

CURRICULUM RESOURCE

Skills for Success in the Workplace – Distribution Centres: Creativity & Innovation

OALCF ALIGNMENT

Competency	Task Group	Level
Competency A - Find and Use Information	A1. Read continuous text	2
Competency A - Find and Use Information	A2. Interpret documents	2
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B1. Interact with others	1
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B3. Complete and create documents	1

Goal Paths (check all that apply)

- Employment
- Apprenticeship
- Secondary School Credit
- Postsecondary
- Independence

Embedded Skills for Success (check all that apply)

- Adaptability
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Creativity and innovation
- Digital
- Numeracy
- Problem Solving
- Reading
- Writing

NOTES: Part five of a five-part series on SFS in Distribution Centres.

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SKILLS FOR SUCCESS IN THE WORKPLACE: Distribution Centres

Note for practitioners:

This series of **Skills for Success Curriculum Resources** can be used as a supplement to the Material Handler resource published by Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO) based on curriculum developed by Literacy Link Eastern Ontario (LLEO) in 2012 (<https://www.communityliteracyofontario.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/Warehouse-Curriculum-Jan-14-2021-FINAL.pdf>). It is not an adaptation of that material but rather an addendum focusing on five identified Skills for Success competencies: **Problem Solving, Adaptability, Creativity & Innovation, Collaboration, and Communication.**

These resources are learner-based and activity-focused, moving the learner through on-the-job “scenarios” they will then respond to. By participating in the activities, the learner will gain an understanding of the workplace challenges that might require them to use a given competency and its associated strategies.

Practitioners may be required to assist learners by reading the activities.

The series is divided into five sections that can be used separately or in tandem:

- Skills for Success in the Workplace: Distribution Centres – **Problem Solving**
- Skills for Success in the Workplace: Distribution Centres – **Adaptability**
- Skills for Success in the Workplace: Distribution Centres – **Collaboration**
- Skills for Success in the Workplace: Distribution Centres – **Communication**
- Skills for Success in the Workplace: Distribution Centres – **Creativity & Innovation**

*This is Section Five, Skills for Success in the Workplace: Distribution Centres –
Creativity & Innovation*

SFS In the Workplace: Distribution Centres Creativity & Innovation

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What is a Distribution Centre Job?

Distribution centre is another word for **warehouse**.

A job in a distribution centre might mean:

- moving boxes and crates in a warehouse
- accepting products at a business
- sending products from a business
- recording the arrival and movement of products
- driving products to and from places

Work at a distribution centre is best for people who:

- enjoy physical work
- like to work with their hands
- can work on their own and as part of a team
- can follow instructions
- are well-organized

Distribution centre jobs might require you to:

- have a driver's licence
- lift heavy things
- be flexible about your work hours
- be responsible for valuable items
- wear a hard hat and safety boots
- apply workplace safety standards

Examples of Distribution Centre Jobs

Many types of businesses offer distribution centre jobs. You could work as:

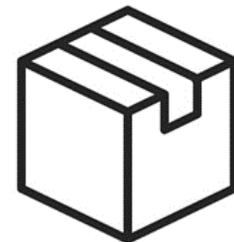
- a warehouse associate at an online retailer like Amazon
- a material handler at a large box store like Walmart or Costco
- a stock person in the receiving area of a grocery store like No Frills
- a mover for a moving company
- a delivery driver for a courier company like Purolator
- a driver merchandiser for a large company like Coca-Cola
- an inventory clerk for a big retail store
- a forklift driver in the warehouse of a large company

Distribution Centre Job Tasks

Some of the tasks you might do at a distribution centre job include:

- unloading new inventory from a truck
- packing and unpacking boxes
- keeping track of incoming and outgoing inventory on a computer
- stocking shelves
- organizing inventory on warehouse shelves
- driving a truck or a forklift

Inventory is another word for the products that move to and from businesses.



What Skills Do You Need to Work in Distribution Centres?

To succeed in a distribution centre job, you need some key skills. Here are some of the skills that you will likely need:

- organizational skills
- time-management skills
- basic math skills
- basic digital skills
- adaptability
- good communication skills
- collaboration skills like teamwork
- creativity and innovation skills
- problem-solving skills

To succeed in a distribution centre job, you also need some key habits:

- clean and tidy appearance
 - politeness
 - reliability
 - being on time for work
- Many distribution centre workers have less education than a high school diploma, but many require **extra training**.
- Many distribution centre workers are men. But many more women are being attracted to distribution centre jobs.



Questionnaire: Is a Distribution Centre Job Right for You?

Are you thinking about applying for a job at a distribution centre?

Answer the following questions to find out if it's for you:

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Do you enjoy doing physical work? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Do you enjoy working with your hands? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Can you work on your own and with a team? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Can you follow the instructions? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Can you be well-organized? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Are you able to lift things that weigh up to 9kg? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Can you be flexible with your schedule? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Do you have a driver's license? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Can you reliably get to work on time? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

- If you answered **yes** to many of these questions, this may be a suitable job for you!



What is Creativity and Innovation?

Creativity and innovation together mean using **new ideas** to make the workplace better.

- It comes from thinking about things in new ways.
- It also comes from using your imagination!

Why are creativity and innovation important at work?

Businesses must keep improving to succeed. As the world changes, businesses must change too.

Businesses **improve** and **change** through creativity and innovation.

Employees with strong creativity and innovation skills:

- pay close attention to how the business works
- imagine how the workplace could improve
- help the business to grow and get better
- are open-minded to change

Everyone can be **creative** just by thinking of new ways of doing things.



Creativity and Innovation at Your Distribution Centre Job

There are many ways to use creativity and innovation at a distribution centre job:

a. Old Things a New Way

Most distribution centre jobs have ways of doing things that you need to follow. But these ways might change if a better way is found.

To think about old tasks in a new way:

- pay attention to what is working and what is not working
 - imagine a way of doing things without the problems
 - be open-minded to change
- If you imagine a better way, you can help improve the workplace!

b. Face Down a Problem

At a distribution centre job, there will sometimes be problems. You might think of new ways to deal with them.

Here are some examples:

- A delivery driver might have to use map apps to avoid getting lost.
 - A stock person might imagine a better way to organize shelves.
 - An inventory clerk at a big retail store might learn about a new inventory computer program and tell their manager.
- Don't be afraid of problems. They might show the way to making things better!

c. Share Ideas

If you do have new ideas at work, it's important to share them with your co-workers and managers.

When you share ideas:

- Your boss can decide what to do.
- Your boss will see that you care about making the workplace better.
- Your boss will be pleased you used your creativity and innovation skills!



- Believe in yourself and what you bring to the job!

d. Try Something New

One way to be creative at work is to try a new strategy or idea. New ideas don't always work, but they might improve things at your job.

If you have a new idea, tell someone first! Tell your boss or co-workers about your idea. Don't just do something new without asking.

- If your boss likes your idea, the workplace might change for the better!



Overview

Start Developing Your Creativity and Innovation Skills for the Workplace

Learn and practice your creativity and innovation skills.

Here are some steps you can take to do so:

- Be thoughtful.
- Use your imagination.
- Be open-minded.
- Be flexible.
- Think in new ways.
- Try new things.
- Share what you know.
- Listen to all ideas.



Activities

We will now do some activities that will give you a good sense of how to use creativity and innovation skills at work. These activities will provide examples of:

- the types of jobs you might have in distribution centres
- the daily tasks you might do
- on-the-job challenges
- other key skills for success in distribution centre jobs
- dos and don'ts



In each case, you will read a scenario, think about it, and respond to some questions. Then we will review.

Activity #1

Gerhardt has been working as a mover for a moving company for three months.

One of his duties is to drive the moving truck for the clients who are moving. If he is not driving, he is responsible for giving directions to the driver.

But Gerhardt sees that he and his partner are often getting lost.

It is a big problem. It means they often arrive late to move clients.

Activity #1 (Continued)

Gerhardt thinks carefully about the situation. He and his partner do not have phones. That would help them with directions. They often make mistakes when following maps or directions. Customers get angry.

Gerhardt uses his imagination and comes up with a creative idea. He asks his boss to provide them with a GPS device. This will help them get to clients' houses.

A GPS device gives directions to exact locations.

The boss thinks this is a great idea. She buys the GPS device. Now Gerhardt and his partner rarely get lost.



Questions #1

1. List one way that Gerhardt used creativity on the job.
2. Discuss with your teacher or partner some benefits of Gerhardt using creativity.

Answers #1

1. Gerhardt used creativity when he came up with the idea to use the GPS device.

He thought carefully about the situation. He decided what the problem was and why it mattered. He used his imagination to come up with a creative solution.

He then shared this idea with his boss.

That's a perfect example of using creativity skills on the job!

2. By using his creativity skills on the job, Gerhardt helped his boss come up with a solution to a problem.

Now he and his partner rarely get lost going to jobs. His boss is very pleased that he used his creativity skills. The customers are happier.

Activity #2

Brenda works as an inventory clerk at a big retail store. There are several inventory clerks on staff.

Often many of the inventory clerks are unable to work a shift. They have an appointment or another conflict.

When this happens, they ask other inventory clerks to cover their shift. To cover a shift is to work a shift for someone else. But workers often have trouble covering their shifts.

Brenda thinks about the situation. She sees that asking around is not working well. She uses her imagination and comes up with two innovative ideas. She shares her ideas with her co-workers and boss.

She creates a text group for all the inventory clerks. Now they can text each other to cover shifts.

She also makes a form for them to write down shifts they need covered. She places this on the staff bulletin board.

Her ideas work really well. Her co-workers find that it is much easier to have a shift covered.

Questions #2

1. List one way Brenda used her creativity and innovation skills.
2. What were the benefits of Brenda using her creativity and innovation skills? Discuss with your teacher or partner.

Answers #2

1. Brenda used her creativity and innovation skills by being thoughtful and recognizing that there was a problem.

She used her imagination and was open-minded. She came up with two innovative ideas.

She innovated and created a text group. She also made a special form for getting shifts covered.

2. By using her creativity skills, Brenda was able to come up with two ideas that made the situation better.

Her co-workers were very pleased that Brenda used her creativity and innovation skills.

Activity #3

Kumar has been working in the warehouse of a large bookstore for eight months.

During that time, he has noticed that a lot of inventory gets lost. Books are unpacked but then misplaced. Sometimes entire boxes go missing.

Kumar thinks carefully about the situation. He is open-minded to change.

He uses his imagination. He thinks of some ways to reduce the amount of loss:

- All boxes should be recorded in the computer before being shelved.
- All books should be recorded in the computer as soon as the box is opened.

These ideas are creative and innovative. They require a new way of doing things. They are different from the way the company does things now.

Kumar tells his boss about the ideas and his boss loves them. The company implements the ideas and they lose less inventory.

Questions #3

1. How did Kumar use his creativity and innovation skills? Discuss with your teacher or partner.
2. What were the benefits of Kumar using his creativity and innovation skills? Discuss with your teacher or partner.

Answers #3

1. Kumar used his creativity and innovation skills by thinking carefully about the situation.

He was open-minded to change. He used his imagination to come up with some new ideas.

2. By using his creativity and innovation skills, Kumar came up with a way to reduce the amount of loss.

This will be better for the company. Lost inventory means lost revenue for a company.

Kumar's boss will be very pleased that he used his creativity and innovation skills.

Activity #4

Mo has been working as a driver merchandiser for Coca-Cola for two years.

He drives the same route every week delivering inventory to customers. He has grown comfortable with his route and never gets lost.

He thinks there may be a more efficient way to make deliveries.

Using his imagination, he comes up with an idea. If he did his route in a different order, it would be quicker. He and another driver could switch some parts of their routes. This would also be quicker.

But Mo is comfortable with his route. He likes the extra pay he gets working overtime. He does not want his route to change.

He does not tell his boss about his creative and innovative ideas.

Questions #4

1. How did Mo use his creativity and innovation skills? Discuss with your teacher or partner.
2. What could Mo have done better in this situation? Discuss with your teacher or partner.

Answers #4

1. Mo used his creativity and innovation skills when he thought carefully about the situation and imagined how it could be improved.

He came up with ways to make the deliveries more efficient.

2. Mo should have told his boss or a co-worker about his ideas.
 - Part of using creativity and innovation is putting your ideas into practice.
 - The best way to do that is to share your ideas with others.
 - Employees should believe in themselves and share their creativity and innovation ideas!

Activity #5

Yoon and Paul both work in the receiving area of a retail outlet.

They are responsible for unloading delivery trucks when they arrive. There are two small dollies to help them unload boxes. But both the dollies are broken. So they unload boxes by carrying them one at a time.

Yoon wonders how he could do the job faster and with less pain. He realizes the dollies would help. The problem is they are broken.

Yoon uses his creativity to figure out how to fix the dollies. He asks his supervisor if he can fix them.

He takes the time to fix both dollies. He starts using one of the dollies. He unloads the trucks faster and his back doesn't hurt.

Paul does not want to change the way he does things. He continues to unload the trucks by hand.

It took a long time for Yoon to fix the dollies. However, Yoon quickly makes up the time because of the change. He unloads more boxes than Paul, by using the dolly.

This makes his supervisor much happier with Yoon than with Paul. He gives Yoon an award for his 'Creativity and Innovation'.

Questions #5

1. Who showed good creativity and innovation skills? Yoon Paul
2. How did Yoon use his creativity and innovation skills? Discuss with your teacher or partner.
3. What were the advantages of Yoon using his creativity and innovation skills? Discuss with your teacher or partner.



Answers #5

1. Yoon showed good creativity and innovation skills.

Paul did **not** show good creativity and innovation skills.

2. Yoon thought carefully about the situation. He used his imagination. He was open to change.

He came up with an idea to change things that made the situation better.

3. Yoon found a way to unload the trucks more quickly and with less pain.

He also fixed the dollies. This will be helpful when unloading trucks in the future. His boss was pleased and gave him an award.



Review

- Now you have learned some strategies to use creativity and innovation on the job:
 - You have learned the importance of considering problems at work.
 - You have learned the importance of using your imagination.
 - You have learned the importance of being open-minded and flexible.
 - You have learned the importance of sharing information with others.

- You can go back to this guide to review the strategies for improving your creativity and innovation skills at your distribution centre job.