



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

Summary Report – October 1, 2013

Regina, Saskatchewan

To All Participants:

Thank you for joining us on Oct.1 at the fourth in our series of Roundtable events to be presented by CERIC across Canada in 2013. We will continue on this Fall to Montreal, Vancouver & Moncton.

Our promise to you is to report back on the total dialogue from all cross-Canada events, to give you a perspective on how others see the solutions and share examples of regional collaborative innovations. As we build this content we will 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 Regina 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 from all the roundtables so far, there is more than one thing that needs changing. Distilling the notes from the Regina conversation, primarily the focus was on improving the disconnects for students as they journey from education to employment.

One puzzling question that emerges from viewing the comments is - with all the career development services and information available to students, how is it that so many still don't seem to be prepared or well coached for the work search process?

Secondarily there were clear signals to employers with regards to how they could better articulate their immediate needs, alongside the reality of long-term career possibilities, while giving clarity to their value proposition. Again looking at the Regina comments another question left open is - can the disconnects be better resolved by better communication and participation from businesses; collaborating all through the education system as it prepares people for this journey?

Here are some highlights from Regina's participants regarding students & education:

- Need for 1:1 coaching/counselling with students to expose them to different potential careers in the workforce while in high school; more customized support.
- Create tools for self-reflection in the school system so every student can say this is a sector I could see myself be passionate about; then they need to identify potential opportunities through real hands-on experience.
- Develop lateral opportunities for career growth; new grads/entrants to the workforce are ambitious and want to advance, but often in smaller enterprises there isn't the opportunity to move up.
- Teach interviewing and work search skills in the high schools; help students make connections with self/life situations.
- Give students more practical experience and career information; experiential learning; build career education into curriculum.

Turning to the employers and business:

- Industry / business needs to define what they need in terms of skills and make sure it's clearly articulated to the marketplace. Linking industry with education (what is needed; where is the opportunity).
- Need a better understanding between employees and employers around potential for advancement.
- Employers want to train for today not tomorrow (immediate vs. long term investment/pay off) and some are critical of universities preparing students for a job that doesn't exist.
- Some employers continue to rely on a credential for screening instead of competencies, but few employers are involved in what credential means in terms of curriculum development for a certificate or diploma. Need to encourage employers to better define competencies within their business context.
- Focus of employers should be keeping good people in the organization not necessarily in a "specific position." Help people make the best moves, facilitate their career progression as people tend to change jobs frequently (18-24 months not uncommon).
- In a market like Regina with 3.9% unemployment, employers who want skilled labour will need to develop it themselves; you won't be able to hire a journeyman painter; instead start with entry-level and develop your own journeyman. Some employers might balk about investing in these training costs and then having employees leave, but what are their other options?
- There is already a job match system out there, we just need to integrate and communicate better. Need more networking and partnerships between organizations and community service providers.

Point of interest. At the time of preparing this summary, there was a report issued by TD Bank (TD Economics) titled **Jobs in Canada: Where, What and For Whom?** This might add to the scope of your thinking on this issue. Here is the link <http://www.td.com/document/PDF/economics/special/JobsInCanada.pdf>

Not to neglect some other comments, here are some dedicated to areas of concern other than the student/education discussion:

- Provide a continuum of support for multi-barriered clients not just a short intervention, such as a life skills course. With most vulnerable - address need for basics: food, shelter before people look for work. Employment stats don't include those unemployed who are not looking for work, so can be misleading. There are systemic barriers from lack of a bus pass or phone or daycare, we need to stop band-aids and provide longer-term solutions; also need to address cultural barriers and provide essential life skills and work search skills.
- Large immigrant population coming into the province need info in a timely way to help them find their path quickly and they need support systems along the way.
- Need more opportunities for people to attain just the specific skills in demand; more short-term credit/accreditation options to meet pressing labour market needs.
- Do more to actively engage the Aboriginal market. Example, as a recruitment issue for the university; how can they convert students into employees? The university offers a huge range of opportunities but right now have 14% Aboriginal students but only 4% are employees.

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)

From all four roundtable groups so far - Burlington, Toronto, Calgary and Regina; 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, participants were asked to develop a value proposition statement for career development services for them.

Most of the responses were more directed at the value for the individual but there were a few responses that came closer to the value proposition of career development services for business and government:

- Employer: Every employee who leaves costs you. If a person can envision a future, they'll stay. People just want an opportunity for growth; they don't necessarily want to change jobs. Career development can help you retain employees.
- Message to employers who prefer a contingent workforce: You need to invest and fertilize.
- A talented, dedicated and motivated employee = priceless.
- Career development: necessary so people are prepared to move and be resilient.
- Career development: Giving people self-awareness allows them to compete for tomorrow (We need to speak the language of competition: We pigeonhole ourselves if we pigeonhole our people.)
- We have a resource economy, but we need a resourceful economy – you build an economy with people (a sophisticated economy needs to create career opportunities where people are at; people are the fuel that drives the bus).

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!

- **Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) & University of Regina** - Works with employers: work placements for all programs; University of Regina has co-ops in every faculty <http://gosiast.com/programs-and-courses/cooperative-education/index.aspx>
<http://gosiast.com/programs-and-courses/programs-by-category/basic-education/readiness-bridging.aspx> & <http://www.uregina.ca/careercentre/coop/>

- **Regina Work Prep Centre** - Brings in local HR professionals to teach students how to do interviews <http://www.workprep.ca/>
- **University of Regina U of R Guarantee** - If students don't secure career-related employment within six months of graduation, they are eligible to come back for another year of undergraduate classes free of charge. Very innovative, getting a lot of press <http://www.uregina.ca/urguarantee/>
- **Saskatoon Trade & Skills Centre & Radius Community Centre for Education and Employment Training** - Saskatoon Trades partners with Radius to teach its students essential skills and better prepare for interviews
<http://www.saskatoontradesandskills.ca/>
<http://www.radiuscentre.com/>
- **Saskatoon Industry Education Council & Regina District Industry Education Council** - Industry education councils are non-profits working with schools, Aboriginal councils, community-based organizations, government agencies and employers to provide career development and exploration opportunities for youth
<http://www.saskatooniec.ca/> & <http://rdiec.ca/>
- **Government of Saskatchewan Talent Teams** - integrated systems approach to economic development; ministries are part of conversations with investors (e.g. oil & gas) at the beginning. Called a "Talent Team", conversation may start about investment but shifts quickly to labour market challenges. Team brings together people from economic development, utilities, employment, apprenticeship, labour market planning and immigration. Government works with them accessing different pipelines for workers and training; can also develop customized programs
<http://www.gov.sk.ca/>
- **Saskatchewan Mining Association** - involved in the classroom as a means of promoting careers in mining in the province; looks at lesson plans, curriculum
<http://www.saskmining.ca>
- **Career Work Exploration (CWEX) - Prairie South School Division.** Resources for teachers, employers, students and parents on career exploration and school-to-work transitions
<http://www.prairiesouth.ca/staff/career-development/cwex-general.html>

- **PotashCorp & SIAST, Regina Trades & Skills Centre.** Potash has hired instructors from SIAST/Regina Trades & Skills to teach its staff on-site
<http://www.potashcorp.com>
<http://www.reginatradesandskills.ca>
www.gosiast.com
- **Workshift** - Calgary-based WORKshift, promotes flexible work programs, officially launched nationally in Sept. 2013; Ottawa and Halifax, two new cities to adopt and implement the initiative. WORKshift, a program with Calgary Economic Development since 2009, is dedicated to promoting, educating and accelerating a management strategy allowing employees to work where and when they are most effective <http://www.workshiftcanada.com/>
- **Can-Sask** - A branch of government providing career and employment programs to residents of Saskatchewan with 19 local offices. The staff provides career exploration; training information, job search or employment information. Also offers job coaching, support for those in receipt of EI <http://www.sasknetwork.ca/html/Home/cansask/programs.htm>
- **GradWorks Intern Development Program** - Provides recent post-secondary graduates with challenging and career-focused positions. Saskatchewan Crown Corporations host Gradworks Internships. These 12 month full-time internship positions allow recent post-secondary graduates the opportunity to gain experience and develop specific career-related skills. <http://www.gradworks.ca/>
- **Ignite Adult Learning Corporation** - Not-for-profit, community-based employer, uses a leading-edge, entrepreneurial approach to guide marginalized young adults away from negative behaviours, unemployment and financial dependency to become self-supporting and contributing members of society. <http://www.ignite.ca/index.php>