

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

Summary Report – April 18, 2013

Burlington, Ontario

To All Participants:

Thank you for joining us on April 18 in the first of a series of Roundtable events to be presented by CERIC across Canada in 2013. We travel to Toronto in May and Calgary in June. 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 also goes to our Burlington 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 process work better, what would it be?

The response to this question for this Burlington group focused primarily on the "school to work" element in the work search and talent match process. We may find varied responses in the next roundtables as the mix of participants will include corporations, recruiters and government.

Here is a summary that captures the essence of what was said as there were multiple specific comments pointing in the direction of a few themes.

- Any change needs to involve Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) given the proportion of workforce they employ. Real opportunity exists for communities to reach out to SMEs; need to have conversations one SME employer at a time.
- Need more of a focus on entrepreneurship, R&D and innovation.
- New graduates need more understanding and help on how to access networks. That's how you get referrals to 90% of jobs. Learn more "real time" face-to-face networking, going beyond social networking tools.
- Address misconceptions or expectations among parents/society at large who still think of university as the only option and skilled trades as a step down. Parents are a huge influence on their children and they need to be having the conversations – but families are so over scheduled with extracurricular activities.
- Address the lack of knowledge of changing labour market data that teachers and guidance counsellors have in guiding children. Get career information into elementary school and introduce concepts as early as Grade 1.
- Co-op education opportunities in high school are key for students to test what they like to do and what they don't; need to find more ways to connect employers and students in real-world, contextual experiences (see Career Trek in Manitoba) <http://www.careertrek.ca>
- Need a national workforce strategy that involves employers, educators and government.

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Business Proposition for Career Services

Variant language describes the "talent disconnect" dilemma. What would you say to **make a strong business value proposition** for career development services all through the work-life cycle as our nation's investment?

Perhaps the most significant statement that summarizes, at least, the dilemma of language was: "You will get 20 different answers to the business value proposition for career services." 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.

This question will still need further discussion, but the second most valuable comment from you that could get us working closer to define a value proposition was that for the business world where employment happens, "finding the right metrics around productivity and retention will make the case to employers for investing in career development". Then there was that age old comment; "employers need to understand that their investment in training reduces turnover, which reduces their costs; if a business is looking to grow then need to invest in the workforce."

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?

Though there may have been other examples, these were the significant one's captured. If you hear of other regional initiatives please let us know.

Innovate Burlington. A local community initiative providing graduates with high quality work experience to put their learning into practice as well as contacts. Graduates get experience helping local businesses with market research, business planning and communication strategy. Innovate Burlington is designed to help recent graduates gain experience and employment in their field of study.
<http://www.innovateburlington.ca>

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