

SUMMARY REPORT: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**TOURISM WORKFORCE STRATEGY & LABOUR MARKET PLAN
TOURISM REGIONS 4 & 7**

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Background

This report summarizes the findings and recommendations of the Tourism Workforce Strategy and Labour Market Plan project carried out on behalf of Regional Tourism Regions 4 and 7. These RTOs cover the following counties: RTO 4: Huron, Perth, Waterloo and Wellington; RTO 7: Bruce, Grey and Simcoe.

The purpose of this project was to develop a longer-term labour force strategy for the respective tourism regions. These RTOs combined resources to support this initiative, on the view that there were labour force issues that were common to both regions and economies of scale to be realized in exploring these together. The take up and implementation of the resulting recommendations remains a matter for each RTO to consider separately. This work was also assisted by the participation of the local workforce development boards in the steering of this project.¹

The project was made up of a number of activities: a review of the literature; an analysis of existing tourism and labour market data; interviews with key informants; an employer survey; and deliberations with the steering committee.

This report is a condensed version of the findings, and its main purpose is to describe the recommendations in greater detail. Background documents relating to the data analysis and the employer survey results are companion pieces to this report.

This report is organized as follows:

- Highlights from the data analysis
- Highlights from the employer survey
- Highlights from the key informant interviews
- Review of recommendations

¹ The relevant workforce development boards: Four County Labour Market Planning Board; Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Development Board; and Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin.

Highlights from the data analysis

Tourist visits. The tourism industry depends on tourists for business: tourists create the demand for tourist services, and the number of tourists determines the number of tourism establishments and employees working in those enterprises. Table 1 lists the tourist-visits per county and offers a “visitor per resident” ratio to provide a context for the numbers.

Table 1: Population and tourist-visit numbers and ratios, RTO 4 and RTO 7²

	RTO 4				RTO 7		
	Huron	Perth	Waterloo	Wellington	Bruce	Grey	Simcoe
Population	59,100	75,112	507,096	208,360	92,568	66,102	446,063
% of Ontario	0.46%	0.58%	3.95%	1.62%	0.72%	0.51%	3.47%
Tourist-visits	989,857	1,273,006	3,876,008	2,274,535	1,623,050	1,390,096	6,053,515
% of Ontario	0.96%	1.24%	3.77%	2.21%	1.58%	1.35%	5.89%
Tourist-visit/resident	16.8	17.0	7.6	10.9	21.0	17.5	13.6

Thus, while Simcoe has by far the largest absolute number of tourist-visits, it also has a larger population. Bruce, with a smaller population, has the highest tourist-visit per resident ratio, followed closely by Grey and Perth. Waterloo has the lowest ratio of tourist-visits per resident, and it is the only county of the seven to attract a share of all Ontario’s tourist-visits than is smaller than its share of Ontario’s population (Waterloo attracts 3.77% of all Ontario’s tourist visits while it is home to 3.95% of Ontario’s population).

Seasonality. Tourism here is a highly seasonal activity, which can create great variations in demand for tourism businesses, which in turn impacts on the workforce. Great variations in the number of person-visits from one season to the next requires a greater reliance on seasonal workers. Workers looking for year-round work will be less likely to be attracted to these seasonal jobs, except perhaps as a stop-gap when unemployed. Each year employers need to recruit a new batch of workers, who may or may not return the following season. These workers may have less invested in their work because it is short-term, and employers may be less inclined to provide much training, knowing these employees will likely

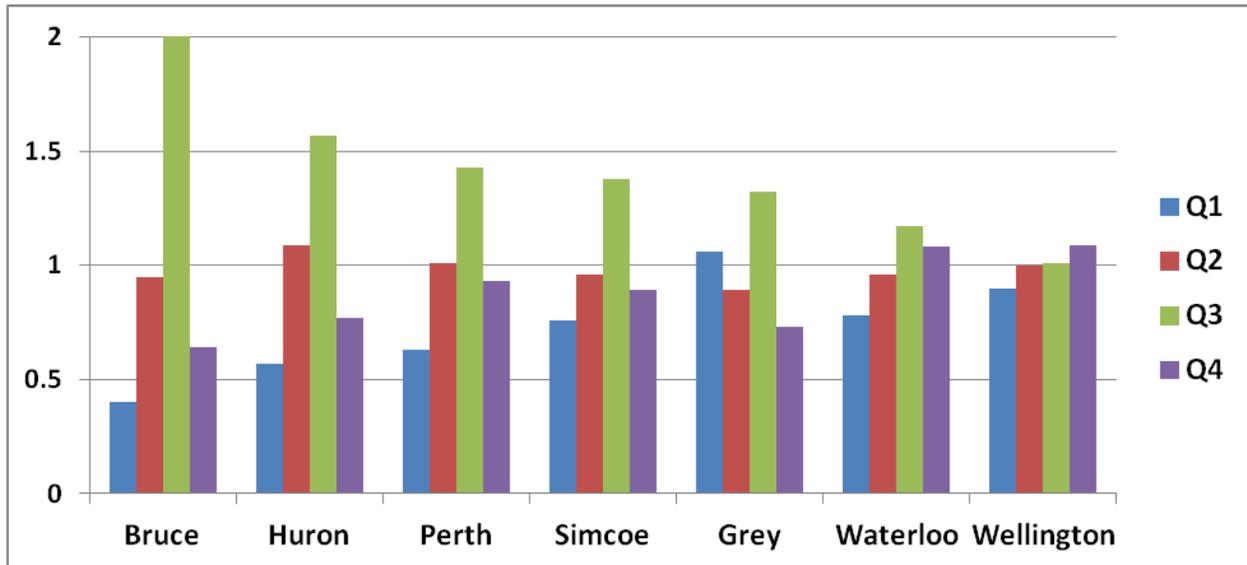
² The population numbers are from Statistics Canada’s 2011 Census; the person-visit numbers are the average figure from 2006 to 2010 for each destination, from Statistics Canada’s *Travel Survey of Residents of Canada* and the *International Travel Survey*.

soon be gone. At the same time, employers are nonetheless pressed to provide basic training and orientation to a continuous batch of new recruits.

In order to compare the degree of seasonality across all seven counties, the following calculation was used: for each county, the total number of tourist-visits in a year was divided by four, resulting in the average number of tourist visits per quarter. Then the actual number of tourist-visits per quarter is compared to that average and is expressed as a ratio: if the average figure is expressed as “1”, then each quarter can be expressed in relation to that 1. For example, if the average number of tourist-visits in a quarter is half that of the average figure per quarter for the year, then the value would be 0.5.

Chart 1 compares these ratios for each quarter for each county. The calculation is done using the tourist-visit data for 2006 through 2010, to smooth out any unusual differences that may relate to a peculiar year.

Chart 1: Ratio of seasonality of person-visits, RTO 4 and RTO 7, 2006-2010



Q1: January, February, March
 Q2: April, May, June
 Q3: July, August, September
 Q4: October, November, December

As is apparent from the chart, Bruce has by far the most seasonal tourism industry, with Huron somewhat less so. Perth, Simcoe and Grey each have a similar seasonality pattern, except that Grey shows a second high season in Q1 (skiing season). Wellington shows very little variation by season, with Waterloo also showing limited variation (except for a more pronounced low season in Q1).

Overnight visitors. There is a significant variation in the proportions of same-day and overnight visitors by county. Two-thirds of visitors to Bruce stay overnight, compared to one-third of visitors to Waterloo (and only slightly more than one-third for Wellington and Perth as well). Bruce also stands out for having the longest average stay for overnight visitors, with Perth the shortest, and Grey, Simcoe and Wellington not too far behind.

Where those overnight visitors stay has a great bearing on the size and shape of the accommodation services sector. Table 2 shows the percentage breakdown of overnight stays by accommodate type spent by overnight visitors.

Table 2: Percentage of overnight stays by accommodation type by overnight visitors, RTO 4 and RTO 7, average for 2006-2010

	RTO 4				RTO 7		
	Huron	Perth	Waterloo	Wellington	Bruce	Grey	Simcoe
Hotels	2.8%	22.6%	12.9%	7.7%	1.4%	12.1%	10.3%
Motels	1.5%	11.6%	3.0%	3.4%	4.4%	3.5%	2.8%
Commercial cottages/cabins	8.1%	1.1%	0.1%	0.2%	10.2%	6.6%	4.7%
Camping/RV facilities	16.4%	4.9%	2.6%	4.2%	16.5%	5.5%	7.5%
Private homes	33.5%	34.9%	74.0%	72.1%	24.4%	39.7%	42.3%
Private cottages	28.7%	1.9%	2.8%	2.0%	36.5%	20.3%	23.8%

Where an entry is particularly high for its category, the cell is shaded green, and where it is particularly low it is shaded red. Thus, Perth has a notably higher proportion of its overnight visitors stay in hotels and motels, while the exact opposite is true of Huron. One can see that a very large proportion of overnight visitors to Waterloo and Wellington stay in private homes while, on the other hand, one can also see why Huron, Bruce, Grey and Simcoe are considered cottage country.

Tourism establishments. There is considerable variation in the mix of tourism establishments. Some notable items:³

³ Data is from Statistics Canada, *Canadian Business Patterns*, 2010.

Accommodations services

- Huron: 57 establishments, almost 40% are RV parks and campgrounds
- Perth: 62 establishments, two-thirds are bed and breakfast operations, with the rest almost all hotels and motels
- Waterloo: 89 establishments, over half are either hotels, motor hotels or motels
- Wellington: 54 establishments, almost half are either hotels, motor hotels or motels
- Bruce: 111 establishments, over half are RV parks and campgrounds or motels
- Grey: 53 establishments, half are RV parks and campgrounds or motels
- Simcoe: 185 establishments, almost half are RV parks and campgrounds or motels, but also over a quarter are hotels, motor hotels or resorts

Arts, entertainment and recreation

By and large, certain subsectors make up a larger proportion of all establishments in all seven counties. These are:

- All other amusement and recreation industries (a grab-bag category that includes pool halls, curling rinks, fishing guide services, mini-putt, hunting and fishing clubs, and so on);
- Fitness and recreational sports centres; and
- Golf courses and country clubs.

Several subsectors have a larger presence in a few areas:

- Horse race tracks are prominent in Huron, Perth and Wellington;
- Marinas are prevalent in Bruce, Huron and Simcoe;
- There are significant proportions of art dealers in Perth and Grey (although larger absolute numbers in Waterloo and Simcoe).

Some counties have an activity that is particularly more concentrated in their area:

- Theatre companies in Perth;
- Skiing facilities in Grey (although in absolute numbers Simcoe comes close);
- Sports teams and clubs in Waterloo and Simcoe.

Food and beverage services

There are only two subsectors in this category that are of primary significance, namely full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places. These two categories typically make up a little over half of all the business establishments in the tourism sector as a whole as well as a significant portion of employment in the tourism sector.

In four counties, the share of full-service restaurants is notably higher than the share of limited-service restaurants (Huron, Perth, Bruce and Grey). In Wellington the share of full-service restaurants is only slightly higher, in Simcoe it is essentially even, while in Waterloo limited-service eating places have the larger share.⁴

In terms of trends over time (2006 to 2010), in most cases the numbers either hold steady or more often have dipped somewhat, and the decline is usually more pronounced among the limited-service eating places. The exceptions are: Bruce experienced a greater decline among its full-service restaurants than limited-service eating places, while Huron and Waterloo both saw a slight increase in their numbers, slightly more so among limited-service eating places.

Table 3: Number of establishments, Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places, Huron, Perth, Waterloo and Wellington, 2006-2010

	Huron		Perth		Waterloo		Wellington	
	Full-service	Limited-service	Full-service	Limited-service	Full-service	Limited-service	Full-service	Limited-service
2006	68	49	85	68	403	520	205	191
2007	83	55	91	64	415	499	206	185
2008	76	54	93	57	384	483	188	170
2009	70	58	83	59	404	500	183	172
2010	71	53	81	57	404	522	194	172
%	57%	43%	59%	41%	44%	56%	53%	47%

⁴ Overall, the average for Ontario is rough 50-50, however a quick scan of the data for other regions suggests that in areas with larger suburban populations, the proportion of limited-service eating places is greater than that for full-service restaurants.

Table 4: Number of establishments, Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places, Bruce, Grey and Simcoe, 2006-2010

	Bruce		Grey		Simcoe	
	Full-service	Limited-service	Full-service	Limited-service	Full-service	Limited-service
2006	103	64	107	70	413	446
2007	93	53	111	68	397	425
2008	86	54	110	64	398	379
2009	102	56	102	60	378	375
2010	89	60	105	63	385	382
%	60%	40%	63%	37%	50%	50%

Drinking places (serving alcoholic beverages) make up a very small portion of the food and beverage services industry. Even though there are numerous pubs and bars, most are, in actual fact, restaurants that have liquor licenses, as opposed to stand-alone drinking establishments. And the number of such establishments is dwindling.

Local jobs in the tourism sector. The workforce data relies on a single source, the Statistics Canada Census, for which the most recent data remains the 2006 Census (while data from the 2011 Census is becoming available, such as population counts, the more detailed data relevant to this study, such as occupation data, was not yet available at the time of writing this report). While the 2006 Census data is somewhat out-of-date, it is still relevant as far as proportions and comparisons go, as these tend to be more stable, even as the absolute numbers change.

Table 5 provides the number of tourism jobs located in each county by industry subsector. These figures slightly undercount the number of jobs, since they only can report jobs with a fixed workplace.

The table also provides a calculation of what percentage of all jobs located in that county fall into the tourism sector. As can be seen, the proportionate size of the tourism industry varies by county, from a low of 6.7% in Waterloo to a high of 12.2% in Simcoe (the average for Ontario in 2006 was 8.3%). Thus, Waterloo and Wellington fall somewhat below the average, Huron and Perth hover just slightly above the average, while Bruce, Grey and Simcoe are considerably above the average.

Table 5: Number of jobs, tourism sub-industries and all jobs, Huron, Perth, Waterloo, Wellington, Bruce, Grey and Simcoe, 2006

	Huron	Perth	Waterloo	Wellington	Bruce	Grey	Simcoe
711 Performing arts, sports	125	745	700	565	100	245	605
712 Heritage institutions	35	40	160	50	115	80	275
713 Amusement, recreation	305	290	1955	905	345	785	5445
7211 Traveller accommodation	275	385	1000	315	395	885	1955
7212 RV parks/camps	110	15	60	135	220	85	200
7221 Full-service restaurants	535	1085	5605	2195	920	1170	5030
7222 Limited-service eating	755	990	6015	2400	560	885	5480
7224 Drinking places	110	75	395	200	75	110	465
TOTAL ALL TOURISM	2250	3625	15890	6765	2730	4245	19455
TOTAL ALL JOBS	25560	39955	238465	97395	27290	37605	159340
% TOURISM OF ALL JOBS	8.8%	9.1%	6.7%	7.0%	10.0%	11.3%	12.2%

Residents employed in tourism occupations. Tables 6 and 7 list the number of residents living in each county employed in specific tourism occupations. This is different from Table 5, which lists the actual jobs – there will be a difference between the number of jobs that exist in a county and the jobs that residents are employed in, as people can commute outside their region to work, especially when they live near the border of their county.

The figures in Table 6 and 7 only include those individuals employed in a tourism industry. Thus, cashiers and retail salesclerks are only counted if they are working in an establishment within a tourism industry. The tables present the occupations by the number of employees in Ontario, and for each column the ranking is offered for that county. As one can see, the ranking of the top four occupations by number of employees is more or less the same (except for a few isolated instances), as follows:

- 1) Food counter attendants & kitchen helpers;
- 2) Food and beverage servers;
- 3) Cooks;
- 4) Restaurant and food service managers.

After that, the ranking has greater variation. There is a larger proportion of accommodation service managers in those counties with many small accommodation operations (RV parks and campgrounds, bed & breakfasts), such as Huron, Perth and Bruce. A larger number of golf courses and other such

facilities increases the number of landscaping labourers (Bruce and Grey in particular). Simcoe stands out for its large number of individuals employed in casino occupations.

Table 6: Number of residents employed in select occupations in the tourism sector, Huron, Perth, Waterloo and Wellington, 2006

	HURON	PERTH	WATERLOO	WELLINGTON
1. Food counter attendants & kitchen helpers	(1) 530	(1) 720	(1) 3985	(1) 1830
2. Food & beverage servers	(2) 300	(2) 475	(2) 2315	(2) 960
3. Cooks	(3) 260	(3) 325	(3) 1495	(3) 630
4. Restaurant and food service managers	(4) 175	(4) 210	(4) 1410	(4) 590
5. Cashiers	(9) 70	(10) 75	(5) 830	(5) 260
6. Program instructors in recreation	50	(9) 105	(7) 575	(6) 255
7. Light duty cleaners	(6) 85	(7) 130	(8) 335	(9) 140
8. Chefs	10	(5) 160	290	(10) 125
9. Bartenders	(10) 60	20	(9) 305	(7) 165
10. Food service supervisors	(7) 80	(10) 75	(6) 720	(10) 125
11. Casino occupations	15	0	30	65
12. Landscaping labourers	(7) 80	60	(10) 300	(7) 165
13. Accommodation service managers	(5) 130	(6) 150	105	45
14. Maîtres d'hôtel and hosts	0	25	260	70
15. Retail salespersons and sales clerks	0	(8) 110	220	120

Table 7: Number of residents employed in select occupations in the tourism sector, Bruce, Grey and Simcoe, 2006

	BRUCE	GREY	SIMCOE
1. Food counter attendants & kitchen helpers	(1) 520	(1) 785	(1) 4110
2. Food & beverage servers	(3) 400	(2) 505	(2) 2250
3. Cooks	(2) 405	(3) 370	(3) 1790
4. Restaurant and food service managers	(4) 185	(5) 195	(4) 1440
5. Cashiers	(9) 65	60	(7) 810
6. Program instructors in recreation	(7) 95	(6) 145	(8) 615
7. Light duty cleaners	(10) 65	(7) 110	(6) 840
8. Chefs	(8) 80	(10) 85	350
9. Bartenders	55	75	(10) 505
10. Food service supervisors	35	40	440
11. Casino occupations	20	45	(5) 1300
12. Landscaping labourers	(6) 125	(4) 200	(9) 590
13. Accommodation service managers	(5) 180	(9) 90	310
14. Maîtres d'hôtel and hosts	0	80	255
15. Retail salespersons and sales clerks	(10) 55	45	420

The numbers provide a good sense of the orders of magnitude. The two largest occupations, food counter attendants & kitchen helpers and food & beverage servers, together account for over 11,000 employed residents in RTO 4 and over 8,000 in RTO 7, while food service supervisors account for less than a tenth of that number, 1000 food service supervisors in RTO 4 and over 500 in RTO 7.

Highlights from the employer survey

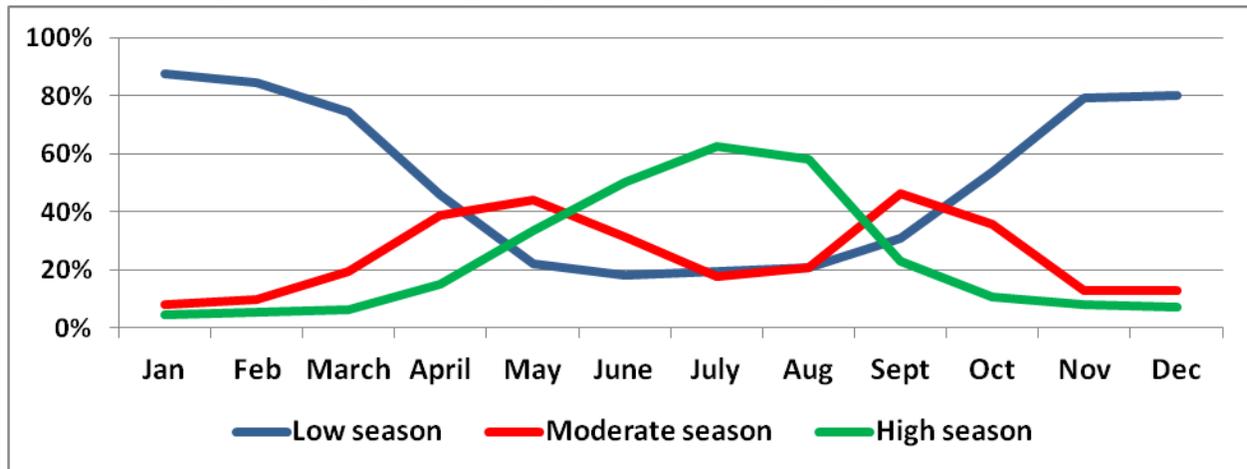
A total of 274 tourism sector employers provided responses to the on-line survey, which was conducted between August 14 and October 8, 2012. The profile of employer respondents reflected a representative cross-section, in terms of geography, industry and size of operation.

Seasonality of hiring. Employers were asked to categorize each month of the year according to whether it represented low seasonal, medium seasonal or high seasonal hiring. The distribution of responses has been converted into a percentage (Table 8), to indicate what proportion of employers chose which designation for each month.

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Low	88%	85%	74%	46%	22%	18%	20%	21%	31%	54%	79%	80%
Medium	8%	10%	19%	39%	44%	32%	18%	21%	46%	36%	13%	13%
High	5%	6%	6%	15%	34%	50%	63%	58%	23%	11%	8%	7%

The numbers from Table 8 can be illustrated in a chart (below).

Chart 2: Percentage of employers designating seasonal level of hiring (N=242)



Potential workforce development initiatives. The core of the survey requested respondents to rate an extensive series of potential workforce development initiatives, 26 in total, on a scale from “Not at all a priority” to “Highest priority.” The full explanation of each possible initiative is listed in the table below, together with the abbreviated phrase that will be used in the subsequent charts. As well, these initiatives are clustered into a number of common categories, as they were presented in the survey.

DESCRIPTION IN SURVEY	SHORT VERSION
PREPARING INDIVIDUALS FOR WORK	
Basic pre-employment programs familiarizing individuals with the expectations of a workplace (attendance, punctuality, taking direction)	Pre-employment programs
Work experience programs for high school students (e.g. co-op program)	Work experience for high school students
Work experience programs for community college students	Work experience for community college students
Work experience programs for private vocational college students	Work experience private vocational college students
Work experience programs for university students	Work experience for university students
HELPING EMPLOYERS RECRUIT JOB CANDIDATES	
Helping employers find entry-level and/or high turnover and/or seasonal staff	Help finding entry-level staff
Helping employers find intermediate or senior level staff	Help finding intermediate or senior-level staff
Increasing the potential labour pool by drawing on less traditional population groups (older workers, newcomers to Canada, persons with disabilities, Aboriginal populations)	Recruiting from less traditional population groups
Improving access to foreign workers, including through the Temporary Foreign Worker program	Improving access to foreign workers
HELPING EMPLOYERS RETAIN QUALITY EMPLOYEES	
Survey of local wage rates by occupation, to help determine a competitive wage	Survey of local wage rates
Help with identifying, choosing and implementing effective non-wage benefits	Advice on non-wage benefits
Help with identifying, choosing and implementing effective employee engagement strategies	Advice on employee engagement strategies
PROMOTING CAREER ADVANCEMENT	
Designing career pathway maps and providing support for career advancement for employees through career laddering programs (that is, explicit programs to support career advancement over several years)	Career advancement programs

PROMOTING CAREER AWARENESS	
Making high school students as well as new entrants into the workforce aware of career opportunities in the broader hospitality, tourism and recreation sectors	Career awareness for high school students

TRAINING EXISTING STAFF	
Providing basic literacy, numeracy, computer and related essential skills	Training in literacy and essential skills
Providing customer service training and enhancing soft skills (such as interpersonal communications)	Customer service training
Providing skills for specific work-related functions (such as food order processing)	Training for specific work-related skills
Cross-training to increase the flexibility of your workforce	Cross-training for flexible workforce

ENHANCING MANAGEMENT AMONG TOURISM ESTABLISHMENTS	
Improving supervisory and management skills in HR	Improving management HR skills
Helping management to develop and implement employee engagement strategies	Helping managers with employee engagement strategies

IMPROVING ACCESS TO INFORMATION RELEVANT TO TOURISM BUSINESSES	
Developing useful guides to relevant resources (training options, career information)	Guides to relevant resources
Producing credible evidence of effective return on investment when using strategies such as training, non-wage benefits, employee engagement and so on	ROI evidence on workforce solutions

ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC BARRIERS TO WORKFORCE CHALLENGES	
Ensuring that the various parts of the workforce system (education, trainers, employment services, government, employers) are working together, developing programs together and sharing information in a timely fashion, and are working to serve employers	Making workforce system more effective
Developing partnerships whereby employers with different peak labour demand periods can share employees	Partnerships to share employees across seasons

OVERCOMING FUNDING CONSTRAINTS	
Facilitating the ability of more than one employer to share the costs of employee-training, to create economies of scale and of convenience	Partnerships to share training costs
Seeking funding to supplement the investment by employers into workplace training	Seeking funding for training

The scoring for these many potential initiatives is presented as follows (Table 9): An aggregate score for each item has been developed, where a “1” has been assigned to the lowest response (“Not at all a priority”), up to a “7” for the “Highest Priority.” As well, the table identifies what percentage of respondents chose “the Highest Priority” for that item. The proposed items are ranked from the highest to the lowest score.

Table 9: Scores for priority workforce initiatives			
	Total	Highest	Rank
Customer service training	5.71	41%	1
Pre-employment programs	5.27	34%	2
Seeking funding for training	5.19	27%	3
Career awareness for high school students	5.19	21%	4
Work experience for community college students	5.01	17%	5
Survey of local wage rates	4.93	20%	6
Making workforce system more effective	4.93	17%	7
Cross-training for flexible workforce	4.90	16%	8
Help finding entry-level staff	4.83	23%	9
Helping management with employee engagement strategies	4.83	16%	10
Work experience for university students	4.80	19%	11
Improving management HR skills	4.79	18%	12
Work experience for high school students	4.79	18%	13
Guides to relevant resources	4.73	13%	14
Advice on employee engagement strategies	4.71	17%	15
ROI evidence on workforce solutions	4.65	13%	16
Training for specific work-related skills	4.64	15%	17
Work experience for private vocational college students	4.53	12%	18
Partnerships to share training costs	4.46	11%	19
Partnerships to share employees across seasons	4.39	9%	20
Advice on non-wage benefits	4.31	12%	21
Training in literacy and essential skills	4.26	14%	22
Help finding intermediate or senior-level staff	4.04	11%	23
Career advancement programs	3.99	8%	24
Recruiting from less traditional population groups	3.75	4%	25
Improving access to foreign workers	2.95	4%	26

The following tables illustrate some of the variations in scoring by different survey respondent sub-groups: by geography, by number of employees, and by certain select sub-industries. These variations are highlighted by the different rankings assigned to each item, and colour-coded to emphasize where the differences appear.

Table 10: Scores for priority workforce initiatives, by county

COUNTIES→	Huron	Perth	Waterloo	Wellington	Bruce	Grey	Simcoe
1. Customer service training	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
2. Pre-employment programs	8	4	2	15	3	2	2
3. Seeking funding for training	5	1	17	4	2	8	4
4. Career awareness for high school students	4	6	3	3	8	3	3
5. Work experience community college students	15	12	4	2	7	5	9
6. Survey of local wage rates	2	3	7	7	16	16	12
7. Making workforce system more effective	5	9	11	20	5	4	8
8. Cross-training for flexible workforce	13	10	6	10	10	10	6
9. Help finding entry-level staff	14	5	15	21	4	9	9
10. Help managers employee engagement	3	14	8	9	14	17	7
11. Work experience for university students	17	16	5	5	6	19	19
12. Improving management HR skills	7	12	9	11	17	11	5
13. Work experience for high school students	22	11	10	6	13	5	16
14. Guides to relevant resources	10	18	14	17	8	7	17
15. Advice on employee engagement strategies	10	19	15	16	10	13	11
16. ROI evidence on workforce solutions	16	14	11	13	18	14	15
17. Training for specific work-related skills	20	16	21	8	12	15	13
18. Work experience private college students	18	21	18	12	15	19	14
19. Partnerships to share training costs	9	7	20	17	22	12	22
20. Partnerships to share employees seasonally	10	8	24	13	20	21	20
21. Advice on non-wage benefits	20	20	19	19	23	25	18
22. Training in literacy and essential skills	19	23	13	22	21	18	21
23. Help finding intermediate or senior-level staff	23	24	23	22	19	24	24
24. Career advancement programs	24	25	21	24	24	21	23
25. Recruiting less traditional population groups	25	22	25	25	25	23	25
26. Improving access to foreign workers	26	26	26	26	26	26	26

LEGEND	
Rank: 1-6	
Rank: 7-13	
Rank: 14-20	
Rank: 21-26	

Comment:

There is limited variation across the counties, the most significant being variations regarding help to find entry-level staff (higher need in Bruce and Perth, low need in Wellington), and a greater interest in connecting with work experience programs for university students in Waterloo, Wellington and Bruce.

Table 11: Scores for priority workforce initiatives, by number of employees

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES→	"0"	1-4	5-19	20+
1. Customer service training	1	1	1	1
2. Pre-employment programs	2	3	4	4
3. Seeking funding for training	4	2	2	21
4. Career awareness for high school students	5	6	3	2
5. Work experience community college students	12	4	8	7
6. Survey of local wage rates	6	5	11	16
7. Making workforce system more effective	7	12	5	13
8. Cross-training for flexible workforce	9	13	6	9
9. Help finding entry-level staff	3	8	20	14
10. Help managers employee engagement	15	14	7	3
11. Work experience for university students	16	7	15	5
12. Improving management HR skills	13	17	9	7
13. Work experience for high school students	8	9	16	11
14. Guides to relevant resources	10	10	14	15
15. Advice on employee engagement strategies	14	10	13	6
16. ROI evidence on workforce solutions	17	18	12	11
17. Training for specific work-related skills	11	21	10	18
18. Work experience private college students	20	14	19	10
19. Partnerships to share training costs	18	14	23	24
20. Partnerships to share employees seasonally	19	19	22	23
21. Advice on non-wage benefits	23	20	20	17
22. Training in literacy and essential skills	22	22	17	19
23. Help finding intermediate or senior-level staff	24	23	24	20
24. Career advancement programs	25	24	18	21
25. Recruiting less traditional population groups	21	25	25	26
26. Improving access to foreign workers	26	26	26	25

LEGEND	
Rank: 1-6	
Rank: 7-13	
Rank: 14-20	
Rank: 21-26	

Comment:
 Larger employers (20+ employees) are less concerned about getting help to access funding for training, while on the other hand they are interested in help on employee engagement strategies. Smaller firms (1-4 employees) appear particularly interested in work experience placements for community college students.

Table 12: Scores for priority workforce initiatives, by select industry categories

SOME INDUSTRY CATEGORIES→	B&Bs	HOTELS	RV PARKS	OTHER RECREATION	FULL-SERVICE RESTAURANTS
	1. Customer service training	1	1	1	1
2. Pre-employment programs	3	2	2	2	3
3. Seeking funding for training	5	16	11	9	2
4. Career awareness for high school students	4	5	5	3	3
5. Work experience community college students	15	12	17	4	7
6. Survey of local wage rates	2	3	7	18	16
7. Making workforce system more effective	9	12	6	11	12
8. Cross-training for flexible workforce	17	4	8	12	5
9. Help finding entry-level staff	11	20	8	5	11
10. Help managers employee engagement	16	6	3	22	10
11. Work experience for university students	17	20	22	7	17
12. Improving management HR skills	12	8	11	20	8
13. Work experience for high school students	14	15	19	10	8
14. Guides to relevant resources	10	8	3	12	21
15. Advice on employee engagement strategies	22	7	13	14	15
16. ROI evidence on workforce solutions	6	10	14	15	19
17. Training for specific work-related skills	13	11	21	16	6
18. Work experience private college students	23	18	19	6	13
19. Partnerships to share training costs	6	22	14	18	20
20. Partnerships to share employees seasonally	6	23	16	20	23
21. Advice on non-wage benefits	19	17	23	22	18
22. Training in literacy and essential skills	19	18	18	8	22
23. Help finding intermediate or senior-level staff	23	24	8	17	14
24. Career advancement programs	21	12	24	24	24
25. Recruiting less traditional population groups	25	25	25	25	25
26. Improving access to foreign workers	26	26	26	26	26

LEGEND	
Rank: 1-6	
Rank: 7-13	
Rank: 14-20	
Rank: 21-26	

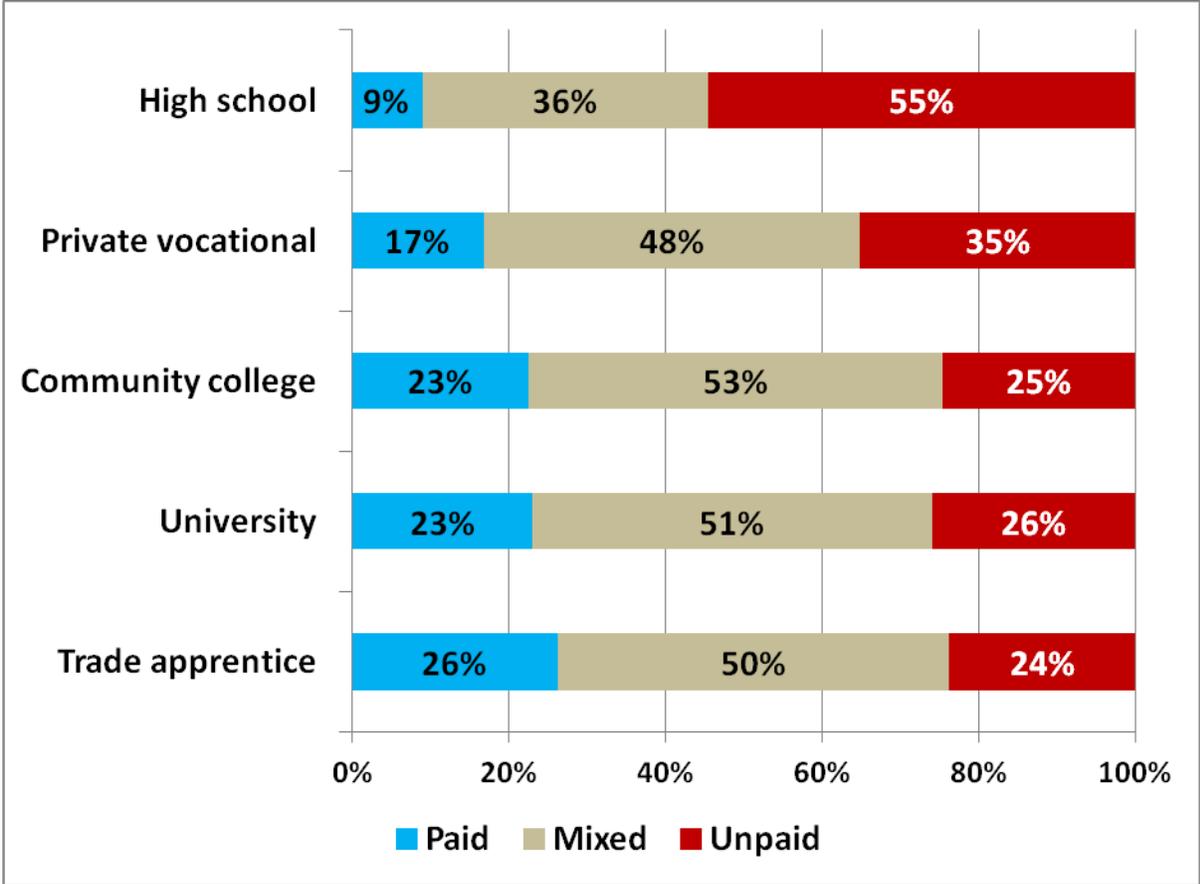
Comment:

Cross-training is a particular interest of employers in the hotel and full-service restaurant sectors. B&Bs and hotels are especially interested in local wage surveys. Funding for training is a big attraction for full-service restaurants. B&Bs are more inclined to partnerships. Employee engagement is a greater interest to RV camps and hotels.

Paying for the cost of a placement. Employers have different opinions about who is to pay for the cost of work placements. These opinions vary according to the category of placement (high school, community college, trade apprentice) as well as according to the type of employer.

Overall, for all employers, there is a greater willingness to contribute to the cost of the placement the higher the level of the credential. For each type of placement, employers were asked what type of placements they were willing to host: paid placements, unpaid placements or both paid and unpaid placements.

Chart 3: Willingness to host paid or unpaid work placements, all employers



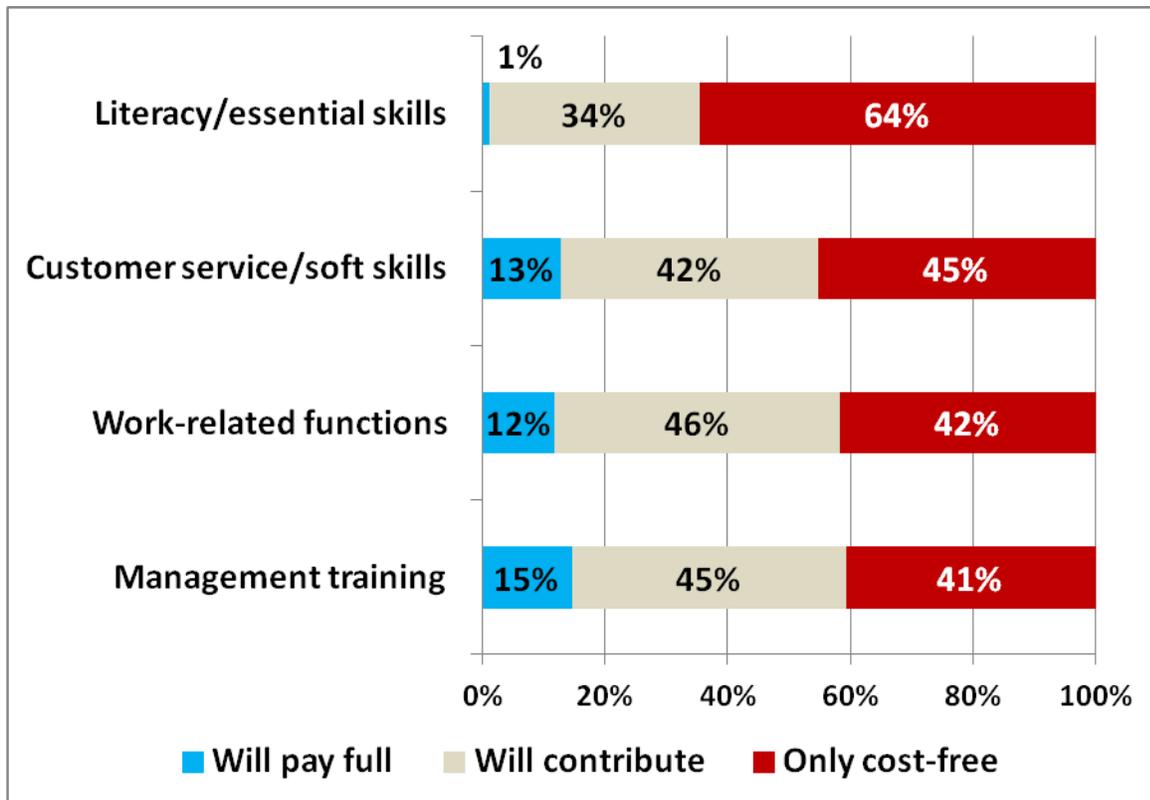
These five different types of placements fall into three categories when it comes to paid/unpaid placements: for high school students, the majority of employers envisage unpaid placements (55%). For community college, university and trade apprenticeship positions, half imagine a mix of paid and unpaid, and roughly a quarter choose each of a paid or unpaid placement. The private vocational college placement falls between these two categories, with 35% opting for unpaid placements only.

Paying for the cost of training. Employers make a distinction with regards to which kinds of training they are prepared to contribute to the cost. Literacy and essential skills training attracts considerably less employer financial contribution compared to the other three types of training being proposed.

For each of the four types of training (literacy/essential skills, customer service/soft skills, training for work-specific functions, training for supervisors and managers), employers were asked to indicate their views on costs by choosing from among the following three options:

- If right training, would pay the entire cost
- Willing to contribute to cost
- Will participate if training is cost-free

Chart 4: Willingness to contribute to the cost of training, all employers



Highlights from the key informant interviews

Over 30 interviews were undertaken with key informants. These included individuals from the following types of organizations: specific tourist sector employers; certain tourist industry employer associations; destination marketing organizations; community colleges; school boards; and employment service providers (both Employment Ontario and Ontario Works).

The qualitative insights from these key informants very much paralleled what one finds in the literature on tourism labour market issues. The following is a short distillation of the major themes:

- Nature of the tourism business defines the labour market challenges: the fact is, many jobs in the tourism sector are at the low end of the pay scale, much of the work is outside of regular hours (evenings and weekends), and a good portion of jobs are seasonal, offering limited prospects for individuals who wish or need to work full-year; at the same time, some employers in the tourism sector can be very demanding; as a result, work in the tourism sector can be a passing affair for many, a place to get some work experience but not a career choice;
- Employers face dilemma of over- or under-qualified: If an individual is over-qualified for the position, there is a good chance they will leave the moment something more suitable to their expectations appears, whereas if an individual is under-qualified, then there can arise issues relating to their skills, attitudes and/or dependability;
- Lower essential skills ratings for existing tourism sector staff: Projects focusing on literacy and essential skills have found that current staff in the tourism sector often rank low in these skills, suggesting the need for remedial foundational training to raise their abilities to appropriate levels;
- Employers are sceptical of employment services programs: Employers are somewhat sceptical of being able to recruit individuals through employment services programs such as Employment Ontario or Ontario Works, in large part because they feel such individuals may need extra assistance in transitioning into employment and in acclimatizing to a workplace; employers do not feel they have the extra time needed to assist such individuals in making these transitions;
- Employers are wary of investing in employees: Because many jobs are seasonal and because of the high level of turnover, employers are hesitant to invest in employees, because they feel they are less likely to get the return on that investment before that employee moves on;
- Training is problematic for other reasons: Employers do not always feel the right training is available, and they certainly have concerns about the cost of training; some employers are not convinced about the value of training (the return on the investment); yet they remain pressured to provide a certain level of training, if only because of turnover and the significant number of job candidates with limited experience;
- Little promotion of career opportunities in tourism: Employers feel that there is not enough effort made to familiarize job candidates and students about the viable careers that exist in the tourism sector, which contributes to the attitude among employees that tourism jobs are transitory and a way-station before one settles on a career in some other sector;

- Some employers raise reservations about young employees: A number of employers expressed concerns about the work ethic of youth, feeling that they exhibited limited commitment to the job, especially in terms of their reliability and their appreciation of what proper customer service requires; some employers also thought some youth had an exaggerated sense of entitlement, while not understanding the expectations that employers had of them;
- Employers reluctant to use foreign temporary workers, but praise the quality of their work: Most employers claim they would not wish to use foreign temporary workers, both because of the cost and because they do not wish to appear to be avoiding giving work to Canadians; that being said, those that do use foreign temporary workers say they have no choice, because it is so difficult to recruit reliable staff; they also maintain that the quality of their work is extremely high, to the point that they serve as good models for the Canadian staff;
- HR skills not always a strong suit for tourism sector employers: Several informants remarked that human resources management is not always a strong skill among tourism sector managers, particularly owner-operators who have a strong entrepreneurial streak and who maintain a keen focus on meeting the needs of their customers; as a consequence, they may demand a lot of employees, but may not always appreciate the need to or the best way to engage their own staff;
- Transportation a barrier for potential employees in many instances: The lack of appropriate public transportation in rural and small town areas reduces the potential pool of individuals who could be recruited for jobs in the tourism sector; transportation becomes an issue where facilities are located in remote areas or in high demand cottage country areas, where housing costs end up being high, with the result being that individuals working in the tourism sector are unlikely to be able to afford to rent or own housing closeby; in these instances, individuals typically have to own a car in order to commute to a tourism job;
- System-wide challenges to advancing solutions for the tourism labour market: The tourism labour market poses a number of distinct challenges: its potential labour force is either inexperienced or needs preparation for the workplace, and training is a necessary ingredient; as such, solutions require drawing on several resources, such as employment service providers, educators (high schools and community colleges in particular), and engaging a number of employers in a project, in order to realize economies of scale; this depends on a degree of system-wide coordination that is not often practiced in our labour market; workforce development boards are one intermediary that can undertake that function, but it also depends on the appetite of local stakeholders to come together to devise and implement solutions; the impetus can come from a number of different quarters, and it requires nurturing a spirit of collaboration.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations that emerged from the analysis and deliberations following the data gathering. Each recommendation has some elaboration regarding rationale and next steps, with some recommendations receiving more details than others.

The recommendation themes are the following:

- 1) Customer service training
- 2) Links with high schools
- 3) Co-ops, placements and internships
- 4) Pre-employment preparation
- 5) Better screening by employment agencies
- 6) Career advancement/employee engagement
- 7) Advocacy with employers
- 8) Raising appeal of tourism jobs
- 9) Temporary foreign worker program
- 10) Transportation
- 11) Survey directed at residents

1) Customer service training

Customer service training is the predominant issue for the tourism sector, a message that comes through from the employer survey, interviews with key informants and deliberations with the project steering committee. For this reason, this particular recommendation will receive special elaboration.

As the employer survey highlighted, this issue attracted the highest priority score:

	Average score	Highest %
Providing customer service training and enhancing soft skills (such as interpersonal communications)	5.71	41%
Basic pre-employment programs familiarizing individuals with the expectations of a workplace (attendance, punctuality, taking direction)	5.27	34%
Seeking funding to supplement the investment by employers into workplace training	5.19	27%

Clearly, employers are concerned about the quality of their workforce. Firstly, they rank “customer service training” as their top priority. Ranking pre-employment programs as their second highest priority indicates they wish to see the calibre of job candidates improved.

If training ranks as such a priority, why is it not being addressed? The survey provides one reason: seeking funding for training ranked as the third highest priority. So, cost is likely an issue.

We also know, from studies and from the interviews, that other significant challenges are associated with the training issue: a large number of the jobs are low-skilled and low-paying, and many are seasonal. As a result, the sector does not provide a great draw for individuals seeking more secure employment. Consequently, there is a high degree of turnover, resulting in new hires needing to be trained. It is likely that a larger portion of the training simply involves orienting a new hire to the job.

On the other hand, there is far more value to be gained from training.

How, then, to approach the issue of training? One needs to unpack several issues:

- 1) The business case for developing one’s workforce
- 2) Identifying the barriers to training
- 3) Identifying where to begin

The business case for developing one’s workforce⁵

The studies on this point are both unequivocal in their conclusions and robust in their evidence: there is indeed a strong business case to support employer investment in workforce development, with impacts on a vast array of indicators.

Two broad reviews of the international literature summarize their findings as follows:

“The literature reviewed in this section shows unequivocally that higher level skills are essential to support higher levels of company performance regardless of sector...The investment employers make in workforce training raises productivity and firm performance across a range of measures. The gains they make in productivity also outweigh the rise in wages for trained workers by 2-5 times.”⁶

⁵ The rest of this section is drawn from a soon-to-be released study prepared by Tom Zizys for the Metcalf Foundation.

⁶ Richard Garrett, Mike Campbell and Geoff Mason, *The Value of Skills: An Evidence Review*, UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2010, p. 71.

“In general, studies of enterprise returns on training investment overwhelmingly indicate that firms recoup their investments in training many times over in raised productivity and enterprise performance.”⁷

More specific findings include:

- “The failure rate of companies that did not train their staff was, over a six year period, 27% compared to 11% for companies that did train their staff. The gap was particularly marked in manufacturing, construction and hospitality;”⁸
- Training leads to increases in productivity, value-added, net output, return on assets, net income per employee as well as an enhanced propensity to innovate;⁹
- Certain types of training can improve levels of job satisfaction, which in turn reduce absenteeism and quit rates, as well as increase commitment to the company;¹⁰
- Other forms of returns include:
 - ❖ “Greater flexibility amongst employees who can perform a range of tasks;
 - ❖ Reduced overhead costs to the firm such as more efficient use of existing facilities, lower consumable costs and reduced human resource expenses;
 - ❖ Greater ability to innovate in terms of adopting new technology and introducing better forms of work organization;”¹¹
 - ❖ These new forms of work organization which training directly supports include new work practices, quality initiatives, team approaches and improved customer service;¹²
 - ❖ 50 other possible training outcome indicators grouped into seven clusters: sales and profitability; quality of products and services; customer service and satisfaction; occupational health and safety; organizational learning and development; and organizational climate, culture and practices.¹³

In the hospitality sector, the logic is laid out in Diagram 1. The service sector is in the business of providing services, which often have a qualitative and subjective component to them. This is particularly so in the tourism and hospitality industry, where the customer is seeking an experience. That experience is greatly shaped by how customers are personally treated by the staff they encounter. The capacity of staff to provide a quality experience to the customer depends on a number of factors, including the competence of the staff (which can be developed through training), the degree to which the staff feel good about their job (which can be enhanced through employee engagement strategies), as well as the innate personal characteristics of the employee (things one screens for when hiring).

⁷ Andrew Smith (ed.), *Return on Investment in Training: Research Readings*, National Centre for Vocational Education Research (Australia), 2001, p. 5.

⁸ Garrett et al., p. 40.

⁹ Ibid, pp. 40-2.

¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 44, 52.

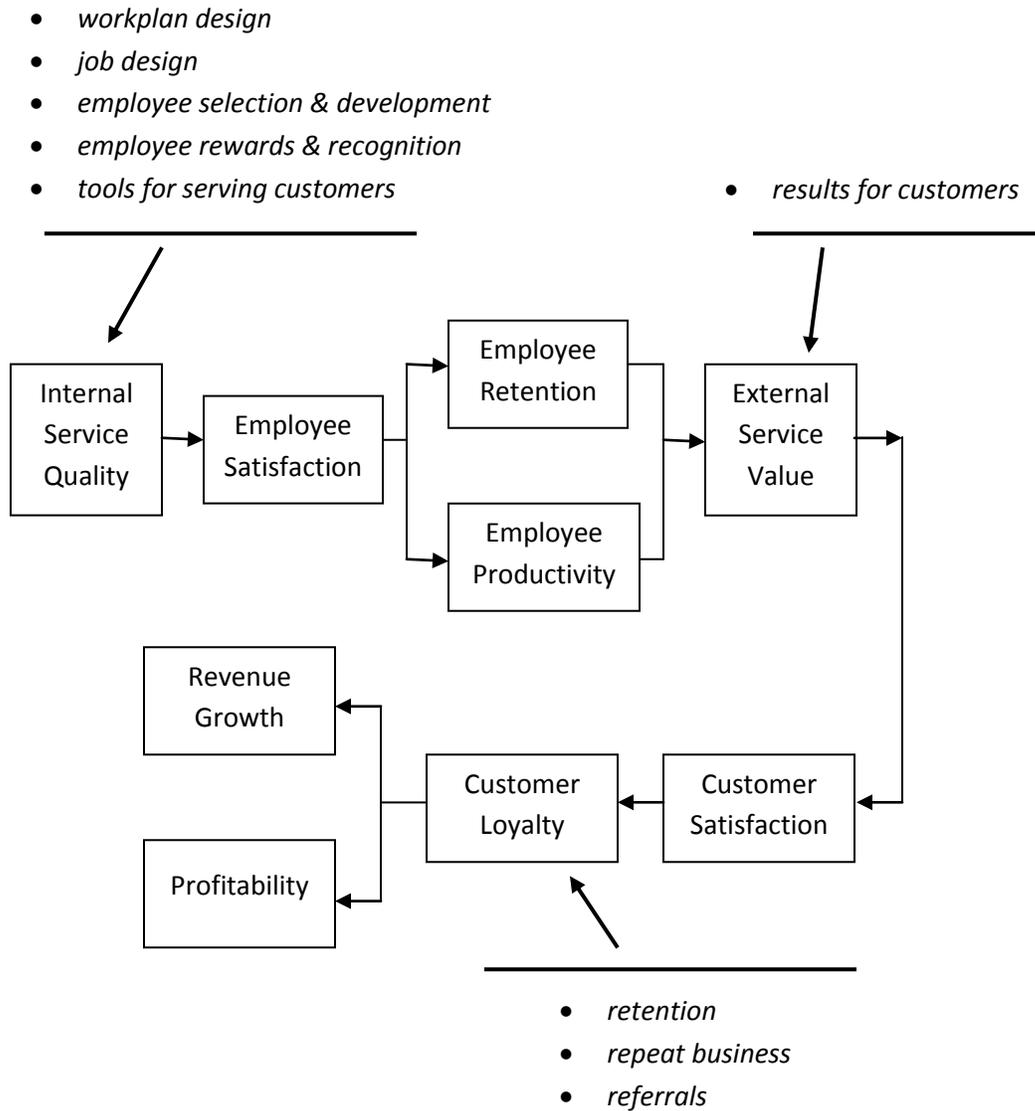
¹¹ Andrew Smith (ed.), p. 14.

¹² Ibid, p. 49.

¹³ Ibid, pp. 54-57.

This diagram highlights how proper recruitment, competency in skills and employee engagement are the foundation for employee satisfaction, resulting in a better product, the basis for customer satisfaction.

Diagram 1: The connection between competent, satisfied employees and business performance¹⁴



Employee engagement deserves special mention. Numerous studies have shown that employees who are passionate about their work and feel a strong connection to their company have higher retention

¹⁴ Matthew Williams, Aoife Ni Luanaigh and Richard Garrett, *Sector Skills Insights: Tourism*, UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2012, p. 21.

rates, lower rates of absenteeism, higher customer service scores, higher productivity and fewer accidents, all contributing to higher revenues.

What do we mean by employee engagement? Consider how an employer might assess an employee on the following measures:¹⁵

- Takes on more work to help colleagues
- Works more hours than is paid or contracted to
- Does not feel under excessive pressure in their job
- Has positive relationships with colleagues
- Achieves what they feel to be the right work–life balance
- Is satisfied with the content of their job role
- Is satisfied with their job overall
- Is satisfied with their relationship with their line manager or supervisor
- Thinks their employer treats them fairly
- Has a clear knowledge of the purpose of their organisation
- Is motivated by that purpose
- Feels their organization gives them the opportunity to learn and grow
- Feels they are consulted about important decisions
- Feels that they are treated with respect
- Feel they have the opportunity to feed their views upward

Advancing employee engagement in one’s workforce can involve the following drivers:¹⁶

- Doing meaningful work, feeling your work makes a difference;
- Having positive working relationships with co-workers, superiors and subordinates;
- Receiving regular communications and feedback from supervisors;
- Providing effective internal employee communications (keeping employees “in the know;”)
- Offering recognition and appreciation, through incentives but also by acknowledging good work and the extra effort;
- Being clear about job expectations;
- Offering career advancement opportunities;
- Being part of something “bigger” – employees are more motivated when they know their organization is a leader in its field or espouses values that are important to them, or when they are working for admired or inspiring leaders;
- Having respect for the work-life balance, accommodating workers through scheduling and other considerations to reduce the stress brought on by external issues.

¹⁵ This list was compiled from Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (UK), *Employee Outlook: Winter 2012-13*, pp. 4, 6.

¹⁶ From Tom Zizys, *Labour Market Overview of the Tourism Industry in Simcoe and Muskoka*, 2011, p. 30.

Identifying the barriers to training

These can be summarized as follows: ¹⁷

Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Despite a plethora of studies, the business rationale for workforce investment may not be reaching as many employers as is needed• Employers may have only a general sense of the studies, remaining sceptical of the evidence• Employers may not be aware of appropriate training resources, either in terms of content (fit to their needs) or quality
Risk aversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The potential benefits derived from training are longer-term and not entirely quantifiable while the cost of training is direct and immediate• Despite studies to the contrary, employers may feel training increases the likelihood that improved workers will find better opportunities elsewhere
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The monetary cost of training may be a barrier for some• For their balance sheet, companies calculate training as a cost, and often perceive it the same way, as opposed to as an investment• Financial lenders may not be convinced to provide loans based on a return on investment calculation for training
Inertia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sometimes it is easier to stay with the tried and true• Training, if done during work time, can involve disruption of work• Managers or supervisors may also be required to invest time they feel they do not have in training (for highly firm-specific training), or in seeking out the appropriate training resources• Staff may be reluctant to participate in training (they may feel more work may be required of them, they feel they will not receive commensurate compensation, they may feel threatened or fear of failure)
Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Managers do not have the foundational skills in HR or in appreciating value of training• May be driven by stereotypical or prejudicial thinking about workers and not believe there is value in investing in them• May not have the social skills or may not have developed the social networks to be aware of possible training partners or resources

¹⁷ The main sources for Table 14 are three reports from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills: *Ambition 2020: World Class Skills and Jobs for the UK, The 2009 Report*, p. 82-83; *Ambition 2020: World Class Skills and Jobs for the UK, The 2010 Report*, p. 96; *Review of Employer Collective Measures: Empirical Review; Evidence Report 7*, November 2009, pp. 50-51.

Identifying where to begin

The likely entry-point for advancing training for employees is through communications and workshops directed at managers and supervisors. These ranked in the mid-range as far as the priority scoring was concerned:

Table 15: Scoring of management capacity building and employee engagement among priority workforce initiatives		
	Average score	Highest %
Helping management to develop and implement employee engagement strategies (10th out of 26)	4.83	16%
Improving supervisory and management skills in HR (12th out of 26)	4.79	18%
Help with identifying, choosing and implementing effective employee engagement strategies (15th out of 26)	4.71	17%

This could take the form of a workshop, rather than a straight presentation, as it would benefit from the interaction of participants, to provide the opportunity for the resistance to training to become better articulated as well as challenged.

Such a workshop would have several elements:

- Establishing the business case for training of employees
- Highlighting why training will become even more important (growing reliance on IT; engaging with a youth workforce; engaging old workers seeking some fulfillment; intensifying discrimination on the part of customers)
- Linking employee engagement (and sound HR practices) to training argument¹⁸
- Clarifying what may be the barriers to training (likely different for different participants)
- Establishing the need to provide managers and supervisors with the tools to deliver these HR practices
- Highlighting concrete tools/practices/approaches (perhaps with case studies)

¹⁸ A very useful Canadian resource is Jillian Brown et al, *Using Human Resource Management (HRM) Practices to Improve Productivity in the Canadian Tourism Sector*, Department of Business, University of Guelph, 2009.

2) Links with high schools

The motivation for working with high schools is two-fold: (a) to familiarize high school students with the basic essential skills and expectations that tourism employers have for the kinds of jobs that high school students are likely to apply for, namely part-time and summer jobs; (b) to widen the perspective of high school students, so that they may consider career opportunities in the tourism sector; acquiring such an interest may also change how a student may approach a part-time or summer job.

In fleshing out this recommendation, discussions were had with individuals in the education sector, who proposed the following approach:

Should start with a high school that has a high skills major in hospitality and tourism

The thinking is that a high school that has a high skills major in hospitality and tourism is one where there is a teacher who is very keen on this area (it takes work to set up and run such a program) and where there are students who are already thinking about tourism as a career (these students would come from a wider catchment area).

A high skills major consists of the following:

- A bundle of nine Grade 11 and Grade 12 credits that comprises:
 - ❖ Four hospitality and tourism major credits
 - ❖ Three other required credits from the Ontario curriculum, in English, mathematics, and a choice of science or business studies
 - ❖ Two cooperative education credits tied to the sector
- Six sector-recognized certifications and/or training courses/programs (four compulsory and a choice of two electives)
- Experiential learning and career exploration activities within the sector
- Certifications and training programs/courses in first aid, CPR, hazardous materials and customer service
- Development of Essential Skills and work habits required in the sector

According to the Ontario Ministry of Education website, the following high schools in the RTO 4 and RTO 7 areas offer the high skills major in hospitality and tourism:

Avon Maitland District School Board (Perth and Huron Counties)
Goderich District Collegiate Institute (Goderich)
Mitchell District High School (Mitchell)
Stratford Northwestern Secondary School (Stratford)
Bluewater District School Board (Bruce and Grey Counties)
Peninsula Shores District School (Wiaraton)
Simcoe County District School Board
Collingwood Collegiate Institute (Collingwood)

Nantyr Secondary School (Innisfil)
Twin Lakes Secondary School (Orillia)
Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board
Patrick Fogarty Catholic Secondary School (Orillia)
Upper Grand District School Board (Wellington and Dufferin)
Centre Wellington District High School (Fergus)
College Heights Secondary School (Guelph)
Erin District High School (Erin)
Waterloo Catholic District School Board
Monsignor Doyle Catholic Secondary School (Cambridge)
Resurrection Catholic Secondary School (Kitchener)
St. Benedict Catholic Secondary School (Cambridge)
St. David Catholic Secondary School (Waterloo)
St. Mary Catholic Secondary School (Kitchener)

Each of these schools are supposed to have an industry advisory or liaison committee, so before proceeding, it would be wise to inquire regarding the presence of such an advisory committee, as one would not wish to appear to be stepping on anyone's toes in approaching any high school.

What might the RTO expect in terms of what would be asked of the industry?

Assistance with:

- Identifying co-op placement for students
- Providing advice on the curriculum
- Being speakers and mentors to the students
- Providing other experiential learning experiences: site visits, job shadowing
- Providing summer job opportunities

There exist a number of resources and guides for industry advisory groups and high schools, as well as for experiential learning programs.¹⁹

As well, students would benefit from learning more directly about the tourism sector locally. This could include data about the tourism sector (for example, the employer data that was generated through this report, showing breakdowns by subsector and size) and strategic plans for the RTO.

¹⁹ Each of these publications can be found on-line by googling: BC Tourism, *The Orange Book of Success for Tourism & Hospitality Students*; BC Tourism, *The Orange Book of Success for Tourism Employers*; National Academy Foundation, *Advisory Board Manual*; (national academies exist in the United States and have similarities to high skills major programs—this manual is a resource for industry advisory committees); National Academy Foundation, *Work-based Learning Exemplars: Worthwhile Internship Experiences for Students, Local Employers, and the Community*; National Academy Foundation, Preparing Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, *Work Experience Placements That Work*.

Other high school students could be targeted with other activities

In addition to the skills major school, there are also other students in the other high schools who could be targeted with activities, which might include:

- Providing assistance/direction for students who are graduating but not contemplating further studies (either trade, college or university), that is, who are going directly into the workforce;
- Providing assistance with student apprenticeship program;
- Customer service training for high school students; and
- Summer job recruitment.

As this expands, could aim for an RTO-School Board Memorandum of Understanding

Once a few items have gotten underway, and once the activities have expanded beyond one high school, the next step would be to develop an MOU between the RTO and the relevant school board, to formalize the relationship and the expectations. The value of the MOU would be to set out some intentions and objectives to aim for over the course of several years, something that could expand should the experience prove useful to both parties.

3) Co-ops, placements and internships

If part of the goal of a tourism labour force strategy is to enhance the work skills of potential workers and to broaden awareness of career opportunities in the industry, then one strategy is to increase the opportunities for learning through doing, otherwise known as experiential learning. These consist of co-op programs, work placements and internships linked to educational programs in high schools, private career colleges, community colleges and universities.

Currently, these placements are each developed and managed either by individual students or through the relevant departments in the educational institutions. The RTOs may wish to support these programs by advocating on behalf of such placements with local tourism employers or, even further, by creating a clearinghouse of possible placement opportunities that could be accessed by any educational institution seeking to place their students. Creating such a single point of contact could help reduce the duplication of effort by numerous schools desperately seeking such placements, and the fact that the RTO is sponsoring such an effort may induce more tourism employers to offer such opportunities. The RTOs could also provide advice and factsheets on what makes for a successful work placement experience, both from an employer's and a student's perspective.

Another strategy could be to represent the local tourism industry at placement or career fairs held at schools, or to organize a delegation of employers who could attend such an event together, to pitch the local tourism industry as an attractive venue to students seeking work placements or employment.

4) Pre-employment preparation

Employers are certainly placing greater expectations on job candidates to be near 100% job ready. With competitive pressures, employers feel themselves less able to spend much time getting a new employee up to speed. Meanwhile, even entry-level jobs often require more skills, from customer service to being tech-savvy, so individuals who have less work experience need better preparation.

Some individuals who are unemployed would benefit from more intensive pre-employment preparation, as well as support as they make the transition into the workforce. This could include:

- More extensive familiarization with expectations related to employment, focusing on essential skills such as job task planning, problem-solving, communicating with others and working with others, as well as such employability skills as demonstrating positive attitudes and behaviours, being responsible, being resourceful and working independently and working safely;
- Specific skills training relating to a particular entry-level occupation;
- Guidance relating to life skills such as time management, addressing potential barriers to maintaining a job (such as ensuring one has planned for transportation or for managing domestic responsibilities);
- Job coach support once employment has started, to help individuals address issues or problems that might arise.

Such a strategy would benefit from a group approach, where workshops and support could benefit from economies of scale. As well, it would be necessary to engage several employers from the outset who have need of entry-level job candidates so that the expectations of these specific employers could be woven into the employment preparation curriculum.

As part of this project, discussions have already been started with certain employment service providers as well as several employers, with positive responses, so that steps are underway to sketch out what such a project could look like, as the first step to project design and implementation.

5) Better screening by employment agencies

When employers are asked about how employment services can serve them more effectively, one of the common responses is that these services could do a better job of screening the candidates that they refer. By this they mean:

“Understand what the employer is looking for; the person may be a terrific individual but still may not meet or fit with the employer’s environment”

“Having a clear understanding of the job description and function”²⁰

Employment services do seek to find the right fit between a job opening and a job candidate. They analyze the standard descriptions found for any particular occupation as well as try to gain as much insight about the specific requirements of the job from the job posting and from the employer, where possible, and seek to match that with the qualifications, experiences and aspirations of the individual looking for work.

It is nevertheless possible that more could be done. For the local tourism sector, occupational descriptions of common jobs in the tourism sector could be prepared that provide even greater detail, including rating jobs along a number of competency dimensions, in particular in terms of specific soft skills. These could be developed with the direction of representatives of the tourism industry (via the RTOs). Further, there could be an evaluation mechanism, whereby employers could provide feedback on the candidates who were referred, so that employment agencies can learn in what ways their screening was accurate or not. Over time, agencies could fine-tune their referrals.

Done right, such a process could save employers time and ensure a better fit among the candidates they do hire, ultimately saving them money (and aggravation). Such a service would be particularly welcome among smaller establishments, which do not have the resources to recruit broadly.

6) Career advancement/employee engagement

One of the challenges that employers in the tourism sector face is attracting and holding on to good employees over the long term. With a large proportion of jobs in the sector being entry-level, and many of them lower paying, job candidates often look to this sector as a temporary way station, possibly a part-time or summer job, but not a longer term commitment or career.

Employee engagement is one strategy that was already discussed under Recommendation #1. To summarize the purpose of an employee engagement strategy: if the employer makes the employee feel wanted, engaged and fulfilled by his or her work, the employer is far more likely to benefit from the increased quality of effort on the part of the employee. To put it another way: the tourism sector places a lot of emphasis on pleasing the customer, both to meet their expectations but also to increase return traffic and word-of-mouth referrals. It makes sense to take that same approach to one’s employees, because by motivating them, one increases the likelihood that one’s customers will receive the quality of service that the employer aspires to.

²⁰ These comments are from an on-line survey done of employers across all industries in Simcoe and Muskoka in 2012. The results and analysis of the survey can be found in: Tom Zizys, *Digging Deeper: Learning from the Local Labour Market in Simcoe and Muskoka*, 2012, p. 63.

Offering career advancement opportunities is another strategy for securing employees for the long haul. That can be done on an individual basis, or it can be done more deliberately with several employees and even across several employers. Such an approach is called a career ladder program.

A career ladder normally refers to the opportunity to advance along a path of progressively higher-ranked jobs, in terms of skill level, remuneration and/or responsibility. A career ladder program in one that creates an *intentional* series of connected education and training steps, together with whatever support is needed, which allows individuals to access employment, and then allows workers (new and incumbent) to advance over time to successively higher levels of education and employment.

Such programs are usually not limited to one employer but instead apply across an industry sector or subsector in a given area, to take advantage of economies of scale and to address collectively the broad need for better-qualified employees. Explicitly designing pathways of occupational advancement relies on:

- (Re)introducing intermediate career steps;
- Facilitating access to education and training while working (through learner-friendly workplaces and work-friendly education);
- Linking job prerequisites to the training program;
- Providing the necessary services and supports that employees need to juggle work and career development.

The fact is, career ladder programs have been developed in a number of locations in the United States:

- Probably the most extensive training and career ladder program can be found in Las Vegas. *The Culinary Training Academy* is a joint venture of Culinary Union 226 (60,000 members) and 24 casino and resort properties. The Academy trains 3000 individuals a year, for entry-level employment and for incumbent workers looking to move up the career ladder;
- The *San Francisco Hotels Partnership Project* encompasses 11 Class A hotels and covers nearly 5,000 workers. It focuses on the entire range of labour-management issues, and incorporates a training fund that supports career ladder opportunities;
- The *Four-City Hospitality Career Ladders Project* covered San Diego, San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Jose. The project is a collaboration between unions, hotels and community colleges. In its first year, 121 workers at 12 hotels underwent training for career advancement.

To begin such a project would require an industry sector where there are opportunities for advancement and a location where there is a concentration of employers in that sector. In the tourism industry, an obvious industry candidate is the hotel industry, with a good mix of entry-level and mid-level occupations. Across the area covered by this study, concentrations of hotels are found in Kitchener-Waterloo, Barrie and Guelph.

The first step would involve a feasibility study, which should engage the broadest range of participants. This would likely include: the RTO; the local workforce development board; as many employers as would

be interested in participating; a community college with a hospitality program; the union representing the local hotels (if such a union is present); local high schools with a high skills majors program in hospitality and tourism; local Employment Ontario agencies; and the local Ontario Works administration.

The process of engaging in a feasibility study would help determine whether there is both a need for such an initiative as well as whether there is a willingness to use such an approach to develop the local workforce. The focus of the feasibility study would be:

- 1) To identify and quantify the specific occupations that could be part of a career ladder approach;
- 2) To clarify the skill sets needed for each of these occupations;
- 3) To map the various pathways that would allow for career progression;
- 4) To articulate what training or education would be necessary to prepare an individual to progress from one occupation to the next;
- 5) To identify how that training or education could be best delivered to individuals who would be working;
- 6) To canvass the appetite of potential job candidates and incumbent workers for committing to career advancement through workplace training or education.

Assuming successful completion of a feasibility study, the next step would be a project design phase, to clarify the specific mechanics of such a program, from curriculum development to establishing criteria and a process for candidate recruitment, from deciding on the best mechanism for training delivery to identifying what ancillary support services need to be in place for participants. The step after the design phase would be implementation, likely starting with a pilot project.

7) Advocacy with employers

A number of the recommendations suggest specific initiatives to address one part of the workforce challenge. In many instances, this involves engaging employers to consider alternative approaches. This recommendation proposes that, instead of choosing between specific projects, the focus be on employers, to introduce them to a range of considerations over a period of time.

The delivery mechanism could be electronic or in-person, via webcasts, a newsletter or a series of workshops and/or speakers. Topics could include:

- The relevance and application of employee engagement strategies
- The value of training
- Resources available to employers to help address their HR needs
- Career advancement and career ladders
- Engagement with high schools
- Managing the Millennium Generation
- The value of work placements and how to get the most out of them

In essence, this recommendation focuses on building the HR management capacity of employers.

8) Raising appeal of tourism jobs

If part of the challenge relates to the stereotypes associated with tourism sector jobs, then promotional material that counters that perception is important. In making this point with a high school student or an individual seeking assistance at an employment services agency, it would be helpful if there were a brochure that could be handed to them so they could better appreciate the employment and career opportunities available in the local tourism sector and perhaps entice them to explore further. Some of this could be more promotional (selling the emotional pitch of an attractive job), and some of it could be informational (listing of good jobs, starting salaries, fringe benefits and career advancement opportunities).

This message might be reinforced by the tourism marketing advertising, where part of the message highlights the quality of the service or the warm hospitality of the local tourism sector—this could inject a sense of pride in the workforce, a view that this is a workforce one would want to be part of.

9) Temporary foreign worker program

During the course of this assignment, a few employers in more remote areas noted that, despite their reluctance, their only recourse in the face of a shortage of qualified local job candidates was to rely on the federal temporary foreign worker program, whereby workers from overseas can be recruited for limited periods of time to fill job openings. However, several employers indicated that the process for applying through this program had been getting more onerous, and some had suggested that perhaps RTOs could assist in facilitating this process.

In the lead up to the most recent federal budget (released on March 21, 2013), there was much discussion in the media regarding apparent skills shortages and skills mismatches in the Canadian labour market. It was striking, wherever there were opportunities from readers to comment on stories, how often criticism was directed at the opportunity for Canadian employers to recruit workers from overseas when unemployment was relatively high in Canada.

It would appear that the federal government has heard these criticisms, as the 2013 federal budget proposes measures that will make it even harder for employers to take advantage of temporary foreign workers. The following excerpt from the budget document illustrates the evolving federal government view on this program:

“In order to help unemployed Canadians get back to work and ensure that Canadians are given the first chance at available jobs, the Government is taking action to reform Canada’s Temporary Foreign Worker Program. With details to be announced in the coming months, the Government will:

- Work with employers to ensure that temporary foreign workers are relied upon only when Canadians genuinely cannot fill those jobs;
- Increase the recruitment efforts that employers must make to hire Canadians before they will be eligible to apply for temporary foreign workers, including increasing the length and reach of advertising;
- Assist employers who legitimately rely on temporary foreign workers, due to a lack of qualified Canadian applicants, find ways to ensure that they have a plan to transition to a Canadian workforce over time.

The Government will also propose to introduce user fees for employers applying for temporary foreign workers through the labour market opinion process so that these costs are no longer absorbed by taxpayers.”²¹

These proposals signal that, if anything, the process for obtaining temporary foreign workers will only become more onerous,²² and that this is a deliberate government policy. It suggests that employers may have to consider putting greater efforts into recruiting and preparing Canadians for these jobs. One possible option would be involvement in and support for the pre-employment preparation program being proposed in Recommendation #4.

10) Transportation

No one would suggest that it is incumbent on the tourism industry to solve the transportation challenges faced by individuals without cars who need assistance travelling to work. But the tourism industry does need to recognize that transportation, especially to business establishments located in remote or high property cost areas, is actually a labour market issue.

At the very least, the industry should be a vocal ally of those seeking to improve the transportation options. That may mean adding their voice to a policy submission to government or appearing at a public meeting to endorse a call for better public transportation made by a residents’ group or a transportation advocacy organization.

The tourism industry might also talk up this issue with other employers, so that this might become an item that the local business community identifies as an important adjunct to local economic development, and is added to the agenda when business and government meet.

RTOs could also provide some practical advice to local tourism employers, proposing such strategies to employees as:

²¹ Government of Canada, *Jobs, Growth and Long-term Prosperity: Economic Action Plan 2013*, p. 85.

²² Add to this all the commotion arising from the Royal Bank of Canada foreign temporary worker/outsourcing issue, and one can imagine applications under this program will be even more closely scrutinized.

- Making information about transit options available to employees, by posting transit information in the workplace and including such information in employee orientation materials;
- Hosting promotional events to encourage employee participation in shared-ride programs;
- Having options in place to support a guaranteed ride home program (some parents feel they must take a car to work in case they need to get home unexpectedly, usually because of something related to their children);
- Partnering with transit providers to design options that best help employees (flexible routes, shuttles, express buses).

If the RTOs wish to become more knowledgeable about the transportation options, both in terms of suggesting strategies to employers or in terms of adding their voice to advocates for local transportation solutions, one very helpful source of ideas is the website of the Community Transportation Association of America,²³ which has an extensive collection of resources relating to every aspect of alternative transportation solutions, including such topics as:

- Fixed-route services and the trip to work;
- Demand-response services and the trip to work;
- Vanpooling;
- Late night transportation services: benefits, examples and tips for success;
- Guaranteed ride home programs;
- Overcoming transportation challenges for youth.

11) Survey directed at residents

In the course of this project, an attempt was made to conduct a survey of residents, to ascertain their views of jobs and careers in the tourism industry, to identify features of the work that they liked or did not like, and to gain insights into what may act as barriers to employment in this sector. Because this was an activity that was tacked on midway through the project, the completion rate for this survey was low and the distribution of the sample by various demographic characteristics was poor. As a result, this survey did not form part of this report.

Nevertheless, the experience did suggest that a residents' survey was a worthwhile undertaking, as it could identify issues that would make it easier for employers to connect with potential job candidates.

Naturally, any such survey should be short. It should gather pertinent demographic information (e.g. age, gender, educational attainment), and the degree of interest in working in both specific tourism subsectors (e.g. from hotels to full-service restaurants to museums to golf courses) as well as in specific occupations (e.g. a food server in a restaurant, a cook, a front desk clerk, a camp instructor and so on).

²³ See <www.ctaa.org>.

The resident survey that was used sought to understand the issues that may deter residents from working in the tourism sector through questions such as the following:

When you think about employment in the tourism sector, how do you rate the following elements of the work? (On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not at all attractive, and 5 = Very attractive.)

- The level of pay
- The potential to earn tips or gratuities
- Working shifts
- Working evenings
- Working weekends
- Interacting regularly with customers

When you think about a possible job in the tourism sector, how would you rate the following issues as barriers for you personally? (On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not at all a barrier, and 5 = Very much a barrier.)

- Transportation to and from the workplace
- Child care for dependents
- Having to interact regularly with people
- Physical demands of the work
- The likelihood of shift work
- The skills necessary to perform the work

The responses to such a survey would provide useful insights to employers regarding what positive aspects of the job they should pitch to potential recruits, as well as areas where they may have to improve their offerings.