

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

Summary Report – October 29, 2013

Montreal, Quebec

To All Participants:

Thank you for joining us on Oct. 29 at the fifth in our series of Roundtable events to be presented by CERIC across Canada in 2013. Our final two locations in this series are in Vancouver & Moncton.

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

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

Thank you goes to our Montreal 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 Montreal conversation, once again the focus leaned mostly towards improving the disconnects for students within the education system, as they move into employment.

One comment that stood out from others was - perhaps the culture of career counselling should change. Instead of starting with the individual and their choices, turn it on its head and start with what the employment market needs. This might encourage more people to look at a wider range of options.

On the flip side – employers need to be more open-minded and willing to train instead of looking for too narrow and specific profile among hires; for those just graduating from post-secondary and for existing workers – and employers could be given further incentive through appropriate government programs.

Here are a few other highlights from some Montreal participants that further speak to inter-related issues regarding students, their "career development education" and the way parents, schools, employers and career services professionals set out expectations for career opportunities:

- All levels of the education system could invest more in career development education and integrate it into their curriculum. Before they graduate, students need to learn how to develop and leverage their soft skills and work search skills.
- Develop accelerated programs in post-secondary learning to make transitioning from one career to another feasible and examine what are the skills that are really required, including "business etiquette in the workplace."
- Educate parents on career realities Many younger people, unhappy in high school and university, feel pressured by parents into taking programs that they aren't interested in (e.g. this can be so, but not exclusively, among immigrant communities who may think of "my son the doctor, my daughter the actuary.")

- Infuse more interest into rural and skilled trades careers. Teachers and career counsellors continue to value or focus on white collar professions.
- Introduce entrepreneurship as an option starting in high schools and teach it differently. It doesn't have to be a big scary (more risky?) thing.
- Improve barriers to entry to fill talent gaps on two fronts:
 - provide more entry points into post-secondary education. We shut people out from further education (e.g. because they don't have high school math or science requirements prevent them from attending an X-ray technician program, why not give them another route that might take a year or two longer.)
 - advance the system to recognize educational degrees and professional accreditations for newcomers (e.g. professions like engineering or pharmacy that seem to be "protecting their own turf" and should be more engaged in addressing barriers to entry.)

To wrap up this question – if there was one thing you would change to make the work search & talent match system work better...? The persistent concern – (to improve the flow of relevant, current information and awareness about the rapidly changing labour market) – was repeated more than once in this Montreal session.

Perhaps this is an opportunity for parents, educators, career services professionals, industry leaders, professional associations and workers of all ages. Perhaps the very nature of global markets being in a perpetually fast rate of change will make this an ongoing challenge.

Point of interest. Prior to this Montreal session, 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>

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)

From all of our roundtable groups - Burlington, Toronto, Calgary, Regina and Montreal; the quick observation, about how this question was answered, is that there 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.

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

Most of the responses were more directed at the value for the individual but here are a few responses that came closest to the value proposition of career development services for business and government to see it as our nation’s investment.

- The R.O.I for Canada:

Collaborative Career Guidance + Talent = Productivity, Innovation and Prosperity

- Business: Career Development helps you attract and retain talent.
- Career Development maintains the competitiveness of our country through investment in the skills of its citizens: Careers that keep Canada competitive!
- To change public opinion around trades, let’s have bumper stickers that read instead of “Proud parent of a soldier, etc.” how about “Proud parent of an electrician.”

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!

- **Quebec Social Enterprise** – Quebec is a leader in social enterprises involving private sector and government partners. For example, a manufacturer in Val-D'or employs people with disabilities to produce mining equipment for international markets (Wikipedia defines a social enterprise as: "An organization that applies commercial strategies to maximize improvements in human and environmental well-being, rather than maximizing profits for external shareholders.")
- **CEIM Centre d'entreprises et d'innovation de Montreal** – Offers customized management consulting and related services for the creation and development of companies in information technology, new media, clean and industrial technology and life sciences <http://www.ceim.org/index.aspx?Lang=EN-CA>
- **Women in Technology** – Partners include Youth Employment Services (YES) Montreal and Status of Women Canada, engaged in looking at ways to create careers and self-employment for women in the technology sector in Quebec
<http://www.yesmontreal.ca/yes.php?section=entrepreneurship/library/954>
http://www.yesmontreal.ca/yes.php?section=job_search/library/955
- **YES Internship Program + HRSDC (Career Focus/Youth Employment Strategy)** – Internship program (up to 26 weeks) for interns to gain valuable work experience in their field of study and to assist young English-speaking Quebecers' integration into the workforce. Employers received a wage subsidy
<http://www.yesmontreal.ca/yes.php?>
- **Alternative High Schools** – Involves school boards, parents, Ministry of Education. An alternative school establishes its own educational vision while still incorporating all the educational objectives set out by the government. Particularly useful with at-risk youth, teaching them job skills
http://www.emsb.qc.ca/emsb_en/index_en.asp and <http://www.repaq.qc.ca/>

- **Premiertech** – A leader in the horticultural, packaging and water treatment industries in Rivière-du-Loup (Québec,) the company has skills development partnerships with local schools <http://www.premiertech.com/global/en/>
- **Street Suds** – St-James Drop-in Centre developed a laundry social enterprise, StreetSuds, to assist marginalized and formerly homeless individuals in Montreal. Beyond offering a professional and high quality laundry service, StreetSuds operates as an employment transition program for formerly homeless individuals and those at-risk of homelessness who are looking to re-enter the workforce <http://www.labuanderue.org/>
- **The Art of Interaction** – October 8-10, 2013 in Montreal, a three-day gathering - workshops on participatory leadership, part of an international community of practice focused on engaging groups of people in action for the common good, particularly in complex situations <http://www.aohmontreal.org/en/>
- **Agence Ometz, Emploi Quebec** - Partners on a Personal Support Workers for Seniors program, specializing in dementia. Provides theory, practical experience and coaching for how to start your own personal support worker business <http://www.ometz.ca/training+and+workshops/>
- **JVS, McGill Department of Social Work + Quebec Government** – Co-developed an education program (6 to 8 weeks) for people who had difficulty maintaining a job, including a work placement with a subsidy to participating employers <http://www.mcgill.ca/socialwork/>
- **Local Community Service Centres (CLSC)** - CLSCs are an integral part of the health and social service centres (CSSS's), providing health and social services on site, in schools, at work or home <http://www.santemontreal.qc.ca/en/where-to-go/local-community-services-centres-clscs/>
- **Community Learning Centres** – Funded by the Quebec Ministry of Education, these are partnerships that provide a range of services and activities within schools, often beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of learners, their families and the wider community & to support holistic development of citizens and communities <http://www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/clc>