

Summary of Roundtable discussion, November 15, 2007
Responses ranked as priorities as determined by the delegates

1. Mature Workers

The mature work force is one of our greatest national assets. Engaging these workers should be one of our highest priorities. Older workers offer a potentially attractive solution to both short- and long-term staffing challenges. Making use of this growing pool of talent, of the collective experience and knowledge of veteran workers, is sound business—a plus for employers and employees alike

Questions to be considered and responded to :

- a) How do we capture the knowledge that is leaving the workforce?
- b) How do we actively engage the mature worker back into the workforce?
- c) How do we capture and experience and knowledge in succession planning?

Responses:

- 1) Succession planning
- 2) Advocacy on Federal legislation: incentive vs disincentive ie: impacts on pensions and WCB eligibility
- 3) Provide opportunities to mentor
- 4) Flexibility in the workforce
- 5) Employer tool kits on how to engage older workers, flexibility, technology gaps, realistic expectations
- 6) Transition and Graduated retirement
- 7) Compendium on best practices and success stories
- 8) Capture the knowledge
- 9) Planned transition for Mature Workers
- 10) Create incentives
- 11) Give employees options to retirement , customize retirement with each employee
- 12) Find people who are interested in working post retirement: Mature worker registry
- 13) Convince them that they have something important to offer and develop confidence in them to do so
- 14) Develop skills to help people effectively mentor others
- 15) Recognize that older workers may feel inadequate as focus is on the youth and not the mature worker
- 16) Offer interesting opportunities
- 17) Identify similarities in values between the youth and the mature worker so that they can successfully work together
- 18) Develop a culture in the workplace where mature workers can come back on their own terms
- 19) Involvement with schools

2. Employee Engagement and Retention

An organization's capacity to manage employee engagement is closely related to its ability to achieve high performance levels and superior business results. Engaged employees will stay with the company, be an advocate of the company and its products and services, and contribute to bottom line business success. Engaged employees also normally perform better and are more motivated. There is a significant link between employee engagement and profitability. Employee engagement is critical to any organization that seeks not only to retain valued employees, but also increase its level of performance.

- a) How do we keep our employees actively engaged in our business operations?
- b) Do we have all the infrastructure in place to keep our employees on the Island and if not what are the deficiencies and how do we address that? Ie: child care, available housing, health care
- c) How are we working with the Island Educational institutions in an effort to engage and retain our workforce?

Responses:

- 1) Empower your people
- 2) Develop strategies to address infrastructure deficiencies that create systemic employment barriers such as housing, transportation, and daycare.
- 3) Understand the different generations
- 4) Professional development and training
- 5) Be flexible
- 6) Co-op transportation
- 7) Work Life balance
- 8) Intergenerational gaps , need to identify best practices and implement and how to support and celebrate the different ages working together
- 9) Leadership in companies is critical
- 10) Managers and supervisors must be trained in HR and understand the importance of valuing and respecting the Employees
- 11) Promote All jobs on Vancouver Island to all middle school and high school students
- 12) Help employees develop a sense of ownership
- 13) Accountability through understanding
- 14) Collaboration
- 15) Ensure that Employees feel valued and appreciated
- 16) Ask Employee what they need to be happy on the job
- 17) Develop trust with the employees
- 18) Need to be aware of cultural diversity in the workforce
- 19) Cultural exchange days and sharing and learning through food. The breaking bread principle
- 20) Companies need to understand the minority barrier youth
- 21) Profit sharing and innovative benefit plans

3. Foreign Workers

Some employers have decided to address the current labour shortage by hiring temporary foreign workers. The process can be time consuming, expensive, and requires patience and commitment.

- a) What processes/supports are in place or lacking to assist businesses in attracting foreign workers?
- b) Are our communities ready to welcome multi cultural workforces? If not what do we need to do to make ourselves ready?
- c) Are there any governmental policy gaps that hinder this process or what are the hindrances?

Responses:

- 1) Credential process needs to be revised , advocacy needs to happen
- 2) Successful integration into communities
- 3) Need local cultural support and understanding
- 4) Help to integrate the family and spouse into the community
- 5) Address the needs of the family not just the employee
- 6) Immigration policies need to be realigned with the Labour Market. The immigration act needs an overhaul
- 7) Streamlined immigration and a better understanding of programs available to employers
- 8) Process needs to be sped up, not so lengthy to hire
- 9) Better communication with employers of the process
- 10) Communities need to be prepared in all respects for the successful integration of foreign workers
- 11) Community and employer welcoming forum
- 12) Free ESL for the entire family
- 13) Harmonize federal and provincial programs
- 14) Unions and interest groups are also barriers
- 15) Successful foreign family integrations
- 16) Vancouver Island lacks a collaborative approach
- 17) Policies need revising such as the inequity in settlement funding throughout the provinces

4 . First Nations

Aboriginal peoples make up one of the fastest-growing segments of the population in British Columbia, increasing at almost twice the provincial average. They represent an

increasingly educated, readily available workforce, eager to assume an active role in the province's economy. One half of Aboriginal people in B.C. are under 25.

- a) What processes/supports are in place or lacking to assist businesses in attracting First Nations workers?
- b) How do we keep our First Nations employees actively engaged in our business operations? What do we need to do a business to meet the needs of the First Nations Culture
- c) How are we working with the Island Educational institutions in an effort to engage and retain this workforce?

Responses

- 1) Cross cultural awareness
- 2) Train the trainer coaching as in Duncan with Joe Thorne
- 3) Develop link between the business community and first nations
- 4) Sharing with First nations Traditions
- 5) Engage First Nations in all Island Workforce work
- 6) Need tool kit to support businesses in linking with First Nations
- 7) Barriers on and off the reserve
- 8) Preconceived prejudices of employers
- 9) Understanding of Culture and priorities
- 10) Understanding of the community's needs
- 11) Recognize and celebrate success
- 12) Compendium of Best practices
- 13) Liaison between First Nations and Business
- 14) Coordinate AHRDA Agreements
- 15) Inventory of community supports
- 16) Local Cross cultural training employers and employees

5. Gaps on Vancouver Island

Given all the services being provided on Vancouver Island in addressing workforce shortages, what do you believe is VIEA's role in addressing this issue?

- a) Advocacy?
- b) Development of a collaborative Island wide initiative
- c) Other?

Responses

- 1) Need Vancouver Island Brand Identity to recruit workers
- 2) Need a Vancouver Island Wide collaboration for workforce development . One main Strategy
- 3) Need an online web portal of all employment services on Vancouver Island. A road map as to how to access and who to access
- 4) Advocacy Re; Affordable Housing to ensure support for workers
- 5) Create a Data Base/Compendium of Best Practices
- 6) Need an umbrella organization to facilitate dialogue on Vancouver Island
- 7)
- 8) Perceptions of hiring people with disabilities need to be changed
- 9) The successful integration of persons with disabilities into the workforce
- 10) Advocacy on ineffective Policies such as The Indian Act, CMHC, Immigration Act
- 11) Literacy /Addictions need to be included in Persons with Disabilities
- 12) What jobs would be viable for workers with disabilities
- 13) Information tool kits for employers when hiring people with disabilities
- 14) Bring together employers with education , cultures Island Wide
- 15) Advocate for training and education on the Island
- 16) Create a labour pool exchange
- 17) Island wide projects and partnerships for recruiting labour. When addressing emigration overseas, their should be representation for the entire Island