

The missions of an office of Cité des Métiers

A Cité des Métiers is a center integrated with counselors and public service resources for researching benchmarks, orientation, and information about careers and the professional life. In a context of profound variation, where forms of work are constantly changing and one does not remain in the same career throughout their lifetime, the ambition of a center is to aid users to **become better role-players in their professional life**.

Registered in a range of events and facilities designed to permit our fellow-citizens to cope with transformations that are more

rapid than the advancement of our knowledge, tools, modes of thought, and work organization, a Cité des Métiers is complemented by the rationale of developing a more advanced culture. In this spirit, it creates a necessary union of economic development role-play (introduction and social work) as one part, and cultural role-play as another. Therefore a cooperation between social role-players and local cultural work must be carried out.

A Cité des Métiers has a mission to direct users in all means of elaboration and realization of professional objectives and to accompany them in their choice. To realize these missions, a Cité des Métiers center must not depend on one alliance of organizations, or resources supplied by partners in supplementary vocations. Thus, these missions cooperate with their efforts to welcome the public, as well as to inform and aid in developing strategies in three ways:

- discussions with professionals of competent institutions in the domain of orientation and the professional life
- free service of documentation regarding employment, careers, and training
- information days, symposiums with external partners

The patrons of a Cité des Métiers center

Because the Cité des Métiers intervenes in all fields of the professional life, it embraces a variety of patrons that would be disassociated elsewhere; downgraded due to the limitations of a specialized institution.

A Cité des Métiers is, by nature, open to all public regardless of status, age, level of education or qualification, or membership to a professional or geographical category. For the best operation of its services, the Cité des Métiers depends on a certain number of intangible principles which constitutes its uniqueness.

The principles of operation of a Cité des Métiers center

1. A center for free and independent access

- The center has free and independent access, which means that no commercial activities can be practices within the confines of the building, and no social restraints will be organized: one can visit a Cité des Métiers without justification or registration in an organization.
- The partners participate to diffuse information that is as complete as possible, not selected publicity that favors their own institution.
- Finally, the public service missions of the Cité des Métiers cannot be conceived by relaying national or European politics. These activities are founded by the institutions in charge of these complete politics, by the partnerships with public or private organizations.

2. Services centered on the needs of the users

- A Cité des Métiers is centralized on the demands, questions, and problems of the user, not on the institution and its services: this considers not completing the "performance" of the institution, but that the user can unlock their problem, get a sense of themselves, and adapt a strategy thanks to the most information and advice available.
- The center operates without set meetings: considers the time of the user, the urgency of their questions, or the stage they have gone through with the aid of counsel and resources.
- As early as the first perception, the user needs to feel that the center is made for him (her). This brings particular attention to the atmosphere, architecture, furnishings, and decor, which need to show respect for the user.

3. A place founded on the plurality of points of view and approaches

Becoming better role-players in your professional life assumes for the user a transition, a time of reflection, and a personal progression of multiple frameworks adapted to different stages of the professional life. Therefore, a Cité des Métiers is not a specialized approach for one type of person or service. It is a multipartner platform covering all fields of the professional life. A Cité des Métiers does not work alone; it functions under a cooperation, an association of efforts, competences, and points of view to help find answers for the users' questions. For example the approach of an employment counselor can overlap that of orientation counseling to clarify a career choice. The user can, in light of this plurality of perceptions, reposition their approach to take on many discussions. To operate, a permanent effort of mutualization of knowledge and proficiencies is assumed on the part of the counselors.

In a Cité des Métiers center, one can return at different stages of their professional choices to:

- inform themselves of existing plans
- choose a service, having knowledge of its design
- use other services

The services offered here exceed that of specialized institutions in the field of the professional life, and they propose a change in services offered by other organizations. They are designed to give the user a better transition in and out of existing services, and to center on initial demands of the users.

Finally, a Cité des Métiers is open to all approaches as gateways to clearly formulated questions, or for expressed problems of those who do not know how to formulate their question, therefore it is a shift in the methods and services offered.

4. A public center for welcoming and progressive discussions founded on the qualities of listening and counseling

- **Counseling is not analyzing or dictating**

The objective of autonomy for users is what justifies the existence of a Cité des Métiers. Therefore, discussions must aid the user in developing strategies for action, and in no case decide for them. For it to be truly counseling, the counselor cannot have investment, control, or decisions. This is what permits the public to readapt a request that elsewhere has been taken charge of by the institution.

- **Respect for anonymity and voluntary participation**

This unconditional rule corroborates the absence of control or dictation: for the choice to work, it is necessary that a liberal discussion is expressed. The discussions operate in a framework of reciprocal anonymity (of the user and of the counselors' member institution), so that the qualities of listening and counseling take priority.

5. A place founded on the interaction of counseling and resources

A Cité des Métiers is a center of integrated endeavors, where the conjunction of counseling and resources is played out. The variety and extent of the documents are indispensable conditions for the public to be able to make their own opinions, discover unknown information, and to open new forms of orientation, introduction, and training.

But without the presence of counselors, all can be reduced to a multiplicity of tools which are difficult to access, and for the user to become less autonomous. It is better to have a mix of counseling and resources that favors a process of learning established by an alteration between independent research in the resource center, and a guided approach in the counseling area. This condition can create, more than solely assisting, a place of autonomy for all users.