



## Skills and Productivity Forum

# Skills and Productivity Action Plan for Canada



# Lead! Inspire! Drive Change!

## Take Action to Maximize Skills and Boost Productivity

### Challenges and Opportunities

With increasing competition for skilled workers, Canadian organizations have to find new ways to maximize skills and boost productivity to promote their brand and deliver value to their customers. Strategic investments in machinery and equipment, in information and communications technologies, and in the skills of managers and employees alike will be critical to the competitiveness and growth of Canadian firms.

### Skills and Productivity Action Plan for Canada

This *Skills and Productivity Action Plan* is a framework for **discussion** about the skills and productivity challenges and opportunities facing Canadian organizations. The Conference Board of Canada hopes that the *Action Plan* will help **raise awareness** of the role everyone has to play in helping Canadian organizations compete and grow, and **inspire all stakeholders**—from employers, workers, and job seekers to cities and communities, educators, parents, and government—**to take action** to ensure a prosperous future for Canada.

The *Action Plan* offers advice on what you can do to:

- increase the supply of workers available
- improve the quality of their skills
- better facilitate the flow of skilled workers into the labour force
- increase the productivity of people in the workplace

See also the *Skills and Productivity Action Plan Worksheets*: use them to set goals, identify action steps, and implement plans to maximize skills and boost productivity.

Use the tools and advice provided in the *Skills and Productivity Action Plan* to maximize your approach to building workplace skills and boosting productivity. The *Action Plan* will help you discover what's working and what's not—whether on a personal or an organizational level. It allows you to: identify problems that are holding you back; clarify how to solve them; and learn new ideas for action—whether on your own, or in partnership with communities, educators, parents, and government.

### How to Get Started

1. Review the *Action Plan* (available online at [www.conferenceboard.ca/networks/skpf](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/networks/skpf)).
  - use the following pages to identify: **Potential Problems** > **Potential Solutions** and > **Ideas for Action**
2. Make your personal or organizational action plan using the *Action Plan Worksheets* (available online at [www.conferenceboard.ca/networks/skpf](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/networks/skpf)).
3. Share the plan with The Conference Board of Canada to be eligible for:
  - entry into a national awards program,
  - the use of the *Action Plan* logo on your e-mails and corporate stationery, and/or
  - a chance to be featured in a Conference Board best practice case study.

**Your story, no matter how small or large, will help to inspire others to act!**



# 1

## Advice for Action 1: Increase the **supply** of skilled workers available

To keep up with the demand for quality goods and services, employers look for workers with the right skill sets. Balancing labour supply and demand with skills needs in a competitive global market is our challenge.

### Potential Problems

- > Skills and labour shortages/mismatches
- > Shortage of workers in skilled trades
- > Inefficient selection, recruitment, settlement, and integration of skilled immigrants
- > Underused skills of mature workers, women, disabled persons, and Aboriginal people

### Potential Solutions

- Identify skills needed
- Share information between businesses and educators
- Engage students in hands-on learning
- Encourage positive views of skilled trades
- Increase participation in apprenticeship training
- Hire and integrate skilled immigrants
- Improve credential and experience recognition systems
- Raise immigrants' language skills in English or French to "job standard"

### Ideas for Action...

#### For Employers

- Develop workers' skills to match job needs
- Share talent and training opportunities by partnering with other firms
- Tap into educational institutions' career and placement services
- Fill demand for skilled tradespersons through apprenticeship programs
- Offer mentoring, internships, and work experiences to current and potential workers
- Develop and use succession plans

#### For Workers/Job Seekers

- Talk with your manager or counsellor about what motivates and engages you
- Invest in your future by building your skills
- Take part in co-op, internship, apprenticeship, or other work-based learning programs

#### For Governments/Communities/ Unions/Parents

- Make labour market information more accessible
- Provide incentives for hiring and integrating immigrants, mature workers, women, disabled persons, and Aboriginal people
- Bring business, education, and government together to network and share best practices
- Help employers see the immediate, tangible benefits of improving workplace skills
- Recognize and celebrate successful community-based business-education partnerships



# 2

## Advice For Action 2: Improve the **quality** of workers' skills

To produce quality goods and services, workers need to have quality skills. They need the right skills to be able to perform their jobs well.

### Potential Problems

- > Under-investment in skills
- > Low-skilled labour pool
- > Lack of time or resources for training
- > Individual barriers to taking part in learning opportunities

### Potential Solutions

- Increase employer commitment to workplace learning
- Make the business case for the return on training investment
- Develop employability and essential skills as a base for more advanced training
- Promote the benefits of lifelong learning

### Ideas for Action...

#### For Employers

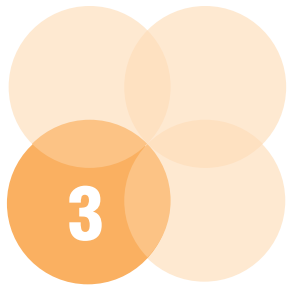
- Link training to business needs
- Develop employability skills and innovation skills
- Seek feedback on training from workers, supervisors, and others
- Treat skills development as an investment, not a cost
- Track productivity gains and other benefits of training
- Promote from within, based on performance
- Find training support expertise from educational institutions, private trainers, sector councils, and others
- Use joint labour–management committees to ensure worker buy-in to training

#### For Workers/Job Seekers

- Take responsibility for your role at work
- Take advantage of learning opportunities
- Keep your skills current

#### For Governments/Communities/ Unions/Parents

- Provide incentives for employers to send workers into trades programs
- Bring business, education, and government together to network and share best practices
- Help employers see the immediate, tangible benefits of improving workplace skills
- Recognize and celebrate successful community-based business–education partnerships



## Advice For Action 3:

# Better facilitate the **flow** of skilled workers into and within the labour force

Improving the way in which skilled workers move into and within the labour force will ease pressure on labour and skills shortages. Labour market mobility is a key factor in firms' abilities to solve their skills and productivity issues.

### Potential Problems

- > Barriers to domestic labour mobility
- > Access to timely, relevant labour market information
- > Foreign credential recognition
- > Local labour shortages
- > School-to-work transitions
- > Integration of immigrants, disabled persons, and Aboriginal people

### Potential Solutions

- Reduce labour mobility barriers between provinces for qualified individuals
- Speed up assessment and recognition of immigrants' credentials
- Promote Canada as a destination of choice for skilled immigrants
- Improve access to labour market information in all sectors

### Ideas for Action...

#### For Employers

- Improve recertification and credentialing processes
- Recognize immigrants' education, skills, and experience
- Promote from within, based on performance
- Create workplace cultures that attract, engage, and retain workers
- Value the training, learning, and development of all workers
- Increase student participation in work experience opportunities

#### For Workers/Job Seekers

- Take part in co-op, internship, apprenticeship, or other work-based learning programs
- Seek out learning and skills development opportunities

#### For Governments/Communities/Unions/Parents

- Support social integration of immigrants into communities
- Develop sector-based career exploration materials
- Bring business, education, and government together to network and share best practices
- Provide incentives for hiring and integrating immigrants, mature workers, women, disabled persons, and Aboriginal people
- Help employers see the immediate, tangible benefits of taking action alone or with partners
- Recognize and celebrate successful community-based business-education partnerships



## Advice For Action 4:

# Increase the **productivity** of people in the workplace

Improving the working environment will boost the productivity of people in the workplace. Efficient and effective work processes and investments are needed to support a productive workplace.

### Potential Problems

- > Under-performance in research and development, innovation, and commercialization
- > Outdated machinery and equipment, and information and communications technologies
- > Crumbling city infrastructure
- > Inadequate rural and remote area infrastructures
- > Regulatory red tape
- > Workplace safety
- > Knowledge transfer between generations of workers

### Potential Solutions

- Find ways to partner with other stakeholders
- Move from a manufacturing- to a knowledge-based economy
- Invest in machinery, equipment, and information technology upgrades
- Keep physical infrastructure up-to-date
- Streamline regulations
- Maintain safe, healthy workplaces

### Ideas for Action...

#### For Employers

- Empower managers, supervisors, shift leaders, and individual workers
- Plan to market research and development as a part of business strategy
- Create workplace cultures that attract, engage, and retain workers
- Develop workers' skills to leverage investments in machinery, equipment, and ICTs
- Refresh employees' essential skills as a base for safety and other training
- Involve mature workers as mentors to ensure knowledge transfer

#### For Workers/Job Seekers

- Understand your role in providing value
- Contribute to continuous improvement efforts at work

#### For Governments/Communities/ Unions/Parents

- Use tax reforms to stimulate commercialization of innovation
- Develop infrastructures that contribute to economic growth
- Bring business, education, and government together to network and share best practices
- Help employers see the immediate, tangible benefits of taking action alone or with partners
- Recognize and celebrate successful community-based business–education partnerships

# The Skills and Productivity Forum

Members of the Skills and Productivity Forum whose contributions and input have helped to make the Action Plan possible:

- Alberta Finance and Enterprise
- British Columbia Ministry of Economic Development
- British Columbia Ministry of Housing and Social Development
- Business Development Bank of Canada
- City of Toronto
- Correctional Services of Canada
- Human Resources and Social Development Canada
- The Home Depot Canada
- Manitoba Competitiveness, Training and Trade
- Nova Scotia Community College
- Ontario Centres of Excellence
- Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
- Ontario Ministry of Education
- Saskatchewan Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour
- Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning
- Toronto District School Board
- Wal-Mart Canada

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