

# RETURNING TO WORK AFTER AN ABSENCE



## SUCCESS STORY

## JOB SEEKER

*A two-year gap in work history makes it harder to find a job because I have to explain where I've been. It was hard for me to talk to people, I was nervous and jittery. Talking to someone at VPI helped me gain confidence needed to be successful at work.*

Tracy, former job seeker



### Client:

**Goal:** Re-enter the labour force in a Customer Service position

**Challenge:** Client had not worked for several years

**Support offered:** 1-on-1 support from Career Specialist including résumé help and interview preparation

### Outcomes

- 3 months from intake to hire
- 30 hours / week in new job

## Situation

Due to health reasons, Tracy had been out of work since 2014. Although she has over 10 years' experience in customer service, she was self-conscious about the employment gap on her résumé and she was not having luck landing an interview.

Tracy applied for a job on the VPI job board and was invited to come in for an intake appointment with Laura – one of our Career Specialists in Hamilton.

Laura was quickly able to spot some issues with Tracy's résumé and make clear, practical suggestions like highlighting the right skills for the types of jobs she was applying for without emphasizing her absence from work.

More importantly, Tracy and Laura developed an immediate rapport. Laura helped Tracy improve her interview skills and give her the confidence to answer difficult interview questions. As Tracy put it: "There wasn't anything that she didn't help with; all I had to do was ask."

Tracy applied for a position at a hardware store and secured a job as a cashier. Thanks to Laura's help, Tracy is on her way to her long-term career goal of finding stable, sustained employment

## Approach

ISSUE	SOLUTION
Nervousness about explaining extended absence from work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1-on-1 support from a Career Specialist to practice difficult interview questions and build confidence</li></ul>
Difficulty landing an interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Help preparing a résumé to highlight key qualifications and deemphasize gap in employment</li><li>• Notifications about available, relevant job opportunities</li></ul>

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