

# Career Connections Series

## Exploring Careers

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Choosing a career is a lot like buying a car! When buying a car you may want to do learn about the car by reading Consumer Reports. You will probably want to test drive the car, and consult a mechanic to ensure the engine runs well. You'll have to consider how this purchase will affect you financially.

Ultimately, gathering and prioritizing information can lead to a "good" buy. Just as with buying a car, information is power when making career decisions. Information about oneself, economic climates, and jobs are all relevant in making a career choice.

Test driving a car lets you get a "feel" for it. Similarly, you want to get a "feel" for what a career might be like before making your career goal. There are several tools available that can help a person learn more about different professions.

Job shadowing is one such tool. It is a powerful, yet often overlooked device in the career planning process. Job shadowing involves following and observing one or more professionals while they work at their job to learn more about the daily experiences in that profession. Many companies today offer job shadowing on the work place as a way for businesses to give something back to the community.

Networking is another useful device in the search for helpful career information. Although sometimes used to assist you in getting job interviews and offers, you can use it to identify people or to learn information, first-hand about an occupation. This type of contact is called informational interviewing. Rather than seeking a job you're interviewing for information. This allows you to ask questions you want, to see the work place and to hear personal stories about being in a career. Afterwards, you can inquire about other people you might contact to build your network of contacts.

Deciding on a career track is an exercise in patience and commitment. Job shadowing, networking and informational interviewing all take of time and effort. To learn more attend some of the career related workshops sponsored by the Career Center or visit the Career Center in Room 185 SSB to learn more about taking a career for a "test drive".