

APPRENTICESHIP
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Richard Eben-Ebenau



Becoming an Apprentice

My Dad was a dual ticket instrument-electrical journeyman and so I grew up with first hand knowledge of the trades. I considered other careers in high school, but I decided on the trades as I enjoyed the intellectual challenge of the electrical-instrumental field and the pay was great. I was hired into an apprenticeship program when I was 19 and I have never looked back.

I started working in the gas fields and had certain certifications which made getting a job with the large energy companies easier since they are the main employers in my region....

I quickly found work in a pulp mill where I install, calibrate and maintain the valves, computers and instruments which are critical to running the mill. I liked the intellectual aspects of the work as it can be a challenging area to work in which involves more than just grunt work.

Some of the Challenges

The education component could be challenging, but I mastered the material and became proficient in my field...it was relatively easy to find a job...I soon became very valuable to the company.

Finding an Employer

The companies I worked for have been very supportive. I was paid a full wage while I was in school and I was hired on after I finished my first trade. There was a policy in place that one should complete one apprenticeship and work for 3 years before working towards your second trade to achieve the dual ticket status. The company was very supportive of my ambitions to attain dual certification and gave me every opportunity to improve my skills and work full time while I learned.

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I feel very loyal towards my employer as they have really helped me and supported me through my training. They were very generous in paying a full time wage while I was in school. This really helped as I didn't have to worry about money so I could focus on my studies.

What Worked and What Didn't

Hard work and attention to detail are important if you want to get noticed and get ahead. A lot of the work can be technical and deals with intricate wiring and tiny screws so a careful and diligent approach to your work is very important. Dedication to your job and pride in your work are also very important. It's important to show up every day and be enthusiastic and ready to work. If you show that you enjoy your work and do your job with a high level of professionalism, than you will be rewarded for it.

It's important to have a good employer who will give you opportunities to learn and provide you with constructive criticism. This allows you to grow and become proficient in many areas. Safety is also a critical aspect of the workplace. Making sure you have an employer who provides you with the necessary training and equipment is key. Many of the electrical jobs can be very dangerous due to the high voltage. Proper training will keep you safe and productive.

*Trade: Instrumentation Technician and Electrician. Location: Slave Lake, Alberta.
Year of Apprenticeship: 1st year*

