

# Human Capital Newsletter



## This issue:

The good news and bad news about the future job market in British Columbia

Closing the Skills Gap: a guest article by BC Chamber of Commerce CEO, John Winter

Top 20 Career Opportunities for the next decade!

Ten important tips to pursuing an apprenticeship

## Inaugural Issue

Spring 2004

## What will the future job market hold for British Columbians?

### The Good News Bad News on BC's Job Growth to 2010 and Beyond

*Labour shortages. An aging workforce. Access to post-secondary education. Recruitment and retention by employers.* These are all important issues that we increasingly hear about and see in BC's economy and labour market. Most recently we are hearing two stories. One is about the difficulty of getting into university and college programs and the ability of post-secondary institutions to keep up with increased demand. Another story is about the looming skilled trades and technical shortages and the need to promote such careers. Both warrant attention.

What will the future job market hold for British Columbians? What will be the occupational winners and losers? What can we all do to maximize employment and skills opportunities over the next decade?

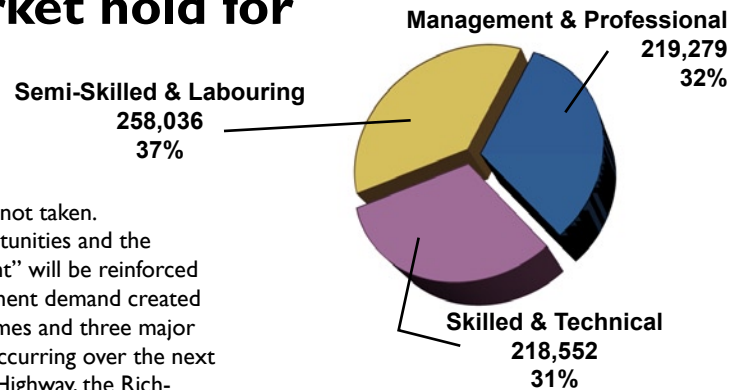
**Good news.** There will be substantial job openings in highly skilled career areas over the next decade. More than an estimated 695,000 openings will occur between 2001 and 2011: Over 296,000 from economic growth in demand for goods and services, and over 399,000 (57% of total openings) from "attrition", mostly retirements. These opportunities will be in an array of careers requiring university and college education and trades and technical training. All types of learning will be increasingly critical to our economic and social well-being; it is not an "either-or" choice. In fact, BC's job growth can be characterized as three fairly equal slices of a pie, a total of almost 258,000 jobs.

**Bad News.** The bad news of this employment growth is that there will be increasing skill shortages, gaps and mismatches between what employers need and the available supply of skills. It will be increasingly difficult for employers to attract, find and keep good people if

proactive measures are not taken. The employment opportunities and the increasing "war for talent" will be reinforced by incremental employment demand created by the 2010 Winter Games and three major construction projects occurring over the next decade: the Sea-to-Sky Highway, the Richmond-Airport-Vancouver Rapid Transit project, and the Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre expansion. These could add demand of up to 268,000 person years of employment on top of the 695,000 job openings mentioned earlier. If new measures are put in place, downside pressures on employers can be reduced and job opportunities can be maximized.

**Learning Matters.** Almost two-thirds of the new openings to 2011 will require apprenticeship training, college certificates and diplomas, and university degrees. There is a direct correlation between job growth rates and the amount of education and training required in future career opportunities. Education/skill-intensive jobs are more likely to significantly grow than other occupational categories. The other side of the job growth pattern is that large numbers of openings are expected in lower skilled, entry level jobs, particularly in retail, tourism-related and other service industries. With established career paths and progressive human resource practices, these can be good opportunities for young people and unemployed persons to start a new career.

**Top Industries.** These occupational patterns are driven in a large part by where demand for goods and services is growing and by older workforces in certain industries. The top BC industries for job openings over the next decade are retail, accommodation, food & recreational services, health services, manufacturing, construction, and computer, consulting & business services.



**Top Occupations.** An "occupation" with huge growth rates is self-employment. In its September, 2003 Labour Force Survey report, Statistics Canada showed that between August 2002 and August 2003, the self-employment growth of over 79,000 in Canada was larger than the growth of any single industry category over the last year.

#### Occupational "clusters" that will involve significant numbers of openings include the following:

- Technology, including computer-related jobs – The openings in BC's technology-related jobs are projected to number almost 50,000 by 2011.
- Management and supervisory jobs – These are projected to account for over 122,000 job openings or over 17% of total future openings.
- Business/Finance/Administration – These mostly "white collar" and university level jobs will account for over 130,000 openings or almost 1 in 5 of total openings.
- Trades-related jobs – Trades, transport and equipment operators in BC will generate over 111,000 openings or almost one in six job openings to 2011. And remember, this figure doesn't include the earlier-mentioned 3 major construction projects or specialty trade categories such as in residential construction.
- Sales and service jobs – These jobs will generate almost one-third of total openings with over 222,000 opportunities over the next decade, mostly in retail and other service industries.

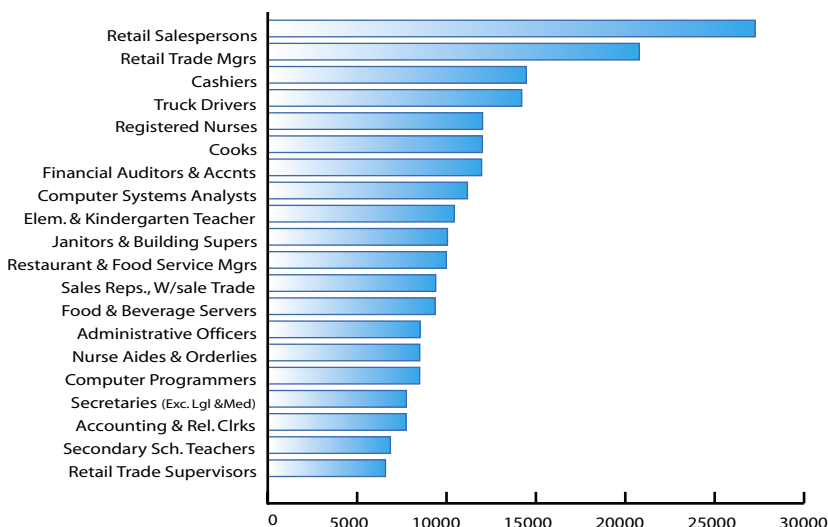
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- Health jobs – With nursing-related openings (almost 23,000) leading the way in BC, health job opportunities are projected to reach almost 50,000 by 2011.
- Tourism-related jobs – According to the BC Tourism Human Resources Development Task Force, between 2000 and 2010, the tourism sector will generate over 568,000 openings.
- Natural, applied and social sciences, education and government – Most of these jobs require university education and together they will generate almost 104,000 job openings over the next decade.
- Arts and culture jobs – Smaller occupational clusters such as these are expected to offer over 22,000 job opportunities to 2011, with a high average annual growth rate of 1.9% per year. On top of this, 2010 will generate growth for this category.

**Summary.** If you are looking ahead at where career opportunities, which ones should you watch for? If you want a career in good paying, challenging and fairly secure occupations:

## Top 20 Occupations by Openings from 2001-2011



Unless otherwise specified, all job opening figures are from the Canadian Occupational Projection System (COPS) BC Unique Scenario, Ministry of Advanced Education, 2003.

### Human Capital Intelligence

- Watch for the final report of the 2010 HR Planning Committee at: <http://www.labour.gov.bc.ca/skills/>
- Register for Business Council of BC's Addressing Skills Shortages: 2004, May 17 & 18, see [http://www.bcbc.com/archive/SS04\\_Notice\\_Feb6.pdf](http://www.bcbc.com/archive/SS04_Notice_Feb6.pdf)
- Canadian Home Builders' Association of BC is looking for a Skills Manager, contact CEO MJ Whitemarsh at (604) 432-7112

## 10 POLICY ACTIONS TO MAXIMIZE JOB OPPORTUNITIES TO 2010 AND BEYOND!

By Kerry Jothen, Human Capital Strategies

**A Ten-Point Plan.** What do we do about this? How can we collectively ensure that these employment opportunities are maximized? How can we bridge potential labour demand and supply gaps and avert unprecedented skill shortages?

We need **action sooner than later**, we need action **on all fronts**; and all job market players will have to shoulder responsibility for action.

**1** Provincial and/or federal governments should create a Human Resource Investment Tax Credit program.

**2** Enable the new Industry Training Authority to develop new, more flexible and open trades and apprenticeship models and dramatically increase the number of young people and employers participating in BC industry training and apprenticeship.

**3** Governments and educators need to support employers who recruit and train skilled immigrants, Aboriginal people & persons with disabilities.

**4** Employers and educators need to ramp up self-employment, leadership, management and supervisory skills programs

**5** Increase career information and career work experience opportunities throughout BC high schools, including expanding the Secondary School Apprenticeship Program.

**6** Establish Skills Canada BC as the career promotion vehicle of choice for the promoting trades careers in and outside of the school system.

**7** Governments and institutions must significantly expand funding for post-secondary education spaces and capacity in the classroom and lab, in the workplace and via on-line learning.

**8** Implement a long-term post-secondary education & training vision and strategic plan, including increasing linkages & decreasing fragmentation and duplication.

**9** Implement a new federal-provincial agreement on labour market training and skills, reflecting provincial priorities and federal Innovation agenda principles.

**10** Create a Human Resources Development leadership body—like the BC Progress Board or Premier's Technology Council—to ensure the commitment of business, labour, educators and trainers, and governments to acting on the above and other strategies.

# CLOSING THE SKILLS GAP

## Tackling Skills Shortage and Skills Wastage

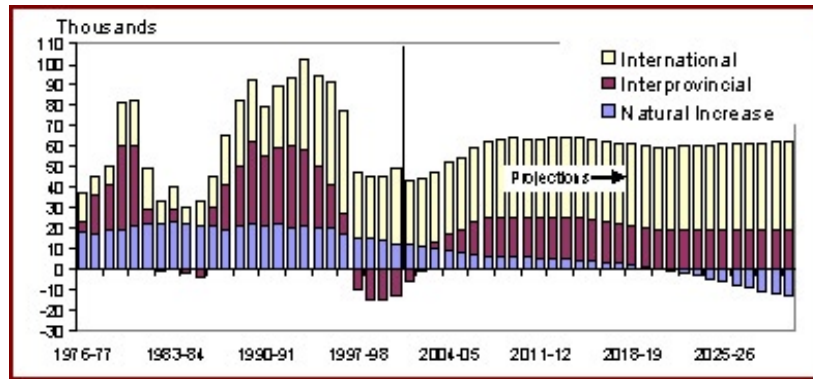
a guest article by BC Chamber of Commerce CEO, John Winter

The British Columbia Chamber of Commerce sees huge challenges on both the demand and supply sides of the province's labour market. This caused us to investigate skills challenges and hold a series of regional forums, leading to the release of the BC Chamber's Closing the Skills Gap report in April 2002.

In the face of demographic, technological and market changes, and increasing global competition, BC employers are concerned about where they will find skilled workers. However, the looming skills shortage challenge is juxtaposed with thousands of under-utilized human resources.

The waste of human capital is reflected in under-employed Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities and women; and in young people on welfare. Nowhere is the under-utilization of skills more manifested than among skilled and professional immigrants in Canada. This exists despite the fact that immigrants will represent most if not all of BC's net labour force growth in the coming decades.

The Conference Board of Canada estimates that the cost of not recognizing the foreign cre-



Source: BC Stats

dentials or experiential learning of 344,000 immigrants and 130,000 other Canadians, respectively, is \$4.1 to \$5.9 billion annually in lost income. Jeffrey Reitz of the University of Toronto estimates that the under-use of immigrants' skills and education represents \$15 billion a year of foregone earnings.

These indicators represent economic losses such as higher costs to the welfare system, costs to employers, to immigrants themselves, and to our economy. David Baxter of The Urban Futures Institute emphasizes that immigration is an investment in our future; like other human capital investments, it should be considered an essential component of BC's economic policy, not simply a social policy instrument.

The BC Chamber calls for action on a number of fronts. In a recent letter to the Honourable Denis Coderre, Minister of

Citizenship and Immigration, I called on both senior levels of government and professions to immediately create a system that will allow better and earlier recognition of skills through credentials acquired off-shore—one that would lead to the ultimate goal of fully employing immigrant workers throughout our economy. Nursing is a good example of where action is needed given we have recently heard 28% of nurses in Canada will retire within 3 years.

ESL training should be made more of a priority by federal and provincial governments and training institutions. More innovative work-based models should be implemented. Also, business, professional and labour groups should work with immigrant and multicultural groups to develop partnerships to address barriers to the full participation of new Canadians in BC's economy.

Since Closing the Skills Gap, the BC Chamber established a Critical Skills Task Force, consisting of employer, educator, community and other representatives. Its objective is to close the gap between the skill requirements of small and medium-sized enterprises and the employment of people from groups under-represented in the workforce by promoting recruitment, training and retention.

The BC Chamber has joined forces with S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and other groups to create stronger dialogue, partnerships and solutions among employers and skilled and professional immigrants. The business community must take action to address the skill shortages-skills wastage problem; governments need to demonstrate leadership on immigration reform; and professions have to reduce barriers to qualification recognition.

July 30, 2003

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## The Real Issue about Apprenticeship Assessment An Editorial by Kerry Jochen

One cannot underline enough the seriousness of fudging exam results for credentialing in any occupation or profession, including apprenticeship. However, I have confidence the provincial government will carefully investigate and make the appropriate changes to safeguard the integrity of BC's trades certification system. The recent controversy over examinations shouldn't distract British Columbians from a bigger issue - the need for fundamental change in our apprenticeship training system.

One inherent problem is that since apprenticeship was introduced in B.C. more than 60 years ago, workers obtained their credentials solely through written exams that assess knowledge in a trade area.

There is no practical assessment of an apprentice's trades skills, other than putting in four years, when authorities determine whether the trades worker meets provincial or inter-provincial requirements.

How can this be changed? One way is for the government and industry to introduce competency-based training. The apprentice or student would need to clearly demonstrate proficiency in practical trade skills and knowledge, not simply complete on time and pass an exam.

This is what Advanced Education Minister Shirley Bond has been trying to fast-track through a new industry

training model and the creation of an Industry Training Authority.

The examination/assessment issue is a small part of the apprenticeship problem. The bigger challenge is to open up the traditional apprenticeship model to enable far greater access to young people and small businesses.

There are so many rules and rigidities inherent in Canada's trades system that it is very difficult for many youth, Aboriginal people, immigrants, women, persons with disabilities, and small businesses to participate in the closed system of apprenticeship.

A good example of what can be done is the reform in Australia's apprenticeship system over the past decade. While B.C.'s apprenticeship numbers have been in the 14,000-16,000 range - the equivalent of less than one per cent of our workforce - since the early 1990s, Australia doubled its industry training system participation during 1996-2001.

Australia's participation rate is 2.5 per cent, almost 330,000 persons. That is almost twice the number of people in Canada's system, with only 60 per cent of our population. How did Australia achieve this?

- It significantly increased the participation of young people in the 15-24 year

old group; particularly young women, whose participation rate quadrupled.

- While the total number of industry training participants doubled, the number of completions tripled.
- Many new occupations were added, to the extent that the traditional trades spaces represent only 38.5 per cent of the total participants.
- A new "traineeship" component was added to its system that was much easier for young people and employers to access - particularly small businesses and emerging sectors.
- This national system contracts with 35 non-government organizations to deliver "New Apprenticeships Support Services" through 300 sites across Australia.
- This is all administered within a national qualifications framework.

That's progress! If similar results were achieved in B.C., there would be almost 50,000 apprentices and trainees in our system, with more of them from younger age groups. They would also be from a broader range of industries, occupations and labour force groups.

The good news in B.C. is that the number of apprentices is higher than it has been in several years, and that some key industries are propose innovative and flexible new industry training models.

Industries and employers need to step up to the plate to make B.C.'s new training system work. It appears that they are starting to do this.

Let's make sure everyone can have confidence in the apprenticeship exam and certification. But don't stop there. We need real change in trades training; for the sake of young people, unemployed workers, under-represented labour force groups, small and large businesses, and our economy.

# Ten Tips to Pursuing an Apprenticeship

## KNOW WHAT APPRENTICESHIP IS AND DO YOUR HOMEWORK

- Know what you are getting into and why.
- If you are not already clear about it, get good, accurate information about apprenticeship – What it is? What is the range of options? What are the working conditions, wages, pre-requisite skills/experience, etc? Which trades are in greatest demand? How many entry level opportunities are there in these trades? Look for trades in industries with large amounts of jobs, industries that are aging and will involve more retirements and vacancies, and smaller industries with fast growth rates.
- Look for good websites. Obtain information from industry and trades associations, unions, government program managers, post-secondary institutions.

## NETWORK AND GET ADVICE

- Use your relationships with parents, other relatives, friends, acquaintances, etc. to find out about the trades and apprenticeship, about job leads, etc.
- Obtain advice on which trade to pursue, on finding an apprenticeship, etc.
- Post-secondary institutions have trades departments and program advising centres that can help you find the right information and training options.

## BE PREPARED BEFORE YOU APPROACH EMPLOYERS

- Develop an effective resume that clearly puts forward your strengths as they relate to the trade you are pursuing. There are many resources for help with resumes such as the internet, books and local workshops.
- Emphasize real-world experience, even if it is not in the trade you are pursuing.
- Ensure you have thought through what you want to say and how you want to appear when you get a chance to talk to an employer.

## USE THE PERSONAL TOUCH

- As much as possible, go to the job site and approach the employer in person – especially in construction and industrial job sites.
- Have a good resume in hand, be appropriately dressed for work, and exemplify a positive attitude and passion for the trade.

## WATCH FOR NEW TRADES AND TRAINING MODELS & LEADING EDGE OPPORTUNITIES

- Watch for industries that are developing new, non-traditional apprenticeships. Industries such as residential construction, heavy industry, automotive retail and others are in the process of developing new models and working with the new Industry Training Authority to implement them in the near future.
- As you are pursuing an apprenticeship opportunity, keep your finger on the pulse of new developments in the trades. Be informed.

## PERSEVERE AND FOLLOW THROUGH

- As with any job search, don't give up easily. Stick with it.
- Learn from feedback and information you obtain from approaching employers.
- This perseverance shows through to the employer and will project a positive image in subsequent approaches.

## EXEMPLIFY THE BASICS: ATTITUDE AND BASIC SKILLS

- The #1 priority employers look for in entry level jobs is a good attitude. Also, other basic employability skills (e.g. interpersonal skills, computer skills, literacy and numeracy, etc.) and safety and other special credentials make a difference.



Some people talk about new industry training models.

*The Canadian Home Builders' Association is doing something about it.*

CHBA-BC is finishing development of its new Framing Technician model. This is the first residential construction specialty trade built in Canada. Stay tuned!

CHBA-BC – The voice of residential construction in BC  
Contact MJ Whitmarsh, CEO, (604) 432-7112

## UNLESS YOU ARE SET ON A DEFINITE TRADE, KEEP YOUR OPTIONS OPEN

- There are apprenticeships in over 100 trades in BC and Canada. There are apprenticeships in over 20 construction trades alone.
- Unless you are set on them, don't just settle on the traditional trades (e.g. carpentry, plumbing, auto service technician, etc.). There are a wide variety of trades outside construction, industrial and automotive trades.
- Check out film/motion picture trades, aerospace trades, hospitality trades, horticulture and landscaping trades, newer marine trades like marine repair technician and yacht builder, log home builder, etc.
- 13 of the top 20 trades in the Lower Mainland are outside the construction trades – 4 of them are in film/motion picture alone.

## UPGRADE YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IF NECESSARY

- The trades are not for "dummies". You need up to date math, communications and other academic knowledge. High schools and post-secondary institutions have short, flexible (e.g. evening) academic upgrading courses you can complete before or during the start of your apprenticeship.
- Consider short term training courses to obtain safety, health, customer services and other credentials.
- If you do not directly enter an apprenticeship or other employment, you can improve your chances with a 4-8 month pre-employment entry level vocational program in an area related to the trade you are pursuing.
- If you are still in high school, check out the Secondary School Apprenticeship Program.
- There are also other high school programs through which you can obtain trades experience.

## BE FLEXIBLE & CUSTOMIZE YOUR APPROACH

- You won't necessarily find your ideal job. Be flexible in what you consider. Be willing to start at the bottom of a career ladder to obtain practical experience.
- Many employers hire new entry workers for labouring jobs to start and use this as a screening period, after which they offer an apprenticeship to those with the best attitudes and basics.
- Customize your approach to the industry, trade, employer, site, etc.



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