



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

Summary Report – May 8, 2013

Toronto, Ontario

To All Participants:

Thank you for joining us on May 8 in the second of a series of Roundtable events to be presented by CERIC across Canada in 2013. We travel to Calgary on June 12 and this Fall we will be in Moncton, Montreal, Winnipeg & Vancouver.

Our promise to you is to report back on the total dialogue from all these events across Canada, 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 website.

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

Thank you goes to our Toronto 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 20th 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, perhaps there is more than just one thing! Distilling the notes from the lively Toronto group conversations, specific observations were focused on two stakeholder groups – employers and educators.

- Employers can be too myopic, narrow/specific in their search criteria, looking for the "ideal" candidate, checking off boxes for a perfect match. (This process also gets repeated by recruiters). Employers need to see beyond surface information and encouraged to make better business decisions, seeing talent as an investment. Better to focus on a person's capacity to relate to others and learn, then establish training programs. "Hire for attitude, train for skill"?
- Employers put up digital walls, screening out applicants through key words & online resumes or assessment tools, which doesn't serve anyone's best interest (employer/jobseeker) and can be particularly difficult for new immigrants.
- Employers must be inclusive, more open-minded. Many employers can still be resistant to anyone who is different. They also need to look broadly beyond job titles because they can mean different things within various business contexts.

One specific area of concern highlighted was the current high youth unemployment rate and the tight fiscal policies of governments to help fund community-based employment services, under-resourced in trying to help disadvantaged youth. Don't employers also have a stake in this? Could they not come to the table with money and support? Many employers are sitting on significant resources and they need to loosen the purse strings and provide training if they want innovation.

From many of the other comments, by extension it could be said that even with the layers of current technologies, techniques and tools applied in the work search/talent match system, employers haven't really changed the basic approach.

As for the educators (and the students themselves):

- Educational institutions could do a better job helping diversity groups to prepare for the workplace. Students really need to be directly exposed to this - they learn by doing. Increasingly, students need guidance early on, perhaps through volunteer opportunities, job trials, co-ops. This has to be connected to a realistic career counselling process.
- Educators are preparing people for more education, but not necessarily the reality of work options or work environments.
- Students need to focus on transferable/portable skills – how can they take skills from the classroom and move or translate them into the workplace?

Pulling it together for employers, educators, students, here was a shared reference:

- #1 finding of a recent Harvard Pathways to Prosperity conference is that educators and employers need to find a way to play together. Project or work-based learning opportunities needs to be part of the experience for all students in order for them to have employability <http://sites.thoughtstream.ca/pathways/>

There were also comments related to career development professionals (counsellors, coaches etc.).

- Career counselling has to change; it needs to be reality-based. When counsellors focus on “where would you get the most pleasure in your career/life” it steers people in the wrong direction. Need to talk of skills in demand and market opportunities. There’s a three-way disconnect between career counselling, workplace needs and the education system.
- For jobseekers in search mode, there is information overload and they need proper processes/techniques in place to help sort through the options including entrepreneurship. Career counsellors need better tools and insights to do this.

Considering this, one group summarized by saying we need 3 things together:

- Awareness of career options (among parents/influencers and students/career changers). E.g. there are more than 10 trades
- Mechanisms to help people do assessments for themselves
- Greater employer responsibility for defining and supporting career paths and aspirations

As a conclusion to - Changing the Talent Match System: here are 3 areas of opportunity that were also discussed.

- Let's not ignore the influence of professional associations and alumni associations that provide assistance where organizations don't. In many cases these associations can offer career services to members.
- Different sectors such as engineering, IT, healthcare, finance and accounting need to come together for better cross sharing of the latest and hottest market information and career opportunities. For example, where do you find out about becoming an IT specialist in healthcare? There are so many diverse intersections.
- For senior-level employment and workforce policy planners in government, their eyes glaze over when you say career development; what they are interested in is economic development. Does this not beg the need for a shift in the presentation of career services? This is a perfect segue to part two of the discussion.

Value Propostion 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)**

As with the Burlington group, the quick observation about this question 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 for this value proposition – business and government, here are the responses that came closest to the hard sell.

- Need ROI language. We are a national profession that brings evidence-based solutions to organizations looking to reduce risk, increase productivity, enhance employee engagement and increase workplace wellness – so employers can do a better job at talent management and individuals can manage their career pathways and find meaningful work.
- **ROI** → **R**ight jobs + **O**pportunities = **I**ncome (profit for business) & **I**nvestment (in economic prosperity for government)
- Career development services facilitate the conversations and connections between talent and industry by helping: individuals better understand their transferable skills, employers better clarify their job skill requirements, and the two to work together to make the best "job fit" decisions.

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?

Thank to all of you for this generous and diverse list of examples.

- **ICTC** – Information and Communications Technology Council makes a case for careers in technology, offers mentoring programs <http://www.ictc-ctic.ca/>
- **IEP** – Internationally Educated Professionals Conference, a partnership between five different sectors, brings together 1,500 IEPs to help them search jobs <http://www.iep.ca/>
- **TRIEC** – Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council – brings multiple stakeholders together to address employment for immigrants in GTA, matches IEPs with mentors <http://triec.ca/>
- **PAYE** Partnership to Advance Youth Employment, joint initiative between private sector employers and the City of Toronto. A group of business leaders, including the Toronto Board of Trade, helps employers increase access to economic opportunities for Toronto youth <http://www.toronto.ca/socialservices/payeh.htm>
- **Mining Association of Canada**, promotes niche career opportunities, job fair brings students & employers together <http://www.mining.ca/site/index.php/en/>
- **BHP Billiton Diamond Mine**, Northwest Territories, educates teachers on career decision making to help students, an example of business stepping up, leaving an impact in a community, especially with Aboriginal students <http://jobmatics.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Diamonds-Education-and-Jobmatics2.pdf>
<http://contactpoint.ca/a-three-pronged-partnership-for-change-positive-outcomes-for-aboriginal-rural-and-remote-students/>
- **OSPE** - Ontario Society of Professional Engineers & Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, a professional association and government working together (in partnership with Career Cycles) to help engineers (immigrants) tell their stories clearly for employment readiness and licensure (to better explain their past work experience) <http://www.ospe.on.ca/>

- **Hammerheads**, a skill and employment-based training program within the construction industry, offers apprenticeship career opportunities to the youth of under-resourced neighbourhoods <http://www.cobtrades.com/hammerheads/>
- **C.H.O.I.C.E. Apprenticeship Program**, collaboration between Carpenters Union Local 27, YMCA, Toronto Community Housing, Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities & Housing Services, Inc. Goal is to provide pre-apprenticeship general carpentry training to people from low-income backgrounds http://www.torontohousing.ca/youth/economic_opportunity/choice_carpentry_pre_apprenticeship_program_paid_employment_opportunity_y
- **Green Skills Network** - provides youth across Ontario with pathways to careers in the expanding green economy. Works in strategic partnership with and adds value to government-supported employment programs, college-based and independent trainers, and private companies <http://www.greenskillsnetwork.ca/>
- **Social Capital Partners** – applies market-based solutions to tackle systemic social issues through designing and implementing new models that address access to employment issues <http://www.socialcapitalpartners.ca/>
- **Ontario Specialist High Skills Majors** let students focus on a career path that matches their skills and interests while meeting requirements of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). Focus on health and wellness, construction, mining, etc. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/morestudentsuccess/SHSM.asp>
- **Sector Councils** exemplify collaboration but are losing federal government funding. Some will continue <http://www.councils.org/sector-councils/list-of-canadas-sector-councils/>
- **HAPPEN** – business professionals networking group in Halton/Peel region connects jobseekers with HR professionals & recruiters <http://happen.ca/>
- **Jobpostings.ca** student job board <http://www.jobpostings.ca/>

Other Resources Shared:

Book Lynda Gratton, *The Shift: The Future of Work is Already Here* (2011)

Article Lou Adler <http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20130502173937-15454-there-are-only-four-jobs-in-the-whole-world-are-you-in-the-right-one>

Tools Ryerson **Who Plus You** to assist students <http://www.ryerson.ca/wpy/>