

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

Summary Report – November 6, 2013

Vancouver, B.C.

To All Participants:

Thank you for joining us on Nov. 6 for our series of Roundtable events presented by CERIC across Canada in 2013. Our final destination is Moncton.

Our promise to you is to report back on the 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 content we will let you know on a regular basis how you can access information on the CERIC web site.

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

Thank you goes to our Vancouver 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?

Distilling the notes from the Vancouver conversation, there were messages for two primary stakeholders – business **employers** and the **education** system, with some specific comments regarding integration and collaboration between the two. Here are some highlights from Vancouver participants that speak to this:

- Develop a collaborative national workforce strategy that involves employers, educators & governments. (e.g. B.C. Skills Plan; five ministries working together to develop a 10-year plan.) A national strategy would include immediate, short, medium & long-term strategies by promoting/engaging regional discussions to understand local supply/demand and help make a work search process easier. Solve this issue regionally first, then move to a national strategy.
- Integrate involvement of schools, industries and business in early high school with trades category more front and centre.
- Employers: step up and improve the disconnect with people looking for work. Maximize the potential of every individual who wants to work in this country. Accommodate for relocation as a key part of supporting recruitment. Help make work opportunities better fit needs of the unique individual.
- Employers: remove barriers for people with disabilities, work with political leaders to truly buy in and take initiatives that are long term and sustainable.
- Education: A multi-disciplinary curriculum is where it's at. Recognizing what's happening with the changing needs in the market and help students to create the links.
- Education: create a system to support resiliency. Build resilience skills early on in the school system and better connect schools, businesses and parents to create awareness of opportunities for changing skill sets required.
- Education: Introduce pre-admissions counselling for university (to change major earlier rather than 3rd year). There needs to be flexibility, open mindedness to other opportunities.

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)**

One thing we can take from all the roundtable discussions - Burlington, Toronto, Calgary, Regina, Montreal and Vancouver, is that service providers in the field of career development need to work at developing a crisper value proposition statement that answers the how and the so what? 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.

Participants were asked to develop a value proposition statement for career development services, considering the two audiences focused in this question - business & government.

As in the previous discussions across the country, most of the responses in Vancouver were broad in nature. Here are three responses that came closest to defining the value proposition of career development services for a business or government to see it as our nation’s investment.

- It’s important to invest in career development services in this country. You are making a sales call to a major business; what would you say to sell the value? If it was to government, what would be the pitch? Perhaps something like:
 - A commitment to invest in career development opportunities for employees as a long-term strategy pays off in terms of productivity, workforce retention, commitment and loyalty.
 - Application of career development into business creates awareness, develops expertise, aligns expectations, bridges supply & demand and drives profitability & economic growth.
 - Developing skills, building knowledge, and strengthening innovation through a career development pathway brings together talent to meet the needs of the economy and society & delivers return on investment.

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!

Collaborative examples from earlier roundtables across the country were shared:

Innovate Burlington – Provides work experience for graduates who help local businesses with market research, business planning, and communication strategy
<http://www.bedc.ca/innovateburlington>

Specialist High Skills Major (Ontario Ministry of Education) – Students focus on their career path while meeting Ontario graduation requirements
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/morestudentsuccess/SHSM.asp>

Calgary, Alberta Human Services – Helps small/medium enterprises (SMEs) with their corporate structure to be in a position to adopt employment training programs
<http://humanservices.alberta.ca/>

University of Regina (U of R Guarantee) – If students don't secure career-related employment within 6 months of graduation, they are eligible to return for another year of undergraduate classes for free
<http://www.uregina.ca/urguarantee/>

Some specific examples of regional Vancouver collaborations:

XYBoom Conference (Vancouver) – The XYBOOM Intergenerational Organization begins as a conversation between a few twenty-somethings, confused about the high levels of underemployment. The first XYBOOM conference was January 20, 2012. Bringing together youth and businesses, its mission was to address youth unemployment and the baby boomer exit through intergenerational collaboration.
<http://www.xyboom.com/>

Discover Trades BC – Initiative funded by the BC Government to help provide easy access for secondary students to many educational opportunities available in trades training. <http://www.discovertradesbc.ca/>

Small Business BC – Provides new entrepreneurs with products and services to assist in successful entry into small business ventures. Core activities are supported by funds from Western Economic Diversification Canada and the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training <http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/>

Road Map Project - Community-wide effort aimed at improving education to drive dramatic improvement in student achievement from cradle to college and career in Seattle, WA. Led by the Centre for Community Center for Education Results (CCER), they have fostered the growth of a regional framework by leveraging the belief that collective effort is necessary to make large-scale educational change. <http://www.roadmapproject.org/>

Decoda Literacy Solutions – Co-ordinated network of 102 task groups in 400 B.C. communities, works with government, business and community organizations to achieve local literacy goals and to build vibrant and resilient communities, successful individuals and sustainable businesses <http://decoda.ca>