

# Apprenticeship: Building the Industry's Future

Construction Owners Association of Alberta  
May 14, 2014

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# Introduction

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# Canadian Apprenticeship Forum

- The organization:
  - was established in June 2000
  - is a not-for-profit organization that brings together the key players in apprenticeship across trades, across sectors, across Canada
  - has three primary objectives:
    - research apprenticeship issues and challenges of broad interest
    - facilitate dialogue and share best practices among stakeholders
    - promote skilled trades careers among youth, parents & educators

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# Supports for the Apprenticeship Community

- Sharing accurate information about apprenticeship
- Career Awareness – engaging youth
- Promoting the business case – engaging employers
- Communicating promising practices
- Connecting stakeholders from across the country

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# Membership

- CAF-FCA launched membership in 2012
  - Apprenticeship Champion \$5,000
  - Apprenticeship Patron \$3,000
  - Apprenticeship Supporter \$1,000
- Members benefit from research reports, resources and opportunities to connect
- Other benefits – event discounts, national recognition



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# Why is Apprenticeship Important?

- Creates a new generation of highly-skilled, certified journeypersons
- Supports continued economic growth
- Aging population and an aging infrastructure are creating significant demand
- Apprenticeship is still the most common way to transfer trades skills to a new generation

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# Apprenticeship Facts & Figures

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# Demographic Challenge

- Skilled trades workforce is older than the average population
- Retirement wave means loss of corporate knowledge and expertise, impacting business productivity
- Loss of mentors compounds the challenge for apprenticeship
- Similar demographic trends elsewhere result in a competition for talent

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# Regional Interests are in competition

- Many industrial sectors require the same skill sets (oil & gas, construction, mining, shipbuilding)
- Jurisdictions are focused on retaining their youth
- Traditional sources of labour may not work for the future
- Attracting new workers will require a competitive strategy

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# Recruitment & Retention

- Registration has doubled in the last decade, while completion rates remain around 50%
- Average age of a new registrant is 26
- Completers are more likely to be employed in permanent jobs
- In 2007, median completer wage was \$27 an hour; median discontinuer wage was \$20 an hour
- Attracting youth to apprenticeship is only the first step

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# Skills Shortages

- More than 70% of employers believe there will be a shortage of skilled workers in their industry in the future
- 25% of employers in the skilled trades said they had no specific strategy for grappling with shortages
- For those who did have a strategy, apprenticeship was by far the preferred approach (25%)

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# Realities of Apprenticeship in Canada

- 19% of skilled trades employers hire and train apprentices
- Construction sector has highest level of participation (34%)
- Of employers with journeypersons, 62% have apprentices
- 77% of apprentices are trained by employers with fewer than 100 employees

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# Who Isn't Participating?

- Employers who have never hired apprentices say:
  - Apprentices are not applicable in my business (33%)
  - Unsure of future workload/no workers needed (9%)
- Employers who used to hire apprentices, but stopped:
  - Minimal work / business slowed down (24%)
  - Poaching (22%)
  - Costs too high / apprentices require too much time (13%)

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# Business Case for Training

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# Five Reasons to Hire & Train an Apprentice

1. There's a solid business case, regardless of size of business or location
2. Training to the unique needs of a business
3. Demographics / Knowledge-transfer
4. Homegrown journeypersons are more productive, make fewer mistakes, have better health & safety records
5. Cost effective – net return by the 2<sup>nd</sup> year

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# Return on Training Investment

1,000 Employers



+

21 Trades



+



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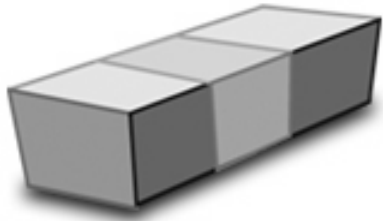
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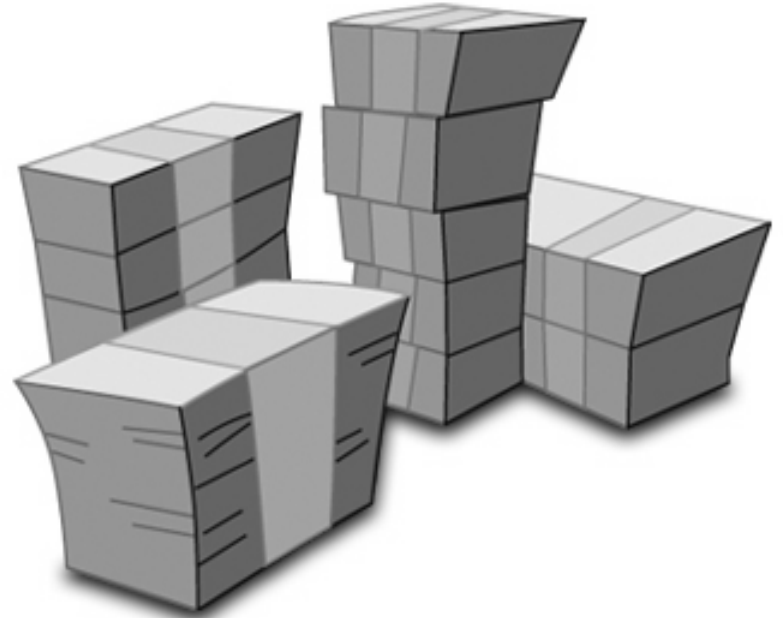
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# Return on Training Investment



\$1.00 = \$1.47



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# Other Benefits



- Recruitment
- Skills
- Quality
- Productivity
- Safety
- Reputation
- Engagement

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# Recruitment

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# Youth Motivators

- Family influence
- Positive career prospects
- Job opportunities more certain in light of skills shortages
- Enjoyment of practical work
- Interest in the industry
- Desire to gain a qualification

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# Employer Motivators

- Youth regenerates workforce
- Apprenticeship addresses skills shortages and aging workforce
- Trades will disappear without training
- Worthwhile investment
- Enthusiasm for training young people
- Company policy

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# Youth Perceptions Survey

- Spring 2013
- 873 students across Canada
- 13 – 17 year-olds
- Compared results to 2004 survey findings
- Report released in October

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# Survey Responses

- More open to considering a skilled trades career
- Greater number rated skilled trades “better than” alternatives
- Improved awareness of available career options
- Better understanding of the apprenticeship process
- Information more readily available
- Valued hands-on work and the contribution of tradespeople

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# Survey Responses

- Concerns & challenges:
  - Skilled trades careers are more appropriate to men than women
  - Young people continue to perceive university as first choice
  - Students say parents, teachers and friends do not encourage consideration of the skilled trades
  - Do not believe skilled tradespeople will always be in demand

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# Challenges for Youth

- Don't necessarily receive positive messages about the value of skilled trades careers from parents and other influencers
- Better information about the educational/skills requirements
- Need the confidence and opportunities to connect with potential employers
- Need to understand labour market demand

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# Opportunities to Improve

- Australian study showed that 30% of apprentices terminated in the first six months, calling for:
  - Better recruitment / selection processes
  - Clarity of expectations
  - Clarity of work in early stages of an apprenticeship
  - Better training and coaching

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# High-quality Training

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# Quality Training

- Block release training presents challenges for apprentices and their employers
- The timing of technical training doesn't always coincide with slow work periods
- On-the-job training isn't consistent; even great journeypersons don't necessarily have the skills to be good mentors and teachers

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# Employer Expectations

- Interest and enthusiasm
- Take responsibility
- Good listener
- Good teamwork, work well with others
- Positive attitude, willingness to do menial tasks
- Work safely

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# Apprentice Expectations

- To obtain a qualification / trade
- To obtain a permanent job
- To be fully trained and understand terminology

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# Supervisor Expectations

- Listen and learn
- Be reliable
- Follow basic instructions
- Don't expect too much at once
- A positive attitude

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# Supervisor Expectations

- In the early stages of an apprenticeship, supervisors suggest that apprentices should anticipate:
  - Getting a feeling for the trade
  - Learning the basics
  - Becoming familiar with the environment
  - Taking on a reasonable level of responsibility
  - Being provided with tasks that are checked and discussed

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# Mentoring in the Workplace

- Interviews and stakeholder input identify best practices:
  - Selecting the appropriate person to be the mentor
  - Offering mentoring training
  - Creating a training plan
  - Conducting ongoing monitoring and evaluation
  - Sharing effective mentoring and communication approaches with journeypersons
  - Providing ongoing supports to journeypersons

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# How to Motivate & Encourage

- Ask questions and encourage interaction
- Make instructions clear, including safety precautions
- Rotate jobs; ensure jobs are useful
- Maintain involvement in jobs and meetings
- Match mentors with care
- Give feedback and positive encouragement

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# Training Plans

- Training plans are consistently identified as the most important workplace practice supporting success
  - A benchmarking tool, providing a way to track progress, identify strengths and weaknesses
  - Establish training goals, ensuring issues, requirements and gaps are identified and addressed
  - Articulate learning objectives, ensuring apprentice and journeyperson share expectations

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# Other Mentoring Tools

- Journeyperson mentors suggest structure is an important element in their effectiveness
  - evaluation forms
  - journals
  - log books
  - bi-weekly meetings

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# Retention

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# Success Factors

- Journeyperson who wants to teach and has received appropriate advance training
  - Learning objectives and training standards
  - How to communicate effectively
  - Safety
- Workplace culture that makes apprentices feel valued
- Opportunities to learn a variety of tasks
- Ongoing support for journeyperson mentor

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# Practical Tools

- Employer toolkit:
  - Journeyperson's Guide to apprentice training; Profiles & Testimonials
- One-page resources:
  - Recruiting Tomorrow's Workers; Earning Return on Training Investment
- Webinars:
  - Managing cultural diversity in the workplace
- Workshops on apprenticeship topics:
  - Mentoring; Impact of Technology; Business Case

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# Skilled Trades Summit 2014

- June 1-3, 2014 in Ottawa
- “Talk to a Trade” will engage local high school students
- Online registration closes on May 26
- Opportunities to learn from and connect with Canada’s apprenticeship community



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