

The Skills Mismatch, Employers Finding Employees

By: Sandra Dueck, Policy Analyst, Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce

The blinding brightness of a very strong spotlight is exposing a transitional moment in the evolution of Ontario's workforce - the skills mismatch.

Describing the skills mismatch is a challenging exercise. Essentially, it's determined by an employer's ability to find the employees they require to complete the work of their business and to subsequently grow their business. And the ability for those in the workforce to apply their skills to the needs of employers.

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce recently released a report titled "Talent in Transition: Addressing the Skills Mismatch in Ontario". The report offers 10 recommendations to government on how to move the bar and create a workforce in Ontario that is firing on all cylinders.

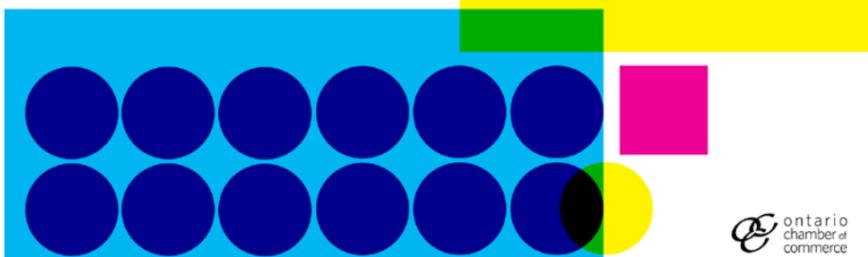
Broadly speaking, the report is based on discussions with a multi-faceted advisory group (of which the Peterborough Chamber of Commerce was one voice), consultations and breakout sessions at a half day forum, and policy resolutions from the Ontario Chamber Network that are currently part of the advocacy narrative for the provincial chamber.

The recommendations fall into three buckets:

1. Exploring the Potential of Experiential Learning

- Address the limited capacity of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to facilitate experiential

"Addressing the skills mismatch will strengthen our economy and provide meaningful career opportunities for all Ontarians."



- learning opportunities by leveraging existing networks
- Drive employer awareness of programs designed to support experiential learning opportunities in Ontario
- Leverage experiential learning opportunities to promote inclusive economic growth throughout the province

2. Developing A Systems-Based Approach to Training

- Shift towards greater client centricity
- Evaluate the potential of an outcomes-based employment and training systems funding model

3. Modernize the Apprenticeship Framework

- Revise the journeyman to apprentice ratio framework
- Enhance support for apprenticeship consortiums
- Modernize the apprenticeship application process
- Reform the Ontario College of Trades
- Promote career pathways in the skilled trades

Introducing younger generations to the world of work they will be

entering into after their schooling is critical. As such, it's positive to see the federal and provincial governments budgeting for such experiential opportunities. However, recognition of the various pathways to achieve the goal is needed, along with ensuring meaningful engagement. Businesses need to be able to integrate programs with ease and ensure that the experience is just as positive for the student as it is for the business.

The ultimate goal of reducing the skills mismatch is to improve the productivity of the workforce. The provincial government invests a significant amount of money through the Employment Ontario program to support people looking to improve their workforce position, so taking steps to ensure the results are client-centric and outcomes-based is a natural evolution for the training program system.

The bulk of the recommendations fall into the bucket of modernizing the apprenticeship framework. This group of industry sectors is at the core of the mismatch discussion. The need to push the boundaries of the current apprenticeship framework might challenge the current norms but is wholly

necessary. As quoted in the Ontario Chamber report, 40 percent of new jobs created in the next decade will be in the skilled trades but only 26 percent of young people are considering a career in these areas. That statistic alone should be impetus enough for us to start innovating in how we view jobs that are considered very traditional. Perhaps it's worth likening the need to transition at this juncture to moving from mainly human powered tools to motorized and electric versions to keep up with demand. Pathways need to be clearly marked and maintained so that the desired outcome of more people entering the trades and completing apprenticeships is achieved.

The upside of this entire discussion is that the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber Network are not speaking about this issue in a vacuum. The government and other groups have joined the dialogue. The challenge is to make sure that all discussions around talent and skills result in actions that lead to a more productive workforce and increased prosperity across Ontario.

Read the report: peterboroughchamber.ca/blog

Newly designed Immigration Portal launched for Peterborough

The new portal is described as "an all-inclusive web resource designed to attract and retain international students, immigrant entrepreneurs and newcomers to the Peterborough area. It showcases why Peterborough is a good place to live, study, work or invest. The website is a gateway to information newcomers and families need to settle in our community."

It is a joint initiative of the City of Peterborough and the New Canadians Centre and is funded by the Government of Ontario through



the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

The portal breaks down the entire process in six blocks: Why Peterborough, Before Arrival, Settling, Living, Working, Learning

It also includes success stories such as the Growing Belonging Project, offers visual maps of the area and

community services and showcases videos of those new to Peterborough talking about why Peterborough was their choice.

The portal also includes direct links about doing business in the area, municipal services, and information for international students.

More: welcomepeterborough.ca

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Local Community Leader Recognized

The Lawson Foundation Emerging Leaders Awards recognized Nicole Gagliardi of the Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough.



Emerging Leader Award Recipients Announced - The Lawson Foundation
Image via Facebook

Ptbo Humane Society @HSPeterborough · Jun 21
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Chamber member will be part of new Entrepreneur Program

Birchview Design has been selected as one of the local entrepreneurs to receive support from the Peterborough & the Kawarthas Business Advisory Centre's new Starter Company Plus program.

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