



## **Canada's Career Imperative How do we fix the "Talent Disconnect" Dilemma?**

**Summary Report – June 12, 2013**

**Calgary, Alberta**

To All Participants:

Thank you for joining us on June 12 in the third in our series of Roundtable events to be presented by CERIC across Canada in 2013. After the summer break we will continue on this Fall to Moncton, Montreal, Winnipeg & Vancouver.

Our promise to you is to report back on the total dialogue from all these cross-Canada events, to give you a perspective on how others see the solutions and share other examples of regional collaborative innovations. As we build this content we will then let you know on a regular basis how you can access further information through the CERIC web site.

We deeply appreciate your participation and the time you took to attend.

Thank you goes to our Calgary Event Sponsor – Millier Dickinson Blais.

### **Preface**

As a refresher here is the opening framework for the roundtable discussion.

Business, education and government all have a stake in the **economic imperative** of crafting a clearer strategy to **"develop, connect and retain the best of our talent"** to meet the ever changing needs of disruptive regional and global markets.

Recognizing the constant swings in and out of recession, and major global forces that rapidly impact the changing world of work (technology, aging demographics and social behaviour to name a few); we in Canada have a real need for a genuine, innovative and collaborative action to mend our "talent disconnect".

Consider how:

- regional markets across Canada differ in the skills shortage & talent match
- the educational process could better prepare and connect young people with realistic choices offered by employers
- patterns of recruitment and selection are amplified by social networks
- society's cycle of work, continuous learning and personal life aspirations is upside down from 20<sup>th</sup> century norms

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### **Changing the Talent Match Process**

If there was **one thing you would change** to make the work search & talent match system work better, what would it be?

As we have learned from three roundtables so far, there is more than simply one thing that needs changing. Distilling the notes from the Calgary conversation, specific focus was largely on making things better for two demographic groups - youth and newcomers to Canada.

In addition, general comments were made around improving processes that make "talent connections" work better from the employer side; and also for the career professionals who are helping people in their work search and making informed decisions around their career path options. Here are some highlights.

- Young people have unrealistic expectations of what the workplace will be like in terms of such things as pay, level of positions, career paths.
- Some youth are under parental influence, being pushed to become oil and gas engineers or doctors (for example); not being allowed to explore their passion, strengths. Some students are purposefully sabotaging their chances of getting into university to avoid programs they are not interested in.
- Better academic advising/counselling should begin at the admissions point of college/university to help youth determine "fit" before committing time and money to a program.
- Need to have post-secondary education connected to employment market needs, not just about "bums in seats". (If BAs aren't getting jobs, perhaps universities need to produce fewer.)
- Need to rethink how youth get that "summer job experience." For many in the oil patch, they are away during the summer, so students don't get the opportunities. Another example, September - a busy month in the hospitality industry, when students are busy back at school. Schools (post-secondary) need to adjust schedules to accommodate when/where work is happening.
- Industry needs to take more responsibility for training, mentoring and provide earlier work experiences if they are feeling the strain from talent shortages.

- Need to educate parents and students on what various paths there are beyond university. Educate career professionals on the value and advantages of trades - eliminate the stigma. Especially at high school level, the assumption often is that achieving good academic grades means heading direct to university.

**Point of interest.** At the time of preparing this report, an article appeared in the *Toronto Star* on Sunday June 23, that underscores much of what was said in this Calgary conversation on June 12. ["The University Myth of Good Employment" by Thomas Klassen.](#)

Moving from youth to newcomers looking for work, specific comments also included reference to the mobility of workers across provincial boundaries.

- If Canada is looking to attract international talent we also need to examine the barriers we put up, such as inter-provincial mobility within trades/professions.
- Often newcomers are being pushed around to multiple agencies; not a clear path to careers. They need more stepping stones to gain Canadian experience and understand how to navigate the employment market.
- If employers struggle to find the right person as a leader and they still frame this on a model of "strong leadership", it doesn't always align with less aggressive/assertive cultures when it comes to new Canadians filling these roles.

And from the work searcher and business employer positioning, what's the change in outlook or process for them to make "talent connections" work better?

- Need a better way to reach out to all people involved in talent management and workforce development (government, industry – companies & HR professionals and education – high school and post-secondary).
- Change old habits of employers who weed out clients based on titles on linear resumes, need to broaden perspective of transferable skills. Many successful people have tried various routes – so a linear career path may not be necessary.
- Need to simplify the talent match system - jobseekers are burning out. Need a "single window" to apply for multiple jobs, (e.g. university/college applications with Apply Alberta) <https://www.applyalberta.ca/pub/> Then jobseekers (and employers) could focus on higher value networking not blasting out resumes.
- It's not a corporate ladder anymore, it's "monkey bars" so people can criss-cross, try out different work options (e.g. internships provide flexibility to try out careers).

## Value Proposition for Career Services

Variant language describes the “talent disconnect” dilemma. **What strong value proposition statement would you make for career development services so that business and government would see it as our nation’s investment? (50 words)**

From all three roundtable groups - Burlington, Toronto and Calgary, the quick observation about how this question was answered, is the dilemma of language, soft vs. hard sell. That is the core of the problem when you ask for a business context for a field of work that is largely unknown and diverse in its application.

Considering the two audiences focused in this question - business & government, develop a value proposition statement for career development services for them; here were the responses that resonated the closest starting with one significant comment:

- Companies are being asked for return on investment (ROI) from stakeholders, and for collaborative support in their economic communities. It’s tough to make the case to engage career development services. What you need to do is prove you are solving a problem for employers.

Then as some of you appropriately identified, the opening lines in our communication to business and government become:

- For your business to grow and prosper, you need to attract and keep a talented workforce.
- An investment in career development is an investment in Canada’s economy.
- Investment in career development services, employee training and human capital development is an investment in Canada’s economy. PERIOD.
- In order to convince companies to invest in career development and training, they need to see a benefit in the long run.
- What is the payback to employers? Retention.

## Collaborative Innovations

What are some **examples in your regional area of collaborative innovations** where business (small & large), education, community based services, trade groups and government are **developing and connecting people** with productive and rewarding career opportunities?

Thanks to all of you for this generous and diverse list of examples. By the time we finish the roundtables in the Fall you will have a comprehensive national directory!

- **Project Protégé – City of Calgary Mentorship Opportunity** – Partnership between City of Calgary Youth Employment Centre, University of Calgary (faculty of Social Work) Mount Royal University and Rocky Mountain College. For social work students interested in different types of occupations within the social work field <http://www.ucalgary.ca/sowkcareers/projectprotege>
- **Enbridge / Haskayne School of Business (University of Calgary) Mentorship Program.** Haskayne undergraduate & MBA students pair with established business professionals in Calgary business community. Students can build networks within the community, gain insight & knowledge to inform career aspirations. <http://haskayne.ucalgary.ca/services/career-centre/mentorship-program> and <http://haskayne.ucalgary.ca/news/jun-11-2009/interest-mentorship-rise>
- **The Harry G. Schaefer Mentorship Program.** Developed & managed by Mount Royal's Student Learning Services under Student Affairs and Campus Life, the multi-faceted mentorship program will be available to all students at Mount Royal; across all faculties, from all social, cultural & economic backgrounds. Will begin by matching third-year students with alumni members with similar career interests. [http://www.mtroyal.ca/facetime/Archive/FTdata\\_schaefer\\_102512.htm](http://www.mtroyal.ca/facetime/Archive/FTdata_schaefer_102512.htm)
- **Calgary Construction Association Youth Employment Program.** For youth looking for careers in construction. Helps them gain a skill base to start their career with a three-week hands-on paid work experience <http://www.cca.cc/>
- **BGS Youth Ventures Calgary.** Offers assessments for the Skills Link program under Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy. Assists youth facing barriers to employment and/or education, to develop a broad range of skills, knowledge & work experience to successfully participate in the job market <http://www.bgsenterprises.com/OurPrograms/YouthVenturesCalgary/tabid/69/Default.aspx>

- **Project Maple, Immigrant Services Calgary (Multicultural Achievement Program for Learning Employers)** Nationwide project bringing together employers & Internationally Educated Professionals (IEPs) to create employment opportunities for immigrants in Calgary. Aimed towards EMPLOYERS (build a more diverse workforce, address skills shortages) and IMMIGRANTS (gain knowledge of Canadian workplace and relevant employment) <http://www.maple2.ca/> and <http://www.immigrantservicescalgary.ca/how-can-we-help/career-education-planning>
- **Calgary Regional Immigrant Employment Council (CRIEC) Council Mentoring Programs.** Three programs with employer partners such as the City of Calgary, SNC-Lavalin, Shaw, Flint Energy and TransCanada, Desjardins Insurance and JMP Engineering. Plus, community partners exchanging best practices designed to better connect IEPs with Calgary employers. Includes Classic 1-on-1 mentoring strategy, Smart Connections (skills transferability) and MentoringCircles (communications skills) <http://www.criec.ca/#overview>
- **Cybermentor Calgary.** Online mentoring program, matches girls aged 11 to 18 with professional women scientists & engineers or female students at Alberta universities studying science and engineering. Primary goal of Cybermentor is to expand girls' knowledge of careers, opportunities and benefits that exist for women in science and engineering fields <http://www.cybermentors.ca/>
- **Calgary Immigrant Education Society.** Accounting skills training program with collaborative support from Calgary employers <http://www.immigrant-education.ca/index.php/accounting-skills-training.html>
- **Calgary Catholic Immigration Society Oil & Gas Training Programs** Industry-driven programs designed to address needs for well-trained employees in the upstream Oil and Gas Industry. Also tailored to help newcomers to overcome barriers as they settle in Canada so they can successfully integrate into this key sector of the Albertan economy. Support from industry associations, the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada <http://www.ogtp.ca/>
- **CAREERS: The Next Generation.** Unique, NFP organization in Alberta raising youth awareness of career options. Helps students earn while they learn through internship. Partners with government, educators, communities, industry, parents & students to introduce high school youth to rewarding careers and develop the skilled workers of the future. Current programs in health services, trades and industrial technologies <http://nextgen.org/>

- **Alberta Human Services.** Helps Small, Medium Enterprises (SME's) with their corporate structure, to be in a position to bring in employment training programs <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/>
- **Petro Staff / YWCA** Provides new immigrant women with internships to gain Canadian experiences & references through work via Petro Staff (recruitment and placement agency in the oil and gas sector) <http://www.petro-staff.com/>
- **Canadian Employment Skills (CES) Program** Bridging program at the YWCA Calgary. Empowers skilled immigrant workers to find employment in their fields of expertise. Many participants are working in survival jobs in Calgary in spite of having university degrees and diplomas from their first countries. 25-week program fully funded by Alberta Employment and Immigration <http://www.ywcakeeparooofcalgary.com/page.aspx?pid=315>
- **CGA/CMA Alberta Connector Program** Inspired by the Halifax Connector Program, a referral process that helps immigrants, international students & young talent build a professional network & connect with job opportunities. Connectors are asked to refer the participant to a min. of 3 people in their network, and each of these is asked to refer the participant to 3 more. Funded by FQR (Foreign Qualifications Recognition) program through AB Government <http://www.greaterhalifax.com/en/home/ourprograms/connectorprogram/default.aspx> and <http://www.cga-alberta.org/>
- **Bow Valley College Corporate Readiness Training Program (CRTP)** Helps foreign workers gain Canadian work experience in their field of expertise with extra tools to find jobs in Calgary making the most of their qualifications & experience. Many CRTP participants in Calgary obtain FT employment with the host company during the 6-week immigrant work experience placement <http://crtp.bowvalleycollege.ca/>
- **Metis/First Nations groups in Alberta** many have funding to partner with employers to train and provide jobs <http://www.spiritstaffing.com/>
- **SAIT/Calgary Board of Education Dual credit Pharmacy Assistant Program** High school students have the prospect of earning credits for Grade 12 diploma and achieve a SAIT Polytechnic certificate. Students build expertise as they work with a CBE teacher, SAIT instructors and industry experts, including a field practicum in local community pharmacies <http://schools.cbe.ab.ca/ct-centre/pdfs/publications/2013-05-03-spring-cbe-sait-pharmacy.html>

- **Seismic in Motion, Canadian Association of Geophysical Contractors**  
 October annually CAGC hosts a 3-day field trip "Seismic in Motion" showcasing a wide variety of activities encompassing Seismic in the Oil and Gas Industry including some newest technologies. In addition to high school students, the event attracts Government Regulators, Industry personnel, Aboriginal Interests and Public Stakeholders <https://www.cagc.ca/index.html?DISPLAY=sim>
  
- **TD Discovery Days in Health Sciences at University of Calgary and University of Alberta**  
 One-day workshops for secondary school students and teachers to explore a variety of career options in medicine and the health sciences. A Discovery Day features a keynote lecture, hands-on workshops & a career panel discussion. Students gain a clear picture of what it would be like to be a health professional by interacting with researchers, clinicians and educators in their real-life work setting. <http://www.cdnmedhall.org/td-discovery-days-health-sciences>
  
- **Women@ Enbridge**  
 Supports a career development program for women at the engineering firm, including coaching, mentoring and leadership skills training
  
- **Motive Action**  
 Calgary-based non-profit training organization teaches unemployed people (18-30) the skills and attitudes they need to succeed in the workplace. Focus on trades with links to employers. Made possible with the help of funding provided by the Province of Alberta and the Government of Canada <http://motiveaction.com/>
  
- **Momentum**  
 Uses a Community Economic Development (CED) approach that offers hope and opportunity to people living in poverty. Works with all Calgarians who are ready to move out of poverty. Includes focus on finding meaningful employment <http://www.momentum.org/>