CREATING APPRENTICESHIP CULTURE

2017 COAA Best Practices Workshop
COAA Apprentice Attraction & Retention Committee
OVERVIEW

- Who are we?
- Why did we do this?
- Where did we start?
- What did we do?
- What did we find?
- How do we create it?
COAA BEST PRACTICES COMMITTEE

Best Practices designed to improve safety and performance in industrial construction projects across the province.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Building a workforce with the right skills, at the right time, in the right numbers.

APPRENTICE ATTRACTION & RETENTION COMMITTEE

Provide comprehensive strategic recommendations for endorsement and promotion of best practices for apprenticeship management.

Determine causal factors preventing apprentices from achieving journeyperson level & increase utilization of apprentices in industrial construction.
THE STATISTICS WERE STAGGERING
WHY DO APPRENTICES LEAVE?
WHERE DO WE START?
COAA APPRENTICE RETENTION & COMPLETION STUDY

- February – December 2015
- Objective
  - Explore individual, supervisory and workplace factors contributing to apprentice attitudes and program completion
    - Improve youth transition outcomes
    - Aid Industry in improving completions
    - Be Practical and Publishable
Primary Researcher:

- **Dr. Peter Sherer**, Associate Professor
  Haskayne School of Business, University of Calgary

Research Assistants:

- **Scott Rankin**, PhD Candidate
- **Brenda Nguyen**, PhD Candidate
Multi-level study reflect complex world of apprentice:

- **Apprentice level** - expectations start of program, **follow up** after 1st work period.
- **Supervisory level** - survey expectations and supervisory approach.
- **Company level** - interview regarding expectations and the environment.
STUDY TIMELINES

- February 2015 - T1 questionnaire
- June 2015 – Preliminary presentation at ASAC conference
- September 2015 - T2 questionnaire & follow up interviews
- December 2015 – Findings released
- April 2016 - Dissertation papers
- June 2016 – Creating an Apprenticeship Culture
"I am a 1st year with a lot of prior knowledge and I find it impossible to find work. I have been trying for 7 months with barely a reply … I believe I've been forgotten."
SO WHAT WERE THE FINDINGS?
Finding:

- Apprentices come to a trade with little understanding or expectation of their role

Action:

- Junior and Senior High schools
  - Career Technology Foundation (CTF) & Career Technology Studies (CTS) program
  - RAP program & work experience programs
  - Pre-apprenticeship training programs

- Educating school guidance counsellors and teachers
FIRST IMPRESSIONS MATTER

- **Finding:**
  - First 3 to 6 months are critical
  - Early experiences, such as orientation and meaningful exposure to trades-based work, are important predictors of progression

- **Action:**
  - Provide comprehensive employment and site orientation
  - Encourage loyalty to their trade
  - Implement an organizational Best Practice Orientation
  - Develop their apprenticeship skills and knowledge!
Finding:
- Apprenticeship creates two separate loyalties
- The requirement to quit to attend trade school diminishes loyalty

Action:
- Train them well
- Be committed to your apprentices: Have the goal of creating a Journeyperson!
SCHOOL – MAKE THEM GO – REMAIN COMMITTED

▪ Finding:
  ❖ Reluctant to part ways when work levels are high

▪ Action:
  ❖ Employers need to encourage apprentices to return to school
  ❖ Have a plan for schooling and progression

Your trade is your profession;
it takes time and hard work to
become a Journeyperson
Finding:

- UK Researchers (Fuller and Unwin, 2003) identified key environmental elements for apprentice success. In particular, the importance of seeing apprentices as *learners first, workers second*
- A successful example – Safety has become a culture in Alberta

Action:

- Our goals needs to be a culture focused on the importance of learning coupled with technical training & consistent messaging on apprenticeship practices & continuing education
JOURNEYPERSONS...A KEY TO SUCCESS

**Finding:**
- Journeypersons vary greatly in experience and approach to training
- For new stage apprentices – consistent Journeyperson interaction is critical!

**Action:**
- Be intentional about finding, developing, and retaining Journeypersons that can teach and mentor.
- Keep new apprentices with the same Journeyperson
- Implement the COAA Mentorship Best Practice
EMPLOYERS AND JOURNEYPERSONS — NEED TO BE UNITED

- Finding:
  - Often agree on the “why?” of training apprentices, but DO NOT agree on the “how?”

- Action:
  - Develop your program with Journeyperson input
  - Implement your program with Journeyperson assistance
Finding:
- Older apprentices (>35) tend to progress slower

Action:
- Be knowledgeable about scholarships, grants & funding and ensure you pass that info along
- Older Apprentices may need additional support
- Promote alternative delivery models
ATTENTION REQUIRED

- First year apprentices experience inconsistent work or lack of work
- Second year apprentices report income issues
- Only 25% of respondent apprentices applied for available grants; 41% didn’t know how; 24% didn’t realize there was money available
- Open-ended enrolment creates opportunity to procrastinate
PROGRESSING TO SECOND YEAR

- Factors contributing to higher likelihood of progressing to second year:
  - Socialization
  - School attitudes
  - Expectations on career progression
WHAT WE NEED TO DO

▪ **Apprentices:**
  ❖ Be responsible for career education requirements, internship, relationships

▪ **Employers:**
  ❖ Dedicate resources and effort in hiring SUITABLE candidates
  ❖ Adopt and implement a robust mentorship program

▪ **Post Secondary Educators:**
  ❖ Provide education that is current
  ❖ Provide flexible options for course delivery and instruction
WHAT WE NEED TO DO

- **Owners:**
  - Dedication to apprenticeship training
  - Create responsibility for achieving apprenticeship goals

- **Provincial Government:**
  - Keep Education costs remain reasonable
  - Ensure Employers adhere to Apprenticeship Act
  - Create incentives – Employers Apprentice Completion Program bonus

- **Industry Associations:**
  - Deliver modularized mentorship training programs
  - Deliver pre-apprenticeship programs that align with Government curriculum
  - Identify, promote and utilize mentors
  - Partner with school districts to create and provide exploratory programs
A QUICK ASSESSMENT – HOW COMMITTED ARE YOU?

Does your organization:

- Have an apprentice onboarding program?
- Provide detailed expectations towards:
  - Safety
  - Progression
  - Attitude
- Have a mentoring program and trained mentors?
- Have administrative management of apprentice progression?
- Competency breakdowns for school prep?
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Further confirmation of what needs to be done in OUR industry
- Students need to be informed
- Mentoring and support at all levels
- **Learners First – Workers Second**
  - Strive to create an Apprenticeship Culture
THANKS TO . . .

COAA APPRENTICE & RETENTION COMMITTEE

CO-CHAIRS

❖ Lynne Harder, Construction Labour Relations – An Alberta Association
❖ Ryan Timmermans, Christian Labour Association of Canada

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

❖ Tim Brower, Association for Construction Workforce Acquisition
❖ Ken Eerkes, Christian Labour Association of Canada
❖ Brian Frevel, Alberta Government - Innovation and Advanced Education
❖ Mel Giles, Careers - the Next Generation
❖ Gwenneth Lauder, Apprenticeship Insights
❖ Don Middleton, Calgary Board of Education
❖ Keri Miller, Progressive Contractors Association
❖ Deloris Rushton, Clearstream Energy Services
❖ John Timmer, Jacobs Industrial Services Ltd.
SOURCES

- University of Calgary Haskayne School of Business: Study on Individual and Workplace Factors in Apprentice Completion
  - Report prepared by Scott Rankin & Brenda Nguyen
  - Funding provided by CLRA and CLAC

- Canadian Apprenticeship Forum – Apprenticeship, an Employer Handbook

- Apprentice Mentoring Program – COAA Best Practice