

SKILLED TRADES PROJECT REPORT 2020



Prepared January 26, 2020 by Dr. Cameron Montgomery



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1. CONTEXT & OVERVIEW

In late 2019 and early 2020, The Labour Market Group of Renfrew & Lanark embarked on a research project to capture the current state of skilled trades in Renfrew and Lanark Counties. Data was collected through a series of information gathering measures, including online surveys, one-on-one interviews, and group consultations.

This on-the-ground approach is particularly crucial in the many rural communities that make up our region, where 98% of employers are small businesses with less than 9 employees. Our unique low-density demographic context makes it necessary to gather more qualitative feedback to put the data into context. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Employment and Training, Workforce Policy and Innovation Division is seeking “community-focused perspectives” (“Analysis of In-Demand Skilled Trades Deliverable”, MTCU 2020). They are giving us an opportunity to share our own stories in Renfrew and Lanark Counties since “much of the published evidence is provincial and national in scope” and the rural perspective can remain uncaptured in the larger statistical scale (Analysis 2020).

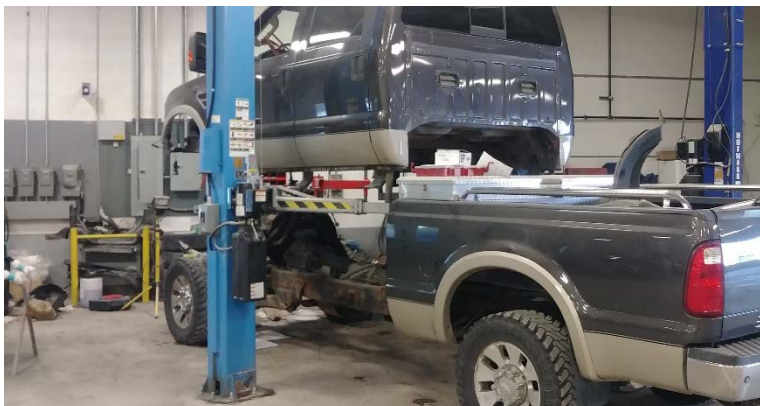
The government has identified that modernizing the apprenticeship and skilled trades system is a key component to support a strong future economy. Building off insights and knowledge of local labour markets gained through previous activities, including information gathered through surveys and focus groups with local employers on occupational and sector needs, Local Employment Planning Councils and Local Boards are being asked to undertake a project in 2019-20 in relation to the skilled trades to support local workforce planning in Ontario.

David Carter-Whitney, Assistant Deputy Minister, Employment and Training Division, May 2019

The Labour Market Group of Renfrew & Lanark presents this report in response to the Assistant Deputy Minister’s call to “help Ontarians improve their skills, find work and succeed in their path to rewarding employment, and[...] supporting local workforce planning in Ontario’s communities.”

Who is the Labour Market Group of Renfrew & Lanark?

The Labour Market Group of Renfrew and Lanark Counties represents one of 26 workforce planning areas in the province of Ontario. Funded by the MTCU, the group works to provide accurate and timely labour market information to employers, job seekers and organizations that use labour market data for strategic planning purposes. The group provides annual labour market reports that outline trends in the local labour force using statistical data from several sources, as well an intelligence gathered from local employers and employment agencies.



2. METHODOLOGY

Information was gathered through a series of modalities, including online surveys, one-on-one interviews, and group consultations. Larger employers, such as manufacturers, were more likely to respond to surveys, and small employers (the vast majority of respondents) were more likely to respond to in-person interviews. 69 surveys were analyzed, as well as feedback from employers and employment service providers at two group consultations held in Pembroke and Perth, the administrative centres of Renfrew and Lanark Counties. (See **Appendix A** for report by Erik Lockheart). Over 50 one-on-one interviews were conducted with skilled trades employers in small businesses across Renfrew and Lanark Counties, delivering a wealth of qualitative feedback.

Online Survey

Emails were sent out to employers across our region inviting them to provide their feedback on the current state of skilled trades and apprenticeship in an online survey.

Figure 2.1: Promotional Video

Matthew LeMay of the Labour Market Group of Renfrew & Lanark created a short video to promote the participation of employers in the skilled trades research project.



In Demand Skilled Trades Survey LMG Renfrew and Lanark, Matthew LeMay, 2020. Link to video: <https://youtu.be/I7QL3I4MobA>

Figure 2.2: Email to Employers

Algonquin College is conducting a survey regarding the shortage of skilled trades workers in Renfrew and Lanark. We ask that you fill out this short survey to help. This information is used to promote trades careers and to educate youth and job seekers about opportunities in the skilled trades within our region.

OPERATING IN RENFREW COUNTY - [SURVEY LINK](#)

OPERATING IN LANARK COUNTY - [SURVEY LINK](#)

Email sent out to employers in Renfrew and Lanark Counties, October 2019.

Figure 2.3: Survey Questions

IN-DEMAND SKILLS TRADES SURVEY

1. Please describe what you see as the most important issues that are expected to impact the skilled trades in your community over the next five years?
2. How is technological change impacting the skilled trades in your organization?
3. What skilled trade positions (a. journeypersons and b. apprenticeship) are hardest for your organization to fill and why?
4. What methods have your organization used to fill those positions?
5. What needs to be done (by a. employers and b. the Ontario government) to increase the number of apprentices and journeypersons in in-demand trades?
6. Has your organization sponsored or is currently sponsoring an apprentice?
7. Has your organization participated or considered participating in group sponsorship training, whereby two or more employers form a group to sponsor apprenticeship training?
Yes
No
8. If yes, how important is this approach to addressing your organization's skills requirements?
9. If no, what support or assistance would your organization need to make group sponsorship training of apprentices a worthwhile option?
10. What has been your organization's experiences with respect to apprentices dropping out of their apprenticeship training?
11. In your experience, what are some of the reasons that apprentices leave their apprenticeship, and are there things the Ontario government could do to help

them complete?

12. How well has apprenticeship worked as a way of addressing your organization's skills requirements?

13. What barriers, if any, does your organization face related to apprenticeship?

14. What changes could the Ontario government make to the apprenticeship program to better respond to the needs of employers?

15. Do you have any further comments with respect to apprenticeship and/or the skilled trades?

Powered by SurveyMonkey

Online survey sent out to employers in Renfrew and Lanark Counties, October 2019.

One-On-One Interviews

Over 50 one-on-one interviews were conducted with employers across our region, in the communities of Perth, Pembroke, Deep River, Stonecliffe, Killaloe, Barry's Bay, Wilno, Pakenham, Petawawa, Renfrew, Eganville, Calabogie and Golden Lake. Meetings took place most often within the workshop of the small business, and sometimes at local cafés, the library, or the business owner's home. The interviews began by following the online survey questions and progressed organically into conversations with the employers. Breaking from the survey narrative was essential because the experience of the employers with the apprenticeship program varied and many employers did not know what the "group sponsorship" referred to. A great deal of useful qualitative data was collected through our interviews. We found that the survey questions did not really suit the rural context in which most of our employers do business.

Group Consultations

Group consultations were conducted with employers and employment-service providers in Pembroke and Perth, the administration centres of Renfrew County and Lanark Counties. Consultant Erik Lockheart was engaged to facilitate the group consultations. Please see **Appendix A** for his findings.

3. EMERGING THEMES

Several major themes emerged in the findings of this research project. The quotes provided represent a sample of the total conversations with local skilled trades employers. These quotes were selected because they represent common threads among the responses of our contributors.

Technology

The first MTCU-directed question was about technology, so we received a great deal of feedback on this theme, with many similar responses.

Highlights

“[With tool upgrades] I can now do this work in my old age.”

“Online shopping has taken a huge toll on our business.”

“Older employees do not want to learn new technologies. Younger employees want more digitization.”

“The trade [mechanic] is getting more and more complicated and computer-oriented. The [local] college dropped the mechanic program so now everyone is going to Ottawa for training... and not coming home.”

Certification

Certification was talked about often. Employers gave us insight as to why they did or did not encourage or pursue certification in their shops.

Highlights

“Certification is a ‘nice-to-have’ not a ‘need-to-have’.”

“No one can afford to go to Kitchener for 2 months [for certification]. If it were in Pembroke [nearest city] a few nights a week everyone would do it.”

“We don’t send our staff to get certified. There is no way to convince them, and there is no incentive. It costs a lot of money, no pay raise after completing it, and once they’re certified we might lose them to a better paying job in the city or out west. No point really.”

“In our shop we see our trade as an art form. We focus more on creative skills than on certifications.”

“In school they teach them to use a computer, they’ve never played with hand tools. What’s the point of that? Students should spend time in a small shop. We don’t use a CNC [automated computer system] here.”

Apprenticeships

Feedback about apprenticeships depended largely on the particular trade and whether or not the employer had engaged the formal apprenticeship system.

“There is no short-term housing to ‘test out’ a rural community, so outsiders don’t want to take the risk on a small community.”

“We are not eligible for apprentices because we do not have a certified mentor on staff.”

“We don’t take apprentices because we are a small business and I can’t handle more responsibilities.”

“Working with apprentices like A.J. gives my work meaning. I love the enthusiasm young folks bring to the shop. They ask a lot of questions and soak up knowledge like a sponge.”

“It’d be nice if we got tax credits for training them again. It was the best incentive. We compete with large companies like Canadian Nuclear Laboratories who won’t take apprentices; we pay for the

training then they are gone for better wages elsewhere. It isn't fair. The tax credit format made us feel better about it, it was what helped us the most.”

On group apprenticeship: “We can't have every one of the electricians in a training position, the journeyperson gets frustrated training all the time. Adding more apprentices than 1-1 is not going to work. Proper training is important.”

Co-op Students

As many of the shops we consulted in one-on-one interviews had little to no experience with the formal apprenticeship system, we discovered that they relied heavily on the high school co-op system to perform a similar economic function in their business.

“We don't qualify for apprenticeships but we take a lot of high school co-op students.”

“We can only have one apprentice [due to only one certified mentor] but we have lots of co-op students... it's more flexible.”

“The high school calls us regularly and offers us co-op students. We usually end up hiring the students for the summer.”

“I don't understand why high schools are closing trades programs. If 1/5 jobs is a skilled trade, 1/5 courses in high school should be trades-oriented.”

“We hire all the co-op students we get after their placement.”

Workforce

Most of our interviewees, with some notable exceptions, were men close to retirement age. Many shared a similar outlook on ‘young workers’. Over 90% of interviewees identified the attitudes and workplace culture of young workers as one of the greatest problems facing the skilled trades today. These older employers and workers interviewed were asked about the short-term (5 years) future trends of the skilled trades, and conversation often turned to the long-term outlook as well, which, for business owners facing retirement, brought up the discussion of succession planning.

Highlights

“Young people confuse us. They are not motivated by money.”

“The only employees that are good are farm boys who've had their butts whooped by their parents. Nobody else is willing to work outside.”

“It's so fun to work here, I bet they'd work for free. Plus they love our initiatives like our recycling program.”

The new generation can't handle jokes about women, minorities, etc. They don't fit the culture of our shop.”

“Young people do not want to be on call. [Plumbing, drywall, repair emergencies.] They want fixed hours.”

“We train them and then lose them to AECL [Canadian Nuclear Laboratories] or bigger companies who can give them benefits.”

“With Grade 13 gone, the apprentices seem much younger. They don't have the life skills, they are dependent on their parents more.”

Succession Planning

“I hope to sell my business when I retire... not sure to who or how”

“Die in the harness”

My son wants to take the company in a new direction [target a more modest client, not luxury renovations]. I don't agree and he lost interest in the business and works for someone else now. We don't really talk anymore.”

“It’s a small family business... we don’t plan to grow it and our kids are not interested. We’ll just close up shop and retire.”

“The scale of growth in this trade is 5 guys to 25 guys... I can’t do that.”

“The boss’s son and son-in-law went through the apprenticeship process and are planning to take over the business.” [Among many struggling, this business had no trouble finding employees.]

“Our goal is to get bought out by a larger company.”

4. CONCLUSIONS

Several common threads among survey respondents and one-on-one interviews with employers from across the rural region of Renfrew and Lanark Counties indicate that rural solutions are necessary to solve rural problems. The unique demographic of aging communities, remote and rural conditions including lack of access to services and transportation, heavily impact the future of skilled trades locally. Employers overwhelmingly advocated that youth need to have opportunities to access skilled trades experiences early on.

Solutions

Some of the local employers themselves proposed solutions to the problems they currently face in the skilled trades.

Highlights

“[Financially] incentivize staying with a company in a rural community for 5 years after apprenticeship is over.”

“Hands-on local Trades Camp instead of 2 months in Southern Ontario, taking youth out of our communities.”

“College programs are teaching young tradespeople to rely on a computer. They graduate from school without the experience of cutting with a hand saw. We use all hand tools in this shop.”

“It’s almost impossible to get started in this industry with the cost of tools, space and insurance [things tradespeople approaching retirement have]. New tradespeople have the strength and enthusiasm... we need to bridge the gap.”

“Co-op structure where all the workers have a share in the company might make a small shop in a rural community more attractive to young tradespeople.”

“Wages need to reflect the skills more... In 1990, a starting salary was \$30/hr; today it’s less. Buddies my age [50’s] working for Hydro make \$55 000 a year now. It isn’t fair... [in the lumber mill industry] we can’t compete.”

“Aging tradespeople should be given incentives to create succession plans, and opportunities to pass on their valuable knowledge with or without the certification required for apprenticeships.”

Why?

Many retirement-approaching employers and tradespeople wanted to talk about the reasons why they chose the trades for their lifelong career, and why the gap between the desires of the current young labour force and the demands of our communities needs to be bridged within our training and apprenticeship system.

Highlights

“I was very inspired by mentors I had when I was younger who got me interested in building things.”

“I’ve had great fulfilment in my 37 year career so far. It’s sad to see that young people are not interested in it.”

“Creative. Hands-on.”

“I had enough of the city, I wanted to build a life out here in this beautiful wilderness. I love what I do.”

APPENDIX A: Group Consultation Forums with Erik Lockhart



IN DEMAND SKILLED TRADES

FORUM HIGHLIGHTS
DECEMBER 3-5, 2019
LANARK COUNTY
RENFREW COUNTY
REVISION 0

Participants:
See participant list
In Association with:
The Labour Market Group
Lockhart Facilitation and the
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Executive Summary

This document contains proceedings from forums held on December 3 and 5, 2019. The purpose of the forums was to discuss participant experiences and challenges in finding skilled trades workers. Each group was asked the following questions:

1. What are the most important **issues** that are expected to impact the skilled trades **in your community** over the next five years?
2. What needs to be done (by a. employers and b. the Ontario government) to **increase the number of apprentices and journeypersons** in in-demand trades?
3. What impact does **the in-school component** have on your company?
4. What **barriers and challenges**, if any, does your organization face related to **apprenticeship**?
5. What advice can you give the **Ontario Government about the apprenticeship system**?
6. How can our **community support you** as a skilled trades employer?
7. What is your experience hiring newcomers/older workers/women?

Below are the highlights.

Lanark County



Key issues and challenges

1. Huge stigma still around trades
2. The block training is a turn-off.
3. Transportation in rural area
4. Awareness & education re: wage opportunities
5. Lack housing availability
6. Fewer young people locating / staying in Lanark County (lifestyle, etc.)

How to increase # of apprentices and journeypersons?

1. More trades programs in high schools
2. Increase financial incentives offered to er's either enhanced taxed credits
3. Build awareness among high school guidance counsellors about trades
4. Dealing with governing body - very difficult to navigate, constant change
5. the ratio of 1-1 becomes a barrier


Barriers related to apprenticeship?

1. Er's don't want the hassle of bringing on an apprentice
2. Ratios for apprentices to licensed.
3. Hard to attract (lot of negativity associated). -> Lack interest/awareness of younger gens
4. Apprenticeship office does not return calls promptly and people quit or give up.
5. Location of schooling

How can our community support you as a skilled trades employer?

1. College to provide a broader range of educational opportunities/training for
2. Promote skilled trades career as 1st choice
3. High Schools need to put more of a focus and excitement in skilled trades.
4. Develop a stronger mentoring system
5. Educate the influencers - parents

Renfrew County



Key issues and challenges

1. K-12 children told university is only route to success
2. Lack of local training
3. Hard to only develop new apprentices, need skilled workers now too
4. Inequality amongst employers: large govt operations poach our ees away
5. Age of tradespeople, retirements
6. Lack of transportation

How to increase # of apprentices and journeypersons?

1. Improve exposure in k-12
2. Govt incentives, grants for ers
3. Streamline entire process, red tape
4. Er's must be incentivized & trained to build apprentices in their plans & ops
5. Build awareness among high school guidance counsellors about trades

Barriers related to apprenticeship?

1. Costs to training an apprentice: time,
2. Startup costs: subsidies, loans for tools.
3. Unemployment insurance is not enough for apprentices while away,
4. Small business is a stepping stone for the learning process: lose talent to big orgs
5. \$\$ incentives to recruit people into trades

How can our community support you as a skilled trades employer?

1. Transportation to a rural industrial site
2. create an info package targeting trades (employees) to entice them to move here
3. High Schools need to put more of a focus into the idea of pursuing a skilled trade.
4. Promote skilled trades career as 1st choice
5. More investment at council/municipal level
6. Invest in student training - Pay for tuition costs in return for talent returning to the community for a duration of time

Editor's Notes:

- a. The symbol // or ... indicates that two similar ideas have been merged together.
- b. This document contains the meeting proceedings and is not intended as a "Final Report"

1.0 – Lanark County (n = 12)

1.1 – Issues and challenges in our region

Item	What are the SEVEN most important	Average	#votes/12
4	Huge stigma still around trades -> Educate parents about trades ..All the myths that go with skilled trades! ..The stature of being a trades person is not high - my parents wanted me to go to university.	0.90	9
16	The block training is a turn-off. in-school component with time commitment required e.g. day release is very expensive and opportunity cost, EI kicks in too slowly	0.80	8
1	Transportation in rural area - not easy/cheap to get around	0.60	6
3	educate with wage opportunities -> Unrealistic Income expectations at the outset especially for smaller employersr	0.60	6
2	housing availability for people coming here	0.50	5
6	Fewer young people locating / staying in Lanark County (lifestyle, amenities, opportunities in bigger urban areas)	0.50	5
11	The apprenticeship process is messy. -> Lack of understanding of apprenticeship and entry process	0.40	4
15	ratios	0.40	4
5	Exodus of retiring trades people	0.30	3
8	Lack of training opportunities and programming to inspire and/or train individuals.	0.30	3
20	Widely understood definition of all the training opportunities (huge range) ... Lack of advertising from the government to effectively promote and attract people to career opportunity skilled trades offer.	0.30	3
7	Pay and stability - seasonal, job by job, temporary, no guaranteed tenure	0.20	2
17	Trades is deceptive for the amount of smarts you need - it is heavy on math, communication and organization. I wasn't great in school but my guidance counsellor said I should get a trade.	0.20	2
19	The governing body is dysfunctional.	0.20	2
9	Apprentices staying with the employer after finished apprenticeship (they leave for higher \$\$!)	0.10	1

10	Social issues - why should I work in a job that is hazardous with no benefits building \$500K homes that I will never be able to afford?	0.10	1
13	Not all employers want to train in apprenticeship. They prefer to have a willing body to be trained internally.	0.10	1
12	lack of training for technicians - lots of complicated equipment, machinery that is expensive, difficult to maintain so cant find anyone to do this	0.00	0
14	Trades is dirty and full of the lowest common denominator.	0.00	0
18	Lack of financing for business start up	0.00	0

1.2 – Ways to increase # of apprentices and journeypersons

Item	What are the five most important	Average	#votes/12
1	More trades programs in high schools. More relevant training younger. Kids need to be exposed to the trades to see that it's an option. We need OSAP for tools and startup costs in the trades, not just university.	1.00	12
2	Government needs to increase the financial incentives offered to employers either enhanced taxed credits or more substantial signing bonuses etc.	0.83	10
9	Build awareness among high school guidance counsellors about trades	0.67	8
3	Dealing with the governing body - very difficult to navigate, continuously changes, finding relevant info is painful ..	0.58	7
10	the ratio of 1-1 becomes a barrier	0.58	7
4	More face to face contact with dedicated apprenticeship position in Ministry (remember old Dave!!)	0.50	6
6	Employers need to switch their thinking to embrace the millennial mind-set. They need to also have more realistic work plans. Employers need to offer even a basic benefit package. Employers also need to make an assessment quicker about whether or not they will be offering an apprenticeship to their new hire or staff person...before they lose them.	0.25	3
7	Provide for more nimble process for training.	0.17	2
8	Carpentry schooling too long, clients can't afford the expense, ei doesn't kick in soon enough, employers can't afford to lose the employer for that length of time	0.17	2
5	Apprenticeship mentorship should be more flexible. Very few small shops have certified mentors.	0.08	1

Ideas merged before voting:

(1) More trades programs in high schools. More relevant training younger. Kids need to be exposed to the trades to see that it's an option. We need OSAP for tools and startup costs in the trades, not just university.

(1.1) Improve teaching & exposure of trades in k-12 .. bring back shop /hands on training back

(2) Government needs to increase the financial incentives offered to employers either enhanced taxed credits or more substantial signing bonuses etc.

(2.1) Funding, incentives and grants for employers to bring on apprentices

(3) Dealing with the governing body - very difficult to navigate, continuously changes, finding relevant info is painful ..

(3.1) Sharing current relevant information with clients - program keeps changing

1.3 – Impact of in-school component on your organization

What impact does the in-school component have on your company?

Note: these are not ranked

- 1) Too long to have a person away, especially with a small business. ... Company loses income when apprentice is in school.
- 2) In school portion is not offered locally. Expensive for apprentices to afford.
- 3) We are locked out of the apprenticeship system because we don't have the certified mentors.
- 4) Colleges are training students to use computers - CNC - but no small shops use them. They are training students to leave our area.
- 5) In-house training is more relevant to our needs as a small shop.
- 6) Hard to get into block training, sometimes have to wait many times. Loss of wages, EI doesn't always kick in soon enough. Employers are down staff during busy periods.
- 7) Block training is bad timing for many businesses. ..Employers find that the timing of the block training always comes during their peak times.
- 8) The schooling is too far and too costly. ..Construction block schooling too long. Clients can,
- 9) It's a total inconvenience for the flow of business.

1.4 – Barriers related to apprenticeship

Item	What are the FIVE most important	Average	#votes/11
8	Employers don't want the hassle of bringing on an apprentice or don't have the staff for ratios. The whole process of signing, etc. is overwhelming/or a pain for employers. Employers want to see if the person is a good fit before signing and committing.	0.82	9
1	Ratios for apprentices to licensed.	0.55	6
6	Hard to attract (lot of negativity associated). -> Lack interest/awareness of younger gens in doing apprenticeship	0.55	6
11	Apprenticeship office does not return calls promptly and potentials apprentices quit or give up.	0.55	6
4	Location of schooling - most are not close enough for apprentice to attend day release.	0.45	5
7	Cost - If customer expectation is 1 person to complete the job we sometimes send 2 in order to fulfill the training requirement of apprenticeship program. The cost of the apprentice is paid by the company, not the customer.	0.45	5
3	Transportation difficult, expensive, x large region	0.36	4
10	Apprenticeship program is not flexible enough to serve our needs. (No certified mentors, students don't have experience using hand tools)	0.36	4
5	Scheduling: Training takes time and slows the jobs down which affect scheduling and customer expectations. ..Scheduling issue when they are away 1 day per week.	0.27	3
2	Don't need formal apprentices - sub out work like drywall, insulation... Need micro-credential?	0.18	2
9	The paperwork associated.	0.00	0

1.5 – Advice to the Government about the apprenticeship system

What advice can you give the Ontario Government about the apprenticeship system?

Note: these are not ranked

- 1) Subsidize/\$ support for students in start up costs, tools etc.
 - 1.1) The incentives, such as the cheap \$400 loan for tools, is terrible! Make it attractive. COJG offers up to \$15,000 to train a new hire. The apprenticeship program offers nothing.
- 2) make the admin process simpler for employers and apprentices - whole process for signing on, navigating the jungle
 - 2.1) Paperwork is difficult... make it more streamlined and accessible.
- 3) PROMOTE it BETTER to everyone!!! They are crying for it, so market it! -> Need a compelling marketing approach that sells the apprenticeship program
- 4) One governing body (multiple players involved in shuffle! changes way too often)
- 5) Mandate and educate the guidance counsellors and careers classes to do a better job and to lose their biases against trades!
- 6) Too many hoops to challenge the exams ..Challenging the exams has waaaay too many bridges to cross
- 7) The department overseeing apprenticeship program is disjointed and needs to have a specific process to follow. All calls from potential apprentices or apprentices should have a 24 hour turn around. Historically, calls are not returned either promptly, or at all. There wasn't a process for paperwork, and has been often misplaced. There needs to be accountability; checks and balances.
- 8) Everything trying to be centralized in an urban centre such as Kingston... no local attention, go to person who is champion
- 9) Increase the ratios
- 10) Make the schooling curriculum clearer to weigh the options of attending school or challenge exam (clearly convey the rubric/competencies in level 1 so people don't waste a year)
- 11) Need to take some cues from Europe in terms of career grooming, stature of trades more formalized in society (less stigma, viewed with more pride, more substantial programming, integration with engineering, architecture, historic restoration) e.g. France, Germany
- 12) Keep EO SPs up to date with the program.

1.6 – How can the community support your organization?

Item	If we could only address FIVE of these...	Average	#votes/11
9	College to provide a broader range of educational opportunities/training for apprentices or employees.	0.82	9
1	Promote skilled trades career as 1st choice ...Economic Developer Officer getting on board and focusing on trades that are needed and help with promotion of them.	0.73	8
11	High Schools need to put more of a focus and excitement into the idea of pursuing a skilled trade.	0.64	7
12	Develop a stronger mentoring system from early in highschool to show youth the potential careers out there. * Nova Scotia example	0.64	7
4	Educate the influencers - parents	0.55	6
2	Municipal government and Economical Development be aware of employers, trades needs, etc. also promote trades within the community by knowing skill shortages ... and ensure the inventory of developable land is updated	0.45	5
3	Focus on youth and the needs of youth - There is a great deal of focus on seniors by the Chamber of Commerce.	0.36	4
5	Awareness of what events are out there e.g. career fairs ..Skilled trades career fair for jobs but also educational booths with 'known' trade celebrities with agencies and ministries involved.	0.36	4
7	Housing that is attainable	0.36	4
10	Formalize a continuous feed back loop that allows business to inform government policy on what skills are actually required by business in real time! ..Connect with local employers frequently to take the pulse of local needs.	0.36	4
6	Better job of posting apprentice jobs and opportunities	0.18	2
8	Transport between communities	0.18	2

Ideas merged before voting:

(1) Promote skilled trades career as 1st choice ...Economic Developer Officer

getting on board and focusing on trades that are needed and help with promotion of them.

(1.1) Create attractive advertising to youth communicating why skilled trades is a good career choice. Connecting what's important to youth with what skilled trades offer.

(2) Municipal government and Economical Development be aware of employers, trades needs, etc. also promote trades within the community by knowing skill shortages ... and ensure the inventory of developable land is updated

(2.1) Better messaging to gov't/society about the huge demand for skilled trades
-> Provide municipalities the evidence & tools to lobby the prov govt

(3) Focus on youth and the needs of youth - There is a great deal of focus on seniors by the Chamber of Commerce.

(3.1) Encourage youth to start local businesses. More support for young people learning how to start/run a small shop. That's practical for our area, not training them to work in a large operation.

1.7 – Your experiences with hiring newcomers, older persons, & women?

- 1) newcomers usually have great work ethic but there are often some language impediments
- 2) Mature workers - way more responsibility -> more conscientious and will show up every day
- 3) Older workers - much more reliable (punctual, show up), often more motivated
- 4) Newcomers: we have not had ESL in Smiths Falls for several years.. need to go to Brockville or Kingston
- 5) Local Immigration Partnerships can help with language training
- 6) the culture in some skilled trades shops are not "women-friendly"
- 7) Not a lot of people going around looking for work here
- 8) Huge sense of entitlement among younger workers (Silicon Valley mentality etc)
- 9) Credentialing can be challenging
- 10) background / criminal record checks requirement

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2.0 – Renfrew County (n = 15)

2.1 – Issues and challenges in our region

Item	What are the SIX most important?	Average	#votes/15
18	target high school age children to show that university is not the only route that needs to be taken to be successful	0.73	11
8	lack of local training: Lack of Apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship training opportunities available at the local college (Pembroke) ..Training for our students. Access to Level 1 Training	0.67	10
13	lack of qualified skilled tradespeople -> gap in skilled trades already exists; hard to only develop new apprentices, need skilled workers now too	0.60	9
16	Inequality amongst our employers, large government operations able to draw employees away from smaller and private sector.	0.40	6
1	Age of current tradespeople, retirements -> older technicians retiring and nobody to replace them	0.33	5
9	Lack of transportation .. difficult to get around...	0.33	5
2	Fear of long term committment -> Youth workers are afraid to make a long-term commitment or commit their lives to that much financial investment	0.27	4
5	Fewer people wish to go into the trades.	0.27	4
7	Convincing small business to invest in training	0.27	4
15	Fear of educational components (many youth have not done well in traditional education settings)	0.27	4
3	How the provincial government decides to redevelop the apprenticeship model	0.20	3
11	Colleges have moved away from skilled trades education, away from their original purpose.	0.20	3
12	Awareness/exposure to the options: Deciding on which trade to go into. Decide on something you are good at and find the Trade that uses that skills.	0.20	3

14	Access for women (#metoo, other logistical access issues, mat leave, old boys career etc.)	0.20	3
19	Newcomers: from wartorn countries not having their high school to get into the trades ... communication challenges, language barriers	0.20	3
6	lack of certified mentors	0.13	2
17	Lack of family support for deciding on future careers	0.13	2
4	competition for existing trades	0.07	1
10	many don't have drivers license... no parental support for this... No clean driving record, no supportive environment or car access, no driver's license	0.07	1

2.2 – Ways to increase # of apprentices and journeypersons

Item	What are the FOUR most impactful?	Average	#votes/15
2	Improve teaching & exposure of trades in k-12 .. bring back shop /hands on training back ..More trades programs in high schools ..Reaching out to school system to provide exposure as part of curriculum * start in grade6?!	0.87	13
1	Government: more incentives, grants -> Increase financial incentives offered to employers e.g. enhanced subsidies, taxed credits	0.80	12
4	Streamline entire process: confusing, time consuming, easier to navigate ..Less red tape and bureaucracy, needlessly complex. ..Process is too time-consuming for applying and registering.	0.67	10
5	Employers must be enabled and trained and incentivized to build apprenticeship into their business plan and operations.	0.47	7
3	Build awareness among high school guidance counsellors about trades	0.40	6
9	Enhance youth for-credit opportunities	0.27	4
6	Government: Licensing options (used to be able to have 4 apprentices, now only 1)	0.20	3
8	Influence the influencers (Parents): awareness, education, improve the pitch to parents	0.20	3
7	Youth programs: shop clubs, trades orientation, coop programs	0.13	2

2.3 – Impact of in-school component on your organization

What impact does the in-school component have on your company?

Note: these are not ranked

- 1) in-school component... they lose their employee for a number of weeks. Problematic
 - 1.1) Loss of employee for training period.
- 2) The individual may have in-school learning challenges... 8-week theoretical program not necessarily attractive
- 3) The in school program is difficult to get scheduled, transportation is an issue,
- 4) Transportation and accomodation
- 5) Funding -> Company expense for course, food, lodging, travel ,
- 6) There is a lack of in-school availability in rural areas. Apprentices are unable to afford/support cost of school and working without pay.
- 7) Many employers view the in-school component as disconnected from real-world skills needed in a particular trade. Employers are not seeing the benefit to in-school training if practical skills need to be taught/re-taught from ground up.
- 8) Unemployment insurance is not enough, the in school portion is very critical in the theory part of the trade. they must learn the why's not just the how's. learning new tools, procedures, equipment.
- 9) Would be useful to have tutors to get support in specific areas

2.4 – Barriers related to apprenticeship

Item	What are the SIX most important?	Average	#votes/14
1	Cost -> Costs to training an apprentice: time, opportunity cost, then they might leave?! ..Employers don't want the hassle of bringing on an apprentice (time, opportunity cost, etc.) ..Financially, salary requirements and training costs should be better funded. for employers and for apprentices.	0.79	11
15	Need subsidies and loans for tools. It's not enough. The startup cost is a huge barrier	0.71	10
4	Unemployment insurance is not enough for apprentices while away, when there is a family involved.	0.64	9
14	Small business continues to be a stepping stone for the learning process and are overburdened by the loss of skill/talent to larger business/unions.	0.64	9
10	Incentives for recruiting people into trades ..funding/financing for expensive school programs rather than trades incentives.	0.57	8
12	The apprenticeship service folks are no longer allowed out of their office. Local people need to be on the ground making connections. Outsourcing/centralizing has not served us here	0.43	6
2	Need qualified NOW, we cant have only apprentices. having too many apprentices, will be difficult to handle time away for school.	0.36	5
7	Lack of timeline/ timing requirements to move to next steps (e.g. no expiration date for apprentices, "career apprentices")	0.36	5
3	Ratios for apprentices to licensed. ??	0.21	3
8	recruiting from other countries, screening from other countries and assisting for specific trades that are truly in large deficit. ...Domestic trades associations restrict ability to bring in foreign skilled trade	0.21	3
11	Candidate pool is small and shallow in this area	0.21	3
5	Age 60+ employers are not flexible in the way that young people desire. (Example: come in at 10 am instead of 7 am, work later)	0.14	2

6	Non-union tracking and modeling of trade completion must model the union process. Far more apprenticeships in the union	0.14	2
9	cultural shift from government towards trades rather than degrees,	0.14	2
13	Employers sometimes just don't want the hassle of going through the paperwork	0.07	1

2.5 – Advice to the Government about the apprenticeship system

What advice can you give the Ontario Government about the apprenticeship system?

Note: these are not ranked

- 1) Promote the Apprenticeship program better -> Need a compelling marketing approach that sells the program YES!
 - 1.1) marketing program, showing/highlighting real benefits and financial possibilities in the trades
 - 1.2) Information to students/ accessibility/ bringing young people to employers
- 2) What is the benefit to the employer? Make it worthwhile
- 3) Mandate and educate the guidance counsellors and careers classes to do a better job and to lose their biases against trades! ..come up with a program for guidance and other teachers to be involved, in industry, trades, and keep up to date with what actual requirements in areas. build training lanes to help students head towards their interest base don local needs
- 4) Subsidize/\$ support for students in start up costs, tools etc.
- 5) Make the admin process simpler for employers and apprentices - whole process for signing on, navigating the jungle
- 6) Certification cost/benefit not worth it in some trades - Small shops (98% of our local economy) don't need certs in most trades. So why bother. If you are enthusiastic and talented (at designing/installing kitchen cabinets, for example) why get certified? Costs money and there's no pay raise at the small shop you work out of. ..Some employers say that certified employees are safer or know more about job safety. But the time investment in sending them off for certs is not quite enough
- 7) The apprenticeship service folks are no longer allowed out of their office. Local people need to be on the ground making connections. Outsourcing/centralizing has not served us here
- 8) Re-examine what is a trade. what are the defining attributes of trade vs. service?where is demand and what really needs gov't \$\$?: e.g. hairdressing is but DZ driving is not
- 9) Small business (under 100 employees) remains the largest "trainer" for trades. Small business needs a mechanism to continue to deliver training and retain the talent they help create. Wage incentive programs and apprenticeship funding needs to help support talent retention and business growth.
- 10) get rid of college of trades (become too complicated, red tape, back&forth hassle, uncooperative, too many hoops to jump thru)

11) reconsider education cuts that affect hands on trades programs

12) offer options to get into apprenticeship earlier/ co-op concept combined with apprenticeship, have hours count towards apprenticeship (e.g. school system in germany, france where earlier coop credit in grade 9) ... need more funding in high schools to enable this

2.6 – How can the community support your organization?

Item	If we could only address SEVEN?	Average	#votes/14
2	transportation to a rural industrial site	0.57	8
7	create a marketing program and info package we can use to give to trades (employees) in order to entice them to move to our area "reasons to move the Renfrew County/Ottawa valley" ..Invest in industry - work to increase diversity in local labour markets	0.57	8
8	High Schools need to put more of a focus and excitement into the idea of pursuing a skilled trade. ..Develop a stronger mentoring system from early in highschool to show youth the potential careers out there	0.57	8
4	Promote skilled trades career as 1st choice ... Econ Dev Officers getting on board and focusing on trades that are needed and help with promotion	0.50	7
1	More investment of time and interest at a town council/municipal level -> Local government should lead the way in hiring apprenticeships whenever possible. ...Educate leaders on the value of enhancing small business' awareness of the trades	0.43	6
3	Invest in student training - Pay for tuition costs in return for talent returning to the community for a duration of time	0.43	6
6	find creative ways to build trades knowledge/skills/awareness/experiences into all youth programming already existing in the community. Start thinking about it	0.43	6
5	We need to offer Training Centres whether they be at the Community College, Union offering Level 1 or Private Training Centres. A Training Centre will help support access to the Trades by offering OPPORTUNITY to our students.	0.36	5
10	Lobby the government upper tiers for direct support to industry training, apprenticeship, youth engagement in industry.	0.36	5
13	Newcomers/immigrant families: ensure they are welcomed	0.36	5
15	Job fairs at the right time	0.36	5

16	Focus on incenting females to enter the trades (role models etc.)	0.36	5
9	Educate the influencers - parents	0.29	4
12	Better messaging to gov't/society about the huge demand for skilled trades	0.21	3
11	help host specific courses locally that would benefit multiple employers from the same trade	0.14	2
14	Thanks to the groups, employers, businesses, training providers, organizations etc that have opened their doors to people to expose them to what you do/provide or what you need to continue to operate. This support is crucial and appreciated.	0.07	1

2.7 – Your experiences with hiring newcomers, older persons, & women?

Note: these ideas were not ranked

- 1) Language barrier
- 2) Difficult process if newcomers dont have work visa
- 3) Takes years to get a driver's license (Even if they have a license already in their former country)
- 4) Housing affordability an issue
- 5) Review sanctions on certain in demand trades - tailor to city/region/rural needs (note: 1980s, focused effort in Ireland to attract trades here) Note: labour market research needs to be done at national level very expensive
- 6) women: very few trades programs geared towards females
- 7) Best solution is to have a good mix of younger and older (for balance)
- 8) our experience is there can be clashes btwn older vs. younger workers (following rules, different motivators etc.)
- 9) our experience with older workers is no different from younger workers
- 10) Fire fighting vs. fire prevention -> Different philosophy with older workers used to "fixing things"
- 11) Certification: intent is to ensure a basic level of service... espec. in high risk trades such as electrical

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Appendices

A – Session Overview

Purpose: Share your experiences and challenges finding skilled trades workers.

Questions:

1. What are the most important **issues** that are expected to impact the skilled trades **in your community** over the next five years?
2. What needs to be done (by a. employers and b. the Ontario government) to **increase the number of apprentices and journeypersons** in in-demand trades?
3. What impact does **the in-school component** have on your company?
4. What **barriers and challenges**, if any, does your organization face related to **apprenticeship**?
5. What advice can you give the **Ontario Government about the apprenticeship system**?
6. How can our **community support you** as a skilled trades employer?
7. What is your experience hiring newcomers/older workers/women?

Background about request from Government

In the report back, the Ministry is asking Local Employment Planning Councils and Workforce Planning Boards to share the findings from their engagements with local employers, including:

- The most important issues affecting the skilled trades;
- The skilled trades and apprenticeship positions employers are currently having difficulty filling and why;
- The reasons for employers' staffing challenges in the trades;
- Employers' experience with respect to the skilled trades;
- Employers' suggestions for improving the apprenticeship system; and
- The number of employers engaged for the project, the size of organizations (small, medium or large), and industries/sectors that they represent.

B – Process Overview

The Forums were conducted using an electronic meeting system (EMS), an innovative facilitation process developed from research at the Queen’s School of Business. The Queen’s EMS, called “the Decision Centre”, combines expert facilitation with a state of the art group decision support system to enable groups to rapidly accelerate idea generation and consensus building. This facility consists of a network of laptops accessing software designed to support idea generation, idea consolidation, idea evaluation and planning. The tool supports, but does not replace, verbal interaction; typically 25% of interaction takes place on the computers. Feedback from groups who have used the Executive Decision Centre process includes: meeting times can be cut in half; participation goes way up; better idea generation and alternative evaluation; a more structured process; and automatic documentation of deliberations.

Over 1200 organizations around North America have used the Centre for meetings such as: strategic planning, visioning, annual planning, focus groups, team building, budgeting, program review, project planning, risk assessment, job profiling, 360 degree feedback, alternative evaluation, new product development and a variety of other meeting types.

In the session, participants were asked, for example, “What are our make or break issues related to skilled trades in our region?” Participants typed in ideas on the laptops all of which appeared on a public screen at the front of the room. These ideas were then discussed and categorized into common themes. Participants were then asked “what are the FIVE most important?” The ranked results were presented for discussion.

For more information on this process, please contact:

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