



**Shauna Rae**  
**THE BROAD PERSPECTIVE**  
 A look at the work environment ... with a female lens

**“JUST BECAUSE I’M A WOMAN DOESN’T MEAN I AM SOFT AND DELICATE.”**

~ Brenna Bogaert – Carpentry/Scaffolding Apprentice

ACCORDING TO the Ontario College of Trades, 13% of total membership is female. There are 156 skilled trades in Ontario and of those, some are female dominated trades such as hairstyling (77% are female) and child development practitioner (95% are female).

Of the total 50,223 certified auto service mechanics in the province, less than 1% are women. Of the 5,720 registered carpenters, 4% are women.

**Why do women enter the trades?**



My father went blind when I was 4 years old. We lived on a farm and I was very close to him. I grew up helping perform repairs with him on our tractor, on my mom’s car and eventually on my own vehicle. I always loved cars and I loved working on them while he advised me what to do. I did try to pursue more traditional roles but they weren’t for me. My family and friends were 100% supportive.”

~ Lori-Anne Dale – Assistant Service Manager, Oxford Dodge and Instructor at Fanshawe College, Motive Power Division



I grew up in a household with a dad that does everything from carpentry to baking pies, and a mom who never stops. I honestly never thought of carpentry as a prospective career. I left high school with a passion to be a fashion designer. It wasn’t until I was part way through my Fashion Design program that I thought “What am I doing? I don’t want to be attached to my sewing machine all day!” So, I went with what I knew, what I grew up doing.”

~ Brenna Bogaert

**The companies that do hire female tradespeople, do they see benefits?**



The businesses that have embraced the opportunity, report that women, in general,



Brenna Bogaert

Rebecca Summerfield

Lori-Anne Dale

have better attention to detail, fine motor skills and ability to interact with the customers.”

~ Rebecca Summerfield

**When it comes to recruiting and encouraging women into the trades, what are the challenges?**



The biggest obstacles for women are finding an employer to sponsor them for their apprenticeship and the perception that women can’t be tradespeople.”

~ Rebecca Summerfield - Student Services Consultant, CODA Motive Power and Pre-Apprentice Parts Tech, Fanshawe College



I believe that more women don’t enter the trades because they are scared of what others will think. Also, most trades are mostly male-dominated and women may think it will be harder for them to get support.”

~ Lori-Anne Dale



We were never told about the possibilities the trades have to offer. I also believe that there is

a stigma that goes with the work. Women are expected to be butch and tom-boyish. That is definitely not the case!”

~ Brenna Bogaert

**How are female tradespeople perceived?**



The service manager, at the second garage I worked at, hired me thinking his wife was playing a joke on him. Apparently, he found out it wasn’t a joke when I came in on the Saturday before I started working there with my tool box. There was an apprentice that tried to tell me I couldn’t do the job because I am a girl.”

~ Lori-Anne Dale



As a woman in the trades, I feel that I am constantly underestimated. If there is something heavy to lift or difficult, they tend to step in and do that for me.”

~ Brenna Bogaert



For the few businesses that are hesitant to hire women, it’s generally a lack of information and perceived problem based on their own experiences rather than anything against women. ”

~ Rebecca Summerfield

**Advice for women aspiring to enter a trade?**



I would say to any woman considering pursuing a trade to definitely go for it and not worry about what anyone thinks or says.”

~ Lori-Anne Dale



I wouldn’t worry about discrimination in the field. Women are being more accepted in the trades and it is becoming more and more common. Working in the trades is a very rewarding career with great pay, community and benefits.”

~ Brenna Bogaert



My advice to women would be that tradespeople make a much higher wage quicker, on average, and the “earn while you learn” aspect means a lot of people can obtain their license with zero debt.”

~ Rebecca Summerfield

-BL