

Introduction to Keys : Working as a Professional Locksmith

Lesson 1 Overview

Locksmithing is an exciting field that can provide a fascinating career, a good income, job security, and self-fulfillment to anyone with a desire to work hard and succeed. The professional locksmith possesses highly specialized skills that few others have; as such, a skilled locksmith is always in demand. As a locksmith, you'll do interesting work while you're helping people. For this reason, a professional locksmith is always highly regarded in the community and commands the respect of friends and business associates.

In this lesson, you'll learn about the roles of a locksmith. You'll learn about some common career fields for locksmiths, skills of the locksmith trade, and education requirements and opportunities for locksmiths.

1.1 Summarize the history and role of the locksmith trade

Introduction to Locksmithing

READING ASSIGNMENT

History of Locksmithing

Locksmithing is an ancient skill that has existed for thousands of years. From the earliest days of humankind, people needed a way to protect their valuables. Today, we use locks to protect our cars and cash; thousands of years ago, our ancestors protected their food supplies and farm animals in the same way. Ancient paintings on Egyptian walls show a lock being used to protect a king's treasure. The early locksmith who made that lock was as important and highly respected as modern locksmiths are today.

The locksmithing profession is an honorable one, and locksmiths have held a position of trust in the community for hundreds of years. Professional locksmiths are guardians of security. For this reason, locksmiths must be exceptionally honest, trustworthy, and of good character. A good reputation is essential to maintain the confidence of your customers.



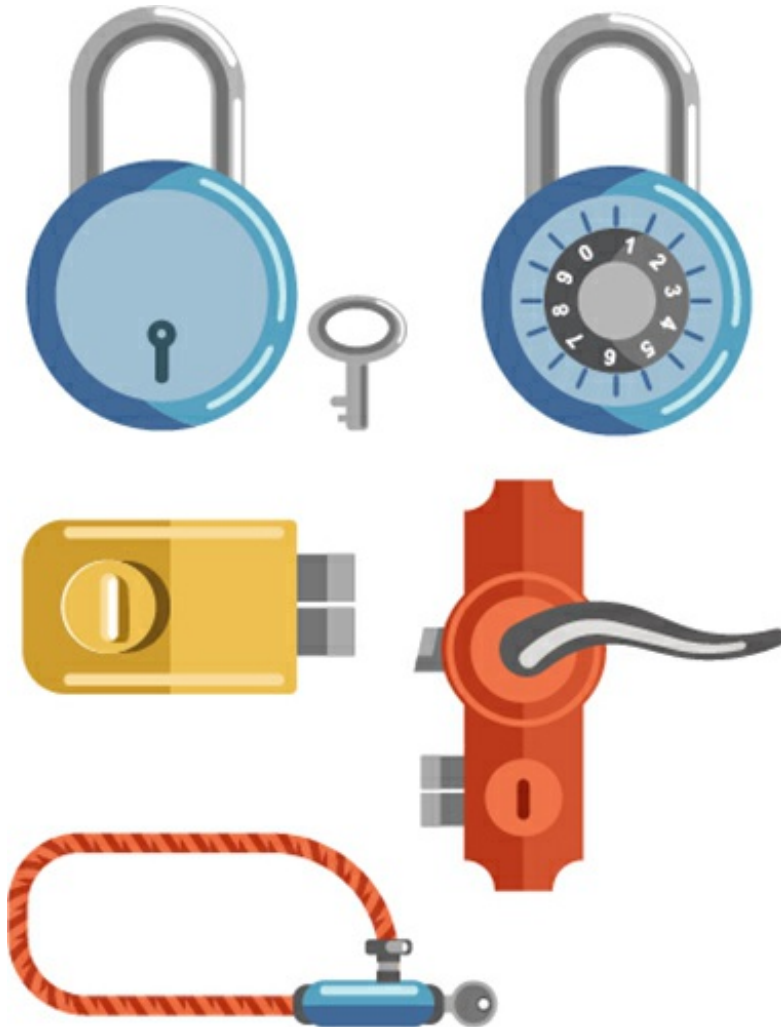
Customers trust locksmiths with the security of their homes and belongings, so it's important that the locksmith is trustworthy.

In the past, a typical locksmith installed, repaired, and replaced locks and keys. In more recent years, however, the development of new security devices expanded the locksmithing field. A typical locksmith may now install and service a variety of electric and electronic security devices in homes, businesses, and cars, as well as traditional mechanical locks.

Why Locksmiths are Needed

Everyone needs a locksmith sooner or later. Our world is filled with locks. We protect our homes, our cars, our property, and our loved ones with them. Think about all the uses for locks—in cars, in homes,

in hotels, and in schools, just to name a few. Now think about how many new homes and cars people purchase each year. Your front door probably has at least two locks on it (maybe more if you live in a large city). The average car may have as many as eight locks on it—ignition, doors, trunk, and glove compartment. Many older vehicles even have a lock for the gas cap! Offices, factories, retail stores, and other businesses have locks on file cabinets, desks, toolboxes, cash registers, employee lockers, and safes. Most commercial buildings (and many homes) have state-of-the-art electronic security systems, burglar alarms, motion detectors, and security lighting. You may even have a lock on your bike, firearm, briefcase, or mailbox.



Locks and security devices come in many shapes and sizes.

Locks give us a wonderful feeling of security—when they’re working efficiently. Yet, what if a lock breaks? What if you lose your keys or lock them inside your car? What if a burglar violates your home? Who can help you?

The answer is the *professional locksmith*. The locksmith gets you back on schedule when you lock yourself out of your car. The locksmith protects your family and property from burglars and intruders. The

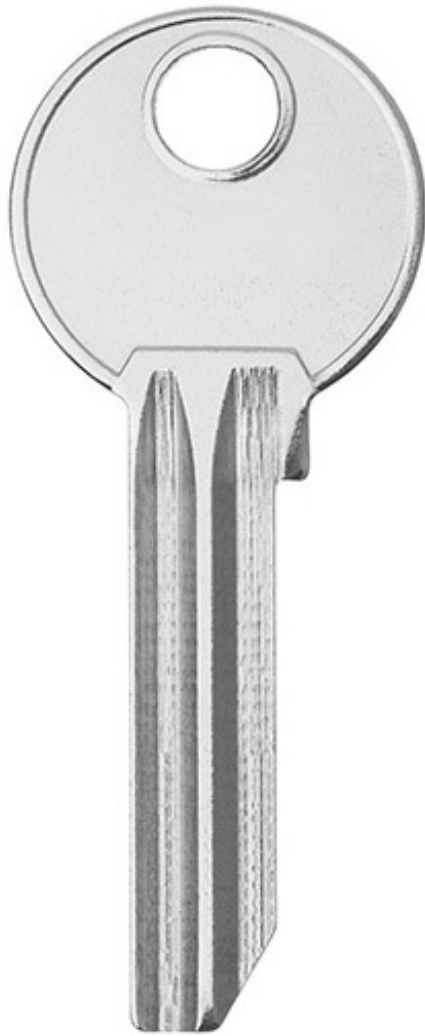
locksmith protects millions of dollars' worth of cash, documents, equipment, and merchandise in banks, factories, offices, and retail stores from theft and vandalism.

In a sense, therefore, locksmiths sell security and peace of mind to their customers. A skilled professional locksmith can build a successful career and earn a comfortable living from keeping customers, their families, and their property safe.

What Locksmiths Do

The average locksmith performs a variety of skilled jobs, depending on the needs and requests of their customers. Some locksmiths specialize in working on just one type of lock (such as auto locks or safes). Others work on all kinds of locks. You'll now take a closer look at the typical jobs that most locksmiths do.

Duplicating Keys



While many hardware stores and drugstores offer key duplication, few stores keep a wide variety of key blanks in stock, so they'll usually only be able to copy the simplest and most common key types. Also, a professional locksmith is much more skilled at making copies that fit and work perfectly.

One of the most common locksmithing tasks is key duplication. Customers will frequently bring in a key and ask you to make copies.

This simple service can make up a large part of a locksmith's income. In fact, a medium-sized shop may sell as many as 600 duplicate keys per week! It's important for a locksmith to be able to provide fast service and a copy that works as well as the original key.

When you make a new copy of an old key, the new key must have the same basic shape and characteristics as the old key. Of course, keys with microchips must also be programmed. Because there are many different types of keys, a locksmith keeps a large selection of different *key blanks*, or uncut keys, on hand to match up with the key the customer has. One of the most important skills a locksmith acquires is the ability to quickly recognize and identify the key blanks used by different manufacturers.

Identifying the correct key blank to match a customer's key is an essential skill for a locksmith.

Occasionally, a locksmith may need to make a special key by hand for an old-fashioned or obsolete lock. For example, a customer may have lost the key to an antique desk or cabinet. In this situation, it may be impossible to replace the old lock without damaging the piece of furniture. So, the locksmith may custom-make a key by hand-filing a key blank. The locksmith doesn't perform this kind of work unless there's no alternative.

Installing Locks



Locksmiths are often called to install new door locks.

A locksmith may receive a call to install a lock on a front door, an inside door, a window, a toolbox, or just about anywhere else a customer requests. However, the largest portion of a locksmith's business comes from ordinary front door lock installations, replacements, or security upgrades.



Locksmiths who expand into the commercial security field may install panic bars on fire escape doors.

Many locksmiths expand into installing commercial locks. Any facility or business that the public frequents has the potential of buying security merchandise from a locksmith. For example, the *Life Safety Code*, a widely-accepted standard on construction, safety, and occupancy concerns written and maintained by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), mandate the installation of panic hardware and fire exit latches in most public buildings. Both *panic hardware* and *fire exit latches* are special door locks that anyone can open in an emergency by leaning on or pushing a bar. However, panic hardware differs from fire exit hardware and is used in different situations, so a locksmith must be sure to purchase and install the correct type of hardware.

Stores install security systems to discourage pilferage and theft. Then, too, there are office security devices to install and service, like desk locks and filing cabinet locks. Finally, schools, hotels, and office buildings may contract a locksmith to install locks.

Repairing Damaged Locks



A locksmith is often called to repair or maintain broken or malfunctioning locks.

You wouldn't automatically replace all damaged locks with new ones. Any type of lock can need occasional repair, or a cleaning to remove dirt, oil, and rust from its delicate inner mechanism. A locksmith may replace a damaged part, lubricate a rusted lock, remove a broken key from a lock, or thaw out a frozen car lock in the winter time. In addition, locks damaged by attempted forced entry will need repair.

Lock Opening

Another important locksmithing skill is emergency lock opening, which involves the use of several specialized tools and techniques. An experienced locksmith can pick open most locks, but this technique is time-consuming. In emergency situations, a locksmith may have to force a lock open using a hammer, a wrench, an electric drill, or bolt cutters.

Auto Work



A locksmith may have to unlock car doors or even create a new key, on the scene.

It's normal duty for a locksmith to travel out to help locked-out drivers get back into their cars. It may be necessary to use specialized tools to unlock the door or trunk. It's even possible for the locksmith to make a

new key at the scene, using the tools carried in the mobile workshop.

Evaluating Home and Business Security

A locksmith employee who knows enough about security alarm systems might be asked to inspect a commercial establishment and give suggestions for putting in electronic devices to protect the business. The proposed security system can focus on areas of primary concern to the owner, such as employee pilferage, shoplifting, break-ins, or other risks.

Safe Work



Locksmiths unlock or change combinations on home safes.

Servicing of safes involves repair, cleaning, changing combinations, and opening without a combination. One of the most common tasks is changing the combination, or *recombining*. Businesses often require this service when employees leave. The locksmith changes the combination to prevent anyone who knew the old combination from gaining access to the safe. Locksmiths either remove the safe mechanism to the shop or do the work onsite. Repair work may involve something as simple as replacing a broken handle. It's not uncommon for a locksmith to demonstrate how to properly dial a combination.

Banks also call upon locksmiths to service and repair safe deposit boxes.

Installing Burglar Alarms

The increasing demand for security products has made burglar alarm installation a growing area of specialization for many locksmiths. Burglar alarms, both residential and commercial, are an excellent source of specialized business.

Choosing a Specialization

Most locksmiths specialize in just one or two of the important locksmithing techniques just described. This is because the locksmithing field varies widely, and it's virtually impossible for every

locksmith to know how to do everything. For example, the fields of safe opening or electronic security systems are specialized professions that not all locksmiths enter.

There are hundreds of lock manufacturers and locks in existence. Manufacturers are constantly updating and improving their products. It's impossible to know everything about every kind of lock made in the world! Also, you would need a wide variety of expensive tools to offer every possible service for every lock made. Many locksmiths run very successful businesses offering only simple repairs, key cutting, and lock sales.

A beginning locksmith should concentrate on learning about the most modern and popular locks, and the most commonly used types of locks. If you thoroughly understand the basics of how different types of locks work, you'll be able to work on just about any device a customer brings you. Once you've mastered the basics of the field, you'll then be able to move on to specialize.

Essential Locksmithing Tools and Resources

A locksmith uses many ordinary tools found in any workshop, such as screwdrivers, hammers, pliers, small vises, and metal files. In addition, a locksmith needs specialized tools for work with different types of locks. Some examples of specialized locksmithing tools are lock picks, key gages, pick guns, and broken-key extractors.



Locksmithing Tools

A locksmith also needs lock parts and supplies. A typical locksmithing shop will always keep a large assortment of key blanks on hand, plus a selection of commonly used lock parts, like pins and springs. In addition, most locksmiths sell locks and locking devices to customers in their shops.

Reference books and publications, like tools, are essential to the locksmith. Most locksmiths keep a variety of reference books on hand, and their collections keep growing all the time. One of the most important resources is a key blank directory. A *key blank directory* identifies the manufacturer's name and number on a given key blank. The locksmith needs to know this information before duplicating a key.

Other important sources of locksmithing information are *key code*

books. These reference books decode the numbers and define the cuts in a given key (particularly auto keys) so that the locksmith can generate a key. Locksmithing reference materials will be discussed in greater depth later in your program.

Key Points and Links

READING ASSIGNMENT

Key Points

- People rely on locks to protect their valuables. Locksmiths provide protection over customer's security and should be trustworthy and of good character. The role of a locksmith has changed from maintaining locks and keys to now managing electronic sources of security.
- A professional locksmith can be relied on if locks break, keys are locked in an area that can not be accessed, or if someone is a victim of a crime. A locksmith brings to a customer peace of mind by protecting various assets of their customers. The job of a locksmith can range from working on just one type of lock to working on a variety of different ones.
- Locksmiths must be skilled at identifying key blanks used by different manufacturers to ensure success when making copies of old keys for their customers. A skilled locksmith will be able to duplicate more complicated key types. A locksmith must also be able to have the skills necessary to custom make a key for an old-fashioned or obsolete lock.

- The largest portion of a locksmith's business comes from ordinary front door installations, replacements, or security upgrades but many expand into commercial locks, too. A locksmith must be skilled at using different hardware installed in different commercial settings. Commercial settings include security devices used by schools, hotels, and office buildings.
- A locksmith should be able to repair damaged locks, opening locks, and auto work. They must use specialized tools to open locks, be prepared to make a new key at any time and assess a situation if locks or security devices have been damaged.
- A locksmith may be hired by a company to give suggestions about how to assess and risks or possible damaging influences that a company could be challenged with. A locksmith can service safes and deposit boxes in an establishment requiring changing combinations and repair. Locksmiths are also called upon to install burglar alarm systems in both residential and commercial settings.
- Locksmiths must specialize in one or two areas because the range of the skills of a locksmith is varied widely. A locksmith must keep the business simple, it is impossible for a locksmith to know every kind of lock. A beginning locksmith should learn the basics and learn more about the more common types of locks. Once a mastery of the basics, a locksmith will be able to find their specialized field.
- Locksmiths must find specialized tools to use in their field of work. A locksmith also needs lock parts and supplies. It is important for

a locksmith to keep reference books and publications along with key code books.

Discover More: Locksmithing Basics

Respond to the following based on your reading.

1. _____ is one of the most common locksmith tasks.
2. Changing the combination of a safe is also known as _____.
3. A/an _____ is an uncut key that a locksmith can use for key duplication.
4. The *Life Safety Code* is a set of standards covering construction, _____, and occupancy concerns.
5. What is the purpose of a key code book?

Discover More Answer Key:

Discover More: Locksmithing Basics

1. Key duplication
2. recombining
3. key blank
4. safety
5. A key code book is used to decode the numbers and define the cuts in a given key so that a key can be generated.

1.2 Explain the locksmith's role in the security industry

The Security Industry

READING ASSIGNMENT

The Growing Crime Problem

There has never been a world more security-conscious than now. New, tougher crime-fighting laws are constantly enacted, especially laws to fight violent and drug-related crimes. More laws haven't brought safety, or even a feeling of security, to the public. The fear of crime is becoming a state of mind in many areas—urban and rural, affluent and poverty-stricken. For this reason, the average citizen is becoming increasingly aware of the need for home protection.

The FBI's *Uniform Crime Report* annually compiles statistics on reported crime in the United States. The crimes included in the report are divided into the categories of *violent crime*, crime against persons, and *property crime*, crime involving theft. Statistics from 2016 indicates that there were more than one million violent crimes committed, which is an increase of 4.1 percent from 2015; there were more than seven million property crimes in 2016, which is a 1.3 percent decrease since 2015. According to the FBI's Crime Clock, a violent crime is committed every 26 seconds and one property crime was committed every 3.9 seconds.

The [Canadian Centre for Justice Studies](#) publishes similar statistics in

their annual *Uniform Crime Reporting Survey*. Statistics from 2016 state that there were around 1.9 million crimes reported for the entire nation. Violent crimes accounted for 75.3 percent of this total, and crimes against property accounted for the remaining 25 percent. According to the same report, Canada has experienced a 28% decrease in crime since 2006.

Preventing Crime



Lack of home security or easy access to high-value goods make a home an easy target for theft.

Statistics show that 70 percent of all burglars are amateurs who have no special training or familiarity with locks or security devices. Most are opportunists who take advantage of the first unlocked door or vulnerable target they find. Most retail shoplifters are also amateurs. They tend to steal from stores where there are fewer preventative

measures against shoplifting. In contrast, many car thieves are professionals. However, they'll generally seek an easy target. The risk involved in stealing a car that has excellent security protection is too great. The thief simply won't have time to disarm the alarm system before being discovered.

Target hardening is one of the best techniques for fighting crime. The *target* is whatever the thief wants—cash, merchandise, or entry to a home. *Target hardening* means making the target harder to get to. An efficient burglar alarm or electronic security system is one of the best methods of target hardening, and more and more citizens and businesses are installing these devices. A vast new market for security products now exists. The security industry has dedicated itself to developing and distributing new and better products to the public.

The Security Industry Defined

The *security industry* is a broad-based market of products and services that protect life and property. The industry includes manufacturers, distributors, and sellers of security services and devices, as well as all persons who work to prevent and control crime and maintain safety.

Security services are services that protect or secure persons or property, such as burglar and fire alarm monitoring or patrols by uniformed and plain clothed officers. *Security hardware* is any equipment used to protect persons or property, such as locks, lighting devices, safes, and video cameras. *Security personnel* includes

employees such as gate guards, armored car drivers, loss prevention employees, and both armed and unarmed security officers. A single business (an alarm company, for example) may privately employ security personnel, or a government agency (such as the police force) may employ security personnel.



Lighting, security cameras, and security personnel are all part of security services.

Security manufacturers are companies that make security products. All tools, locks, hardware, locksmithing supplies, and key-making

equipment are the end product of manufacturers. Some companies specialize in making electronic security devices, others make tools and equipment, and still others make high-security locks, automotive locks, safes, and so on.

The security industry manufactures many products that provide home and personal protection. Some products are designed for residential use (locks and alarm systems, for example). Some products have commercial applications (panic bars, electromagnetic locks, high-security locks, and surveillance devices). Personal security items include stun guns and liquid pepper sprayers. Automotive security devices include antitheft alarms, ignition cutoffs, keypad door locks, and steering wheel “clubs.”

Security manufacturers and distributors make a significant contribution toward public security by making available effective new devices and systems proven to deter crime. As you progress through this program, you’ll learn about many recognized manufacturers in the security industry.

The Locksmith’s Role in Security

The crime statistics listed in this section seem discouraging. However, they demonstrate that locksmiths are needed to help prevent crime. The locksmith is one of the most important members of the security industry. As a locksmith, every time you recommend, repair, or install a lock or security device, you’ll indirectly help prevent a crime from occurring.

The surging demand for improved home and business protection created a new market for the locksmith's skills. For this reason, locksmiths should keep up-to-date on crime trends, especially property crimes, and on all new product developments in the security field. The best way to keep current is to subscribe to a popular trade journal. These publications offer up-to-the-minute information on products, as well as useful articles on lock servicing and installation. By keeping informed of news and trends in the security field, professional locksmiths can turn crime fighting into a lucrative business.

Employment Opportunities in the Security Industry

As a locksmith, you'll have many opportunities for employment, each with different advantages. You may choose to work in someone else's shop, your own shop, as a subcontractor, in a mobile van, in-house, for a manufacturer, as an installer, even as an instructor. However, in this section, the focus remains on the security industry as opposed to self-employment or traditional employment with an established locksmith.

Security Consulting

Many individuals and businesses turn to locksmiths for advice on how to prevent intrusion and protect property. For this reason, in addition to selling, installing, and repairing locks, a skilled professional locksmith who knows about crime prevention can find work in *security consulting*.



A security consultant can provide security solutions and peace of mind to a home or business.

As a consultant, the locksmith first confers with customers to determine their security needs and fears. Then, the locksmith visits the customer's business or home to make an evaluation of the security of the property. Finally, the locksmith offers recommendations on products and techniques that can improve security. Security consulting can develop into a lucrative full-time job or a profitable sideline for some locksmiths.

Working for Manufacturers and Distributors

Some manufacturers of locks and security devices employ locksmiths in their factories, warehouses, or offices to sell merchandise, stock inventory, and work with customers. Some creative and talented

locksmiths even work on developing new products for the industry. In addition, the company locksmith may oversee continuing education or training for other employees.

Key Points and Links

READING ASSIGNMENT

Key Points

- The fear of crime is becoming more of a concern in different areas. There is an increase in the number of violent crimes committed according to the FBI's Uniform Crime Report. The studies also show that most burglaries that take place are done by people that have no professional locksmith skills.
- Many burglaries are performed by those that take advantage of unlocked doors or targets. Target hardening is one of the best ways for preventative maintenance.
- Security includes the security industry, services, hardware, personnel, and manufacturers. Security manufacturers and distributors make a significant contribution to public security.
- Locksmiths are needed to help prevent crime and is the most important members of the security industry. A locksmith must keep up with current related trends and skills.
- A locksmith can choose to work in someone else's shop or on their own. A locksmith can be skilled as a security consultant identifying security needs and recommends products and techniques based on the needs. A locksmith may also choose to

work for manufacturers and distributors.

Links

- [Canadian Centre for Justice Studies](#)

Discover More: Security

Fill in the blank.

1. Violent crime is defined as any crime against _____.
2. Most shoplifters are _____ criminals.
3. Burglar and fire alarm monitoring fall under the category of security _____.
4. Visiting a home or business to evaluate the security of the property is part of security _____.
5. Locksmithing tools and supplies, locks, and key blanks are all made by security _____.

Discover More Answer Key:

Discover More: Security

1. persons
2. amateur
3. services
4. consulting
5. manufacturers

1.3 List the business practices and skills required to become a successful locksmith

Locksmithing Qualifications

READING ASSIGNMENT

The Mission of a Locksmith

The *mission* of a business is its purpose for existing. For example, the mission of the legal profession is to protect the rights of clients; a doctor's mission is to save lives and to support the quality of life. In the same way, the mission of a locksmith is to promote security and peace of mind by supplying products that will defend customers, their families, and their property. The mission of the locksmith carries with it a professional obligation toward customers, colleagues, the security industry, and the public at large.

How can you fulfill this mission? In this assignment, you'll look at some of the qualities, characteristics, and abilities that are desirable in a professional locksmith. Note that qualified locksmiths come from all walks of life and from a variety of age groups.

Education and Training

In locksmithing, the number of years of formal education isn't as important to success as is an *aptitude*, or natural ability, for the work. Since you have enough interest in locksmithing to enroll in this

program, you probably already have natural ability. If you have some natural mechanical ability, you probably have the creativity and intelligence that tends to go along with it.

Locksmithing places emphasis on the kind of brainpower associated with being alert, perceptive, patient, and attentive to details. Common sense, plus the skills you'll learn in this program, are the most important keys to a successful career in the industry. However, you should always improve your locksmithing skills. Even after you complete this program, continue reading trade journals, or attend conventions and seminars to keep up with changes in the industry.

Personal Qualities

While locksmiths come from a wide range of backgrounds, the most successful locksmiths share a number of personal qualities. These qualities ensure that an aspiring locksmith has the best opportunity to run a profitable business.

People Skills

Virtually anyone who's willing to work hard to learn the job can become a locksmith. However, learning to communicate with other people isn't easy. Developing "people skills" is as much a part of locksmithing as any other business. *People skills* are communication skills that strengthen understanding between persons.



Good people skills are essential for making a good first impression with your customers.

High on the list of desirable people skills are consideration, sincerity, courtesy, patience, and *empathy*, the ability to relate to and understand the problems of others. Any previous experience you've had in dealing with the public is an asset to your locksmithing career. You'll use your communication skills every day when dealing with customers, manufacturer representatives, employees, and during phone calls. In fact, your communication skills are just as important as your technical skills as a locksmith!

Professional Image and Conduct

You only have one opportunity to make a first impression. For this reason, it's important that you always look and act like a professional.

This way, you'll always make an excellent first impression that creates confidence in your customers.

The pursuit of excellence sets a fine locksmith apart from an average one. Paying attention to detail is one important way to provide excellent service. You'll inspire confidence and loyalty in your customers when they perceive you to be honest and skilled in the way you conduct your business. One thing you should always avoid is "putting down" the work of other locksmiths to gain business for yourself. Let your excellent work and professional manner speak for itself, and you'll get all the business you can handle.

Remember, as an expert and a professional, you should always try to look good, even when you're making a road call. You should dress neatly, practice good grooming, speak pleasantly, and keep your vehicle and tools neat and clean. In addition, keep your shop and office well organized and attractive. An unkempt appearance detracts from your professional image and may even cause you to lose business.



Your appearance reflects your ability.

You may think that your appearance is unimportant if you're an excellent locksmith. However, remember that the way you look reflects on who you are. If you arrive at a service call looking unkempt and with a disorganized toolbox, your customer may think you neglect your job as much as your appearance. No matter how good your work is, it will be difficult to change the customer's impression of you.

Think of it this way—suppose you're hiring an attorney to represent you in court. You can choose between two equally qualified professionals: one is clean, well-organized, and tidy. The other wears a wrinkled suit and their office appears disorganized. Which person would you trust to take your case? Look at yourself every day in the mirror and ask yourself if you look like a person you would trust with

the security of your home and family. This is the same question that your customers will be asking themselves!

Physical Requirements

There are no specific physical requirements for success in the locksmithing profession. You'll need sharp eyesight, but it's unimportant whether you use corrective lenses as long as you can see well enough to work with small parts.

Any professional career makes demands on your reserves of strength and energy (especially if you open your own shop). If you have any concerns about your health, consult your physician. There are many opportunities in the locksmithing field for all kinds of workers. If you feel you're not up to taking on a full-time job, consider working part-time or as a subcontractor.

Offering Outstanding Service

When you begin your career as a professional, remember this old saying: "Customers are not an interruption of your business; they're the reason for it." The most important part of your job as a locksmith is to provide excellent service to your customers. The following are just a few ways that you can offer outstanding service.

Offer Immediate Service

Speedy and efficient service is essential in the locksmith trade. A broken lock or lost key can trigger great anxiety in the customer, who

feels vulnerable and exposed to danger. If you're unavailable to do a job right away, recommend another locksmith who can help. This kind of consideration for your customer may cause the person to come back to you the next time there's a problem.

Use Quality Products and Materials

Build your reputation as an excellent locksmith by using reliable merchandise and parts. Good quality means durability and dependability. Even if you're the finest locksmith in town, if you use cheap or poorly made products, your jobs will come back to haunt you later. Always do a job right the first time.

Be Knowledgeable about Products

As a professional locksmith, your customers will often ask your advice. You must be knowledgeable about the variety of products on the market. Take some time to study manufacturers' catalogs and familiarize yourself with their products. Visit a local hardware store or home improvement center to look at merchandise and judge its quality for yourself. This knowledge will be invaluable to you when you're recommending products to your customers. Discuss the differences in price and quality with your customers. Encourage them to purchase quality items that will last. In addition, remind them that the small investment in quality locks may help prevent a much larger loss to theft, or even help save their lives.

Set Competitive Prices

Your prices will depend on two factors—economic conditions in your area and what the competition charges. The public may be willing to pay a little more when you provide excellent services. However, make sure you always give your customers their money's worth.

Offer More Services Than Your Competitors

A knowledgeable locksmith who knows how to do a wide variety of jobs (and who has the tools needed to do them) is invaluable. Many professional locksmiths offer only a limited number of services. This is fine if, for example, you work in a large city where many locksmiths are available. Generally, there will be enough business for everyone to succeed. However, in a smaller community, you may need to offer more than just basic services. Your customers may have no one else to turn to if you're not able to help them. When you turn down a job that you don't know how to do, you're losing a valuable customer. So, take the time and effort to learn more and improve your skills.

Locksmithing Laws and Ethics

Your locksmithing knowledge creates a big responsibility. Not only must the professional locksmith live by the rules of good business and professional conduct, but you must also uphold all laws applying to locksmiths. A locksmith holds a position of trust in the community. You must not betray that trust by engaging in illegal services or activities. In addition, you must fulfill any licensing or registration requirements your community has to prove that you deserve the trust of your customers.

Some cities require that a locksmith be registered with the police department or be issued a license before engaging in business. Some communities require you to show proof that you're a qualified locksmith. If you want to know what legal qualifications apply in your area, consult local or national locksmiths' organizations. They're usually glad to supply information regarding laws and regulations governing the practice of locksmithing.

The following is a list of responsible practices by which you should abide.

1. Never duplicate a key for a child (anyone under the age of 18) without written consent from a parent, unless you know the key is for their own property (a bicycle lock or book bag lock, for example).
2. Never open a car or a house door for a customer without proof of ownership.
3. Be sure a customer shows proof of ownership before you make keys by code.
4. Never discuss the confidential trade information in this program with anyone other than a qualified locksmith.
5. Keep all locksmithing manuals and books out of the view of the public.
6. Never divulge confidential information of the locksmithing trade to members of the public.
7. Keep all specialized locksmithing tools locked away when not in

use.

8. Keep all required records.
9. Uphold all local laws and regulations applying to locksmiths.
10. Never duplicate keys for vending machines, telephones, safe deposit boxes, or post office boxes without proper authorization and identification from the owner or office in charge.

Locksmithing Organizations

Many trade organizations exist within the locksmithing profession. Their main purpose is to uphold high standards in the business and fairness among their membership. Some well-known and respected organizations are the following:

Associated Locksmiths of America, Inc. (ALOA)
3003 Live Oak Street
Dallas, Texas 75204

Institutional Locksmiths' Association
P.O. Box 4097
Dedham, Massachusetts 02026

In addition, many state, county, and local organizations exist. Use the Internet to research what organizations exist in your area.

Key Points

READING ASSIGNMENT

Key Points

- The mission of a locksmith is to promote peace and security for customers. Locksmiths must have an aptitude for the work in addition to formal education and training. Continuous improvement should also be key to success.
- The most successful locksmiths have excellent people and communication skills in addition to technical skills. Locksmiths must also maintain a professional image and conduct even if their skills are excellent. Locksmiths must also upkeep their physical well-being and be willing to provide excellent service to customers.
- Offering immediate service, using quality products and materials, and being knowledgeable about products will also help to build a good reputation over time. Also, setting competitive prices and offering more services than competitors will play a key role in keeping customers and expanding the business.
- Locksmiths must abide by the law when in practice including the laws directly related to the profession. Communities must be able to trust their locksmith, and some even require proof of qualification.
- Trade organizations exist within the locksmithing profession. Their main purpose is to uphold high standards in the business and fairness among their membership. Many state, county, and local organizations also exist.

Discover More: Locksmith Qualities, Education, and Ethics

Respond to the following based on your reading.

1. The _____ of a business is its purpose for existing.
2. _____ is a natural ability for an area of work.
3. What are three ways to offer excellent service to your customers?
4. What are three responsible practices that locksmiths should always follow?

Discover More Answer Key:

Discover More: Locksmith Qualities, Education, and Ethics

1. mission
2. Aptitude
3. Any three of the following:
 - a. Offer immediate service
 - b. Use quality products and materials
 - c. Be knowledgeable about products
 - d. Set competitive prices
 - e. Offer more services than your competitors
4. Any three of the following:
 - a. Uphold all local laws and regulations applying to locksmiths.
 - b. Keep all required records.
 - c. Keep all specialized locksmithing tools locked away when not in use.
 - d. Never divulge confidential information of the locksmithing trade to members of the public.

- e. Keep all locksmithing manuals and books out of the view of the public.
- f. Never discuss the confidential trade information in this program with anyone other than a qualified locksmith.
- g. Be sure a customer shows proof of ownership before you make keys by code.
- h. Never open a car or a house door for a customer without proof of ownership.
- i. Never duplicate a key for a child (anyone under the age of 18) without written consent from a parent, unless you know the key is for their own property (a bicycle lock or book bag lock, for example).
- j. Never duplicate keys for vending machines, telephones, safe deposit boxes, or post office boxes without proper authorization and identification from the owner or office in charge.

Lesson 1 Review

Self-Check

1. What's the advantage of going to a locksmith to duplicate a key rather than using a self-serve store kiosk?
 - a. Kiosks only allow you to make a single copy of a key.
 - b. Locksmiths are able to duplicate keys much more cheaply than

kiosks.

c. Keys made from kiosks typically break within the first three months.

d. Locksmiths offer a much wider variety of key blanks.

2. When would a company with an on-site safe typically need the services of a locksmith?

a. When one or more employees leave the company

b. When there are more than the usual amount of valuables inside it

c. Every year, to comply with federal law

d. Only after a security incident such as an attempted break-in

3. What does the largest portion of a locksmith's business come from?

a. Repairing damaged locks

b. Helping locked-out drivers get back into their cars

c. Residential front door lock installations and replacements

d. Installing burglar alarms at commercial locations

4. What role does burglar installation play for a locksmith?

a. It's a growing area of specialization for locksmiths as the demand for burglar alarms rises.

b. It's typically not an area of focus for locksmiths because alarms require specialized electrical and wiring knowledge.

c. It's a declining area of focus as more residential customers purchase easy-to-use wifi monitoring systems.

d. It's becoming less an area of focus for locksmiths as more customers use dedicated home security companies.

5. What approach do most locksmiths take regarding specialization?

- a. Focus on as many areas as possible to get the most business.
- b. Focus on just one specific type of key and lock.
- c. Learn all there is to know about all locks made by all manufacturers, then select an area of interest.
- d. Focus on just one or two areas of locksmithing and become very good at those.

6. What do recent statistics show about burglaries in homes and retail locations?

- a. Most burglars are amateurs with no training who are just taking advantage of a vulnerability.
- b. Most burglars are skilled with picking locks are competent with bypassing security measures.
- c. Most burglaries occur in retail settings as opposed to residential settings.
- d. Most burglaries are violent crimes in which the burglar is armed and dangerous.

7. You notice that a security company is looking for a locksmith who focuses on security consulting. What should you expect the majority of your work to include?

- a. Installing locks and security systems on site
- b. Repairing damaged locks and helping customers when they are locked out
- c. Offering recommendations on products and techniques that can improve security
- d. Developing new security products for the industry

8. What can you as a locksmith do to proactively help prevent crime?

a. Stay current on crime trends and new product developments, and offer recommendations.

b. Learn as much about every type of lock as possible.

c. Show up as quickly as possible when receiving a call about a security problem.

d. Focus on relatively safe neighborhoods with historically lower crime rates.

9. You are arriving at the residence of a new customer for the first time. What's the best way to conduct yourself?

a. Focus primarily on getting the work done quickly and minimizing the interactions.

b. Point out any problems you find from prior locksmiths to help portray yourself as a true expert.

c. Respect the customer's privacy by minimizing your questions, and instead be available to answer questions as you work.

d. Keep your level of interaction high and demonstrate your personal skills just as strongly as your technical skills.

10. What approach should you take regarding the tools and equipment in your vehicle when making a service call?

a. Organize your gear in a manner that allows you to complete the job as quickly as possible.

b. Store your gear however you are most comfortable, as most customers will not care as long as you do the job well.

c. Everything needs to look clean and organized, even if it takes extra effort to do so.

d. Try to travel with minimal gear so that there is never an

opportunity to look disorganized or messy.

11. What physical requirements exist there for someone who is interested in the locksmithing profession?

- a. Extremely good hearing and hand-eye coordination
- b. The ability to lift and carry up to 25 pounds without assistance
- c. Having 20/20 vision or better without the assistance of corrective lenses
- d. None, as long as you have the ability to see small parts clearly

12. A customer calls you with an urgent request, but you cannot accommodate her because you are on another job. What should you do?

- a. Ask the customer you are currently working for if they mind if you leave to help the caller, and then quickly return.
- b. Tell the caller to sit tight, and that you'll give her a call back when you are done with your current job.
- c. Ask her if she wouldn't mind calling you again in about an hour, since that's when you expect you'll be free.
- d. Recommend another locksmith who might be able to help immediately, and show your appreciation for calling you.

13. What becomes more important for a locksmith serving a rather small community than a locksmith in a large city?

- a. Offering good prices
- b. Offering a wider variety of services
- c. Having a reputation as being friendly
- d. Being prompt when a call is received

14. A customer urgently calls you because he is locked out of his

house and needs your help. What's the most important thing for you to confirm before you open the door for him?

- a. That the customer has provided you proof of ownership before you open a car or a house door
- b. That the customer is able to pay for your services
- c. That someone will be there waiting when you arrive
- d. That the person who called you is the person waiting for you when you arrive

Self-Check Answer Key

1. Locksmiths offer a much wider variety of key blanks.

Explanation: Few stores keep a wide variety of key blanks in stock, so they'll usually only be able to copy the simplest and most common key types. Locksmiths have a wide variety of key blanks and are more skilled at making copies that fit perfectly.

Reference: Section 1.1

2. When one or more employees leave the company

Explanation: Businesses often require a recombination service when employees leave. The locksmith changes the combination to prevent anyone who knew the old combination from gaining access to the safe.

Reference: Section 1.1

3. Residential front door lock installations and replacements

Explanation: The largest portion of a locksmith's business comes from ordinary front door lock installations, replacements, or security upgrades.

Reference: Section 1.1

4. It's a growing area of specialization for locksmiths as the demand for burglar alarms rises.

Explanation: The increasing demand for security products has made burglar alarm installation a growing area of specialization for many locksmiths.

Reference: Section 1.1

5. Focus on just one or two areas of locksmithing and become very good at those.

Explanation: Most locksmiths specialize in just one or two of the important locksmithing techniques. It's virtually impossible for every locksmith to know how to do everything.

Reference: Section 1.1

6. Most burglars are amateurs with no training who are just taking advantage of a vulnerability.

Explanation: Statistics show that 70 percent of all burglars are amateurs who have no special training or familiarity with locks or security devices. Most are simply taking advantage of the first vulnerable target they find.

Reference: Section 1.2

7. Offering recommendations on products and techniques that can improve security

Explanation: As a security consultant, the locksmith talks with customers to determine their security needs, visits the customer's business or home to evaluate the property, and offers recommendations on products and techniques that can improve security.

Reference: Section 1.2

8. Stay current on crime trends and new product developments, and offer recommendations.

Explanation: Locksmiths should keep up-to-date on crime trends, especially property crimes, and on all new product developments in the security field.

Reference: Section 1.2

9. Keep your level of interaction high and demonstrate your

personal skills just as strongly as your technical skills.

Explanation: High on the list of desirable people skills are consideration, sincerity, courtesy, patience, and empathy. As a locksmith, your communication skills are just as important as your technical skills.

Reference: Section 1.3

10. Everything needs to look clean and organized, even if it takes extra effort to do so.

Explanation: It's important to dress neatly, speak pleasantly, and keep your vehicle and tools neat and clean. An unkempt appearance detracts from your image and may cause you to lose business.

Reference: Section 1.3

11. None, as long as you have the ability to see small parts clearly

Explanation: There are no specific physical requirements for success in the locksmithing profession. Good eyesight is critical, but it's okay if you use corrective lenses as long as you can see well enough to work with small parts.

Reference: Section 1.3

12. Recommend another locksmith who might be able to help

immediately, and show your appreciation for calling you.

Explanation: If you're unavailable to do a job right away, recommend another locksmith who can help. Even though you might lose this particular job, this kind of consideration for your customer may cause the person to come back to you the next time there's a problem.

Reference: Section 1.3

13. Offering a wider variety of services

Explanation: In a smaller community, you may need to offer more than just basic services. Your customers may have no one else to turn to if you're not able to help them.

Reference: Section 1.3

14. That the customer has provided you proof of ownership before you open a car or a house door

Explanation: It's crucial that you never open a car or a house door for a customer without proof of ownership.

Reference: Section 1.3

Flash Cards

1. Term: Key Blank

Definition: An uncut key template that needs to match up with the customer's key

2. Term: Key Blank Directory

Definition: Identifies the manufacturer's name and number on a given key blank

3. Term: Key Code Books

Definition: Reference books that define the cuts in a given key (particularly auto keys) so that the locksmith can generate a key

4. Term: Life Safety Code

Definition: A widely accepted standard on construction, safety, and occupancy concerns written and maintained by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

5. Term: Panic Hardware

Definition: Special door locks that anyone can open in an emergency by leaning on or pushing a bar

6. Term: Recombinating

Definition: Changing the combination of a safe lock

7. Term: Target

Definition: An item of value that a thief wants, such as cash or electronics

8. Term: Target Hardening

Definition: Making the target harder to get to

9. Term: Security Industry

Definition: The overall market of products and services that protect life and property

10. Term: Security Hardware

Definition: Any equipment used to protect persons or property, such as locks, lighting devices, safes, and video cameras

11. Term: Security Manufacturers

Definition: Companies that make security products

12. Term: Security Consulting

Definition: Job that involves evaluating the security of a property and offering recommendations on products and techniques that can improve security

13. Term: People Skills

Definition: Communication skills that strengthen understanding between people and create trustworthiness

14. Term: Empathy

Definition: The ability to relate to and understand the problems of

others