with it? It may go to the bottom of the pile...



What are they likely to think about you if they asked for an application form but you didn’t complete it? Can’t follow instructions? Too lazy to complete the form?

If you really feel that the questions asked on the application form don’t allow you to give a vital bit of information you want them to know, then include this in your covering letter or email which you may be sending along with the application form. You can also offer to send a CV to provide additional information but wait to be asked before including it.

Completing the form – there are a number of key rules to follow when completing an application form:

* Check the date for return – complete the form in plenty of time so you have time for research if you don’t have everything to hand
* Fill in every question
* Be accurate and truthful
* Check all spelling and grammar ... then double check it
* Ask someone who knows you well to read it before submitting it. They may notice something that is really obvious that you may have missed
* Always post in good time and consider hand delivery, if local, or recorded delivery if posted (the Post Office will track / guarantee delivery). If emailing the application, ask for confirmation of receipt

***Interviews***

Now for the scary bit ... being interviewed for the first time! Actually, there’s no need to be worried. You’ve been ‘interviewed’ before but you just didn’t realise it. Every time we meet someone new for the first time or ask to join a team or group of any kind, it’s a sort of interview. An interview for a job or training is perhaps more important but all that means is that you have to give it a bit more thought and do some homework beforehand. And remember, the interviewer wants you to do well.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

* Don’t worry, good planning will help you be confident on the day
* Check the time, date and place for the interview – do you know how to get there? How long will the journey take? You could do a ‘dummy run’ to check but make sure you do it on the same weekday and about the same time as the interview. Allow extra time and get there earlier so you’re not flustered and have time to sit and
* be prepared
* Plan what you’re going to wear – smart/casual is usually fine but if you’re not sure what’s expected, telephone and ask – it shows you’re thinking ahead and want to make a good impression
* Make sure you have everything you need with you – copies of your CV, letter or application form, the letter inviting you to the interview, any qualification certificates and references if you were asked to take them. Put everything together in a folder or file and take a pen and note pad for any new information you may want to write down
* Know what you want to say about yourself - make sure you can remember everything detailed in your CV and application. Most employers will use these as their basis for questions. Also, think about your key strengths – what you are really good at and be prepared to give examples
* Know about the employer – try to learn as much about them as you can before the interview such as – how big are they? How many sites do they have? What do they specialise in?
* Think of questions – what is the employer likely to ask you and how could you answer them?
* Also make a note of questions you could ask as most interviews end with “Is there anything you would like to ask?”

DURING THE INTERVIEW

* Be confident – you’ve done your homework so there’s no need to be worried. Make direct eye contact and say ‘Good morning/afternoon’ and always be ready to shake hands firmly if offered
* If you are asked a question you do not understand, ask the interviewer to repeat it or re-phrase how they’ve asked it. This is much better than saying “I don’t know” or giving an answer off the top of your head
* Try to avoid answering with a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’. The interviewer is looking to find out more than what is in your CV and application so be prepared to expand and give ‘real life’ examples
* If you need to ask questions during the interview, keep them brief. There should be time at the end of the interview for you to ask the questions you may have thought of earlier. If all your prepared questions have been covered in the interview and you can’t think of any others, say so ... “Thank you but I think we’ve covered all my questions”.
* Don’t highlight any problems you may have had with a current employer or any other company applied to unless you’re asked how you would deal with a particular problem. Answer it positively and say what you have learned from the problem and what you would do differently next time.

AT THE END OF THE INTERVIEW

* The interviewer should tell you what the next step is, when a decision will be made and how you will be informed. If not, ask them
* Always smile, thank the interviewer(s) and say goodbye before leaving



Ask your friends and family about the sort of experiences they’ve had being interviewed.

Now, how about a bit of practice? The portfolio exercises and MOT give you the chance to practice writing a CV and a covering letter. You can keep these as examples for when you actually start to apply for a job or training. You can keep adding information to your CV and reviewing what it says about you as you progress throughout your school life so it’s ready for when you spot that exciting job vacancy or training opportunity.

**GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR CAREER AHEAD**

Portfolio activity

In this module you’ve had a look at thinking about the sort of job you want after education, what sort of education and training route you could take, and how to successfully apply for the career you want.

You will now be able to:

* work out what sort of job you will enjoy and be able to build a successful career in
* find out more about the range of jobs you might be interested in
* understand the different routes into the training and further education you will need
* complete application forms, write a CV and letter of application with confidence
* prepare for and perform well at an interview

Now it’s time to start the process and get some practice.

|  |
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| **CASE STUDY … YOU ARE THE CASE STUDY!** |
| Instead of looking at an example let’s start your own career journey.There’s a list of questions on the next page to get you thinking about what you want to do after you leave school. If you have a good career idea already, try not to think about it whilst you’re answering the questions. It’s useful to think about these sorts of questions without a specific job in mind so that you get a really good idea about what you’re looking for from a career. Later you’ll compare your list to a wide range of jobs and, you never know, you might spot a few new ideas to think about.Remember, you can come back and work through the checklist again and again in the future. As you progress through school, college and training, you’ll get a better idea of which careers are available and what you want to achieve. Many people change their jobs and careers several times in their lives so it’s a good idea to have a rethink every so often. You may be unsure about some of the questions but this isn’t surprising as you’ve not yet had much experience of work. Think about the questions you’ve had problems answering when planning any work experience and talk to your friends, family and Personal Adviser. |

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| **CAREER PLANNING – WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM YOUR CAREER?** |
| Name |
| Date (useful when looking back to review your thoughts and ideas) |
| Q1 What are my interests and hobbies?Q2 How do I like to spend my time? eg happy to sit and work through homework / hobbies on my own, like to be with others most of the time, like to be outside most of the timeQ3 Which are my best subjects at school? Which do I enjoy? Which do I get good marks in?Q4 Am I good with my hands? Do I like building, repairing, making things?Q5 Do I enjoy meeting new people? (Not just people of your own age).Q6 Do I get satisfaction from helping other people?Q7 Do you think you’ll prefer to work in small organisation or as part of a larger organisation?Q8 Are you thinking about staying on at school or college or do you want a job as soon as possible?Q9 Would I enjoy being out working on my own in different situations every day?Q10 Do I want to study at university before I start thinking too much about where I eventually work?Q11 Do I want to be my own boss?Q12 How much do I want to earn? (If you’re not sure how much pay is ‘good pay’, ask your family how much they earn and what they think about different incomes to give you an idea). |
| When do I first start work? Later, after promotion or when fully qualified? |

Have a look at your answers and work out a list of key things a job/career should have to give you the future you want. For example, if you’ve put ‘I want a job as soon as possible’ to the question ‘Are you thinking about staying on at school or college or do you want a job as soon as possible?’, then you want a job in which you can earn as you learn – such as an Apprenticeship.

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| **CAREER PLANNING … WHAT SORT OF JOB OR CAREER DO I WANT?** |
| 1)2)3)4)5)6)7)8)9)10) |

**WHICH JOBS CAN GIVE ME WHAT I’M LOOKING FOR?**

Ok, now you have a list of what you’re looking for. Where do you start looking?

As you worked through the module you may have looked at various job websites, there are lots around and your Personal Adviser may have lots of information as well.

The IMI’s Autocity ‘Explore Job Roles’ has loads of job profiles for all the different jobs available in the automotive sector. Job profiles tell you about the job, what you would do at work, what sort of business and environment you would be working in, the qualifications and training routes you could take, as well as pay and prospects for the future. The site also includes videos with real people telling you about their job and the journey they took to get there. Take a look at [www.autocity.org.uk](http://www.autocity.org.uk)

Spend some time reviewing job profiles and information from your teacher and Personal Adviser. Look out for those jobs which are likely to give you what you want, compare them with the ‘What sort of job or career am I looking for?’ list you created.

How many did you find? Make a note of a few to discuss with your Personal Adviser and family

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| **WHAT JOBS OR CAREERS MIGHT I BE INTERESTED IN?** |
| 1)2)3)4) |

Have you just one job which stands out as the one you want? Perhaps there’s more than one. Do they have much in common? It’s always good to have a back-up plan and it could be that your first step after school may allow you to train or learn more without having to make a definite choice just yet.

Here are another couple of questions to think about before starting to make decisions:

* Is this job available in my area? If no, or there aren’t many, are you willing to travel for the training and eventual work?
* Does the job I’m interested in have a good future?

Are there any major changes likely which could reduce the number of these jobs available? For example, the number of travel agents on the high street is reducing as more and more people book holidays online. How could you find out?

|  |
| --- |
| **WHAT DO I DO NEXT?**  |
| Job Title: |
| **Route(s) into the job:** * Qualification needed?
* Where / how? (Apprenticeship / FE College / University etc)
* Are my current school grades / predicted grades good enough?
* Am I studying the right subjects?
* What do I need to do next?
 |

Have a look at [www.autocity.org.uk](http://www.autocity.org.uk) to help with this.

You can use all the lists you’ve put together to discuss your career plans with your family, teacher and Personal Adviser, but you’ll soon be thinking of actually applying for a job or training so let’s practice putting together a CV and letter of application.

**CV AND COVERING LETTER WRITING**

Remember there’s lots of advice in the module and you can have a look at a couple of examples on the IMI Autocity website. Check that you’ve highlighted anything you’ve done or achieved to date which can show an employer or training provider that you have the skills (what you can do) and the knowledge (what you know) which they are looking for. Remember to include the five key headings in your CV:

* Personal details
* Education/work experience
* Hobbies and interests
* A personal statement
* References

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| **DRAFT YOUR CV**  |
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| **DRAFT YOUR CV (Continued)** |
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| **DRAFT YOUR COVERING LETTER** |
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After all this, you’ll be thrilled when you receive your first invitation for a job or training interview... a little nervous as well perhaps? You’ve already thought about what to do before and during an interview so here’s your chance to write yourself a list of hints and tips to make sure you’re well prepared. Think about what you’ve read or talked about and write a list.

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| **HINTS AND TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL JOB INTERVIEW** |
| BEFORE THE INTERVIEW1)2)3)4)5)6)7)DURING THE INTERVIEW1)2)3)4)5)6)7) |

MOT

When career planning, there are no right or wrong answers. What matters is:

* Have you really thought about what you want from your career?
* Have you looked at as many possible jobs as you can?
* Have you worked out which you want to aim for and know what different routes you can take to get there?
* Have you planned your journey?

The answer to each of these questions is now YES.

This module has taken you through each of these steps so now’s the time to sit down and talk it through with your family, teachers and Personal Adviser. You now have the following lists and paperwork to discuss with them.

|  |
| --- |
| **CAREER PLANNING** |
| * What sort of job / career am I looking for?
* Which jobs can give me what I’m looking for?
* What do I need to do next?
* CV
* Example letter of application
* List of good tips for a successful interview
 |

You are already well prepared so enjoy your journey!

Comments of Queries?

Please contact the IMI Careers team if you have any comments or queries:

Email: careers@theimi.org.uk

Telephone: 01992 511521