

APPRENTICESHIP
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Nikita Porter



Becoming an Apprentice

My family was a big influence in my decision to enter the trades. Both my dad and my brother are painters and I grew up helping them so I had a lot of experience before I started my formal training. I tried out other careers as a secretary and in the make-up industry, but then decided that I would do what I knew and loved and got into a painting apprenticeship. It was relatively easy getting started....

I had helped my dad paint houses before so I decided to focus on residential painting. The painting field can be quite large as it involves everything from residential, commercial, and industrial painting to sandblasting, spray painting, outdoor road paint and stucco.

Some of the Challenges

Attention to detail and a commitment to hard work are very important. Painting can be a very exacting art form. For example, if a line isn't exactly straight, then it can ruin the whole job. It's very important to take pride in your work and to stay on the job as long as it takes to get it done right. Sometimes, I will stay on site for 16 hours if that's what it takes to do the high quality work that is demanded.

Finding an Employer

I've used the union to find all of my jobs, so far. I've been lucky in that there have been plenty of work opportunities for me so I've gained lots of experience. I've also been aggressive in finding work and getting involved with the union. Just dropping off resumes doesn't work. You need to speak with managers and get yourself out there in order for people to recognize you and be motivated to hire you.

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What Worked and What Didn't

Being determined and motivated is the most important thing. You need to be able to convince people that you are good at what you do and that you have a passion for your work. If you don't enjoy your work, there's no point. You have to love this type of job to be good at it as so much of yourself goes into the quality of the final product. It's an art and as such you put yourself into your work. I love my job and I'll keep doing it as long as they'll keep me.

Safety is a major concern. It's important to take all of the safety courses that are available. It's also important to have a good employer who will look out for you and make sure that you have the proper equipment that you need to keep you safe on the job. The basics like a hard hat and proper boots are a start, but continuous training and a diligent attitude are the main factors that will keep you happy, safe and productive on the job.

Trade: Painter. Location: Conception Bay South, Newfoundland. Year of Apprenticeship: 1st year

