

Labour Market Dialogues

TAPPING INTO THE HIDDEN LABOUR MARKET

LABOUR MARKET DIALOGUES PHASE II

FINAL REPORT

a report of



**COMMUNITY
COUNCIL**

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The logo for the Government of Canada, featuring the word "Canada" in a serif font with a small Canadian flag above the letter 'a'.

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Section 1: Introduction

INTRODUCTION

The goal of the Labour Market Dialogues is to explore how best to support employers to hire and retain people facing barriers to employment in order to generate changes in the labour market.

In 2005, the Labour Market Dialogues – Phase I (LMD I), and with the support of Service Canada, the Community Council designed a methodology for an in-depth research project based on initial consultations. This methodology adopted a community participatory approach, using tools such as focus group discussions, interviews and appreciative inquiry.

During that phase the Community Council consulted with over sixty employers, forty two people with barriers to employment, and six social service agencies to create new knowledge and understanding about employment capacity and barriers for specific unemployed groups. In the second research implementation phase covered by this report – the LMD II, the Community Council has explored nine labour market issues more deeply and focused on how to best engage employers in discussions on these topics.

Phase II of the LMD project was delivered from April 2007 to March 2008.

Background

As we enter 2008, the labour market situation in BC's Capital Region continues to pose a challenge for employers. Unemployment rates are consistently low and the workers' skills and experiences required by employers continue to be very diverse. The *Times Colonist* reported that the region's unemployment rate had dropped to 2.8 per cent in November 2007¹. The tight labour market was particularly noticeable during the end of the year holidays, as many employers could not get enough workers or workers with the proper skills².

A ten minute walk around downtown Victoria revealed an average of three "help wanted" signs per block on business windows, a tangible indicator of the number of entry-level job opportunities currently available in our growing economy. However, this economic growth alone is not necessarily all good news for employers, as they struggle to maintain the stable and committed staff required for their operations. A survey conducted by the Island Chapter of the BC Restaurant and Food Services Association revealed that fifty percent of operations surveyed had either lost business or had had to reduce services due to a shortage of staff³.

The demographic challenges that Canada will be facing in the near future will have a strong impact on the nature of work and in the composition of the labour market. These challenges include an aging workforce, a declining 15-24 year old new entrant pool, stiff international competition for new immigrant

¹ "It's a Perfect Storm for a labour crisis", *Times Colonist*, December 8, 2007

² "Holiday shoppers feel staff shortage", *Vancouver Sun*, December 18, 2007

³ "Help wanted: Employers struggle to keep staff", *Times Colonist*, August 2, 2007.

workers, and a growing economy⁴. Furthermore, it has been projected that by 2010 the number of people leaving the workforce in British Columbia will be larger than the number of people entering it. A position paper of the BC Chamber of Commerce cites an estimated 100% of our labour growth will be coming from immigration by 2011⁵.

The Impact of Current Labour Market Trends on Employers

Tapping into the local labour market has become a real challenge, and local employers are increasingly feeling the need to improve their hiring and retention practices in order to access local hires. In addition, recruiting new staff is a time consuming and expensive exercise that directly affects employers' bottom line.

Many organizations may not be aware of the actual costs of employee turnover. According to *go2* – a resource website for the tourism industry in BC, recent studies have shown that it can cost up to 18 months' salary to lose and replace a manager or professional and up to six months' salary to lose and replace an hourly worker⁶.

When considering the details in terms of the costs for the employer, *go2* points out the different costs that are involved in staff turnover, which include⁷:

- Administrative expenses related to the exit of an employee and entry of a new hire
- Job advertising expenses
- Management time involved in writing a job advertisement, contacting newspapers and job banks, reviewing applications, interviewing candidates and conducting reference checks
- Potential overtime costs for other staff while a position is vacant
- Time and resources spent for orientation and training of the new employee
- Supervisory disruption in orienting and training the new employee
- Loss of productivity while the new employee is on the learning curve
- Cost of errors and delays that occur while the employee is learning.

The Labour Market Dialogues project focuses on the need of employers to develop hiring and retention practices that will increase their capacity to access the local labour market. Using a research methodology that is proactive, participatory and that builds on the positive experiences of local employers, the Labour Market Dialogues project aims to facilitate access to better work opportunities for people experiencing barriers to employment.

⁴ "On the cover: Looming labour and skills shortages threaten BC's small business" Institute of Chartered Accountants of BC. Website: <http://www.ica.bc.ca/kb.php3pageid=4045>. <Accessed January 9, 2008>

⁵ "Overhaul of the Canadian Immigration System" (2006), http://www.bcchamber.org/Policy_and_Positions/National_Policy_Statements/Citizenship_and_Immigration/Overhaul_of_the_Canadian_Immigration_System.aspx <accessed August 23, 2007>

⁶ *Employee Turnover - How Much is It Costing You?* go2 — The resource for people in Tourism <http://www.go2hr.ca/ForbrEmployers/Retention/StaffTurnover/tabid/110/Default.aspx>. <Accessed January 21, 2008>

⁷ idem

Phase I: Looking Beyond the Wants Ads

During the implementation of Phase I of the project, we learned that many business owners do not have the time to invest heavily in human resources to attract and retain employees. At the same time, many unemployed people wish to work but face barriers such as poverty, homelessness, not speaking the language, illiteracy, not having work or life skills, and discrimination. With better supports for employers, many of these individuals could participate in the workforce⁸.

Phase One of the Labour Market Dialogues project (LMD I) was intended as a four month research planning process to: determine the interest level in research on how employers can be better supported to hire and retain people experiencing barriers to employment, and; design a community-based research methodology to learn and understand how employers can be better supported to hire and retain people experiencing barriers to employment.

Sixty employers were interviewed during the LMD I, and an additional forty responded to an electronic questionnaire. The results obtained from this phase of the project show that employers consider research into supports for hiring and retaining people with barriers to employment to be important. Most of the participating employers expressed the desire to remain involved in the future stages of the project. 65% of employers (interviews and survey combined) said they would definitely be interested in being involved in the research. 79% of employers who were interviewed said they would definitely be interested in being involved in the research⁹.

Through consultation, interviews and group participatory activities, over 1,700 personal and external barriers were identified by the research team. These barriers were then streamlined down to 200, and later to nine concrete ideas to address employment barriers. These nine ideas were subjected to a more in-depth research and analysis in the second phase of the project.

What is meant by “barriers”?

The term “barriers” has been defined quite broadly in this project. It has been used to refer to a variety of issues – internal and external, that present obstacles to individuals in finding and keeping work.

These barriers can range from (but are not limited to):

- Being a single parent
- Homelessness
- Substance abuse
- Low level of life skills
- Mental and physical health problems

⁸ The Labour Market Dialogues Phase I Final Report and Highlights are available online:
http://www.communitycouncil.ca/pdf/LMD_Phase_I_Final_Report_July_2007_09-20-2007.pdf;
http://www.communitycouncil.ca/pdf/LMD_Phase_I_Highlights_July_2007_10-31-2007.pdf

⁹ Please see the Labour Market Dialogues Phase I Final Report for details.

- Criminal record
- Lack of work history
- Work in the sex trade
- History of abuse and violence
- Being new to Canada
- Not speaking the language
- Discrimination
- Illiteracy
- Poverty.

Most people experiencing barriers in one of these areas also experience barriers in at least one other area. This research was conceived to explore whether or not employers could be better supported to hire and retain people experiencing these types of barriers. The Labour Market Dialogues Phase One created a strategy for tackling this research, which was completed during Phase Two covered by this report.

Community Action Research Methodology

The Community Council provides research services which are responsive to emerging community issues and engage local people in participatory research processes which result in social change. Therefore, the methodology chosen for this project is based on community action research practice that is constantly being revised and validated by the Community Council's stakeholders and communities involved in the different research projects.

A steering committee was formed with the mandate of providing feedback and direction in the planning and evaluation of the project. Members of the steering committee are employers, service agency representatives, community activists, and people with experience having barriers to employment.

Positive Deviance Approach (PDA) and Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

The basic principle of PDA can be summarized as follows: In every community (in this case the employers) there are certain individuals (the "Positive Deviants") whose special practices, strategies and behaviours enable them to find better solutions to prevalent community problems (in this case accessing local labour market during shortages) than their neighbours who have access to the same resources¹⁰.

To illustrate positive deviance in action, researchers with the Business School of Michigan recount how Merck & Co. decided in 1978 to manufacture at its own expense and distribute for free a drug that helped to eradicate river blindness in some African countries. In another case study of positive deviance, the same researchers describe how the owner of a small bus company located her facility in an impoverished Chicago neighbourhood, instilled ideas about business and entrepreneurship in her employees and served as an incubator for new ventures launched by the residents she hired¹¹.

¹⁰ Positive Deviance Initiative: <http://www.positivedeviance.org/> <accessed January 21, 2008>

¹¹ "Understanding the Impact of Positive Deviance in Work Organizations". Michigan Ross School of Business website: http://www.bus.umich.edu/NewsRoom/ArticleDisplay.asp?news_id=2925. <Accessed January 9 2008>

Following the experience with the LMD I, interviews and dialogues were designed using the Appreciative Inquiry model. That is, rather than focusing on the difficulties clients have had finding and keeping work, or the difficulties employers have had finding and keeping employees, the questions were framed in terms of successes. For example, employers are asked about their experience hiring people with barriers to employment and what had been the best thing about that experience for them.

We are adapting the principles of the Positive Deviance Approach as the tool for the identification of successful HR practices in the business community, and Appreciative Inquiry as the data gathering tool, based on the following principles:¹²

- *Discovering the best of...* Appreciative interventions begin with a search for the best examples of organizing and organization within the experience of organizational members.
- *Understanding what creates the best of...* The inquiry seeks to create insight into the forces that lead to superior performance, as defined by organizational members. What is it about the people, the organization, and the context that creates peak experiences at work?
- *Amplifying the people and processes who best exemplify the best of...* Through the process of the inquiry itself, the elements that contribute to superior performance are reinforced and amplified.

Within this framework, the main community action research activities chosen for this project, not excluding traditional research activities, include (but are not limited to):

- focus group discussions
- collective decision-making and analysis workshops
- email consultation
- case studies
- statistical and demographic analysis
- walkabouts and visits to businesses and employers
- one-on-one interviews and dialogues
- surveys and questionnaires
- literature review

¹² Gervase R. Bushe "Advances in Appreciative Inquiry as an Organization Development Intervention". Faculty of Business Administration, SFU. Website: <http://www.gervasebushe.ca/aiodj.htm>. <Accessed January 9, 2008>

Section 2: LMD II Project Description

The goal of the second phase of the LMD project was to explore how best to support employers to hire and retain people with barriers to employment in order to generate change in the labour market. Phase II of the project had a duration of 11 months, from March 2007, to February 2008.

Suggested Activities

In summary, the activities suggested to attain this goal included:

- In concert with the project steering committee and project partners, select 8 to 10 topics identified in the research design phase as areas needing research to better enable employers to hire and retain people with barriers to employment
- Research 8 to 10 topics of interest to employers. Research activities will include literature reviews, focus groups, live interviews, consultation with professionals, advice from steering group and project partners, data analysis, dialogues between employers, people with barriers to employment and service providers, etc.
- Select the two most promising topics (in terms of their potential to generate solutions that will enable employers to hire and retain people with barriers to employment) for deeper exploration, based on the results of the research into the 8 to 10 topic areas
- Engage in deeper exploration of two topics areas and evaluate solutions with the potential to support employers to hire and retain people with barriers to employment emerging from the deeper exploration. Deeper exploration activities may include all the same activities listed under research activities and may be expanded to include facilitated dialogue sessions between stakeholders, workshops, etc.
- Disseminate the results of the research and deeper explorations widely in BC's Capital Region, including to: Project funders, Project partners (including the steering committee), Project participants, Local businesses through existing networks such as the Quality of Life CHALLENGE, the Vancouver Island Social Purchasing Portal, and partnerships with local business associations. Other local stakeholders would also be included in the dissemination of results (service providing agencies, people experiencing the issues first hand, other parties as opportunity arises)

Anticipated Outcomes

It was anticipated that upon completion of this project:

- relationships, respect and understanding are deepened between and among partner employers, service providers and individuals facing barriers to employment

- there will be a greater understanding and knowledge in the community concerning ways employers can be supported to hire and retain people with barriers to employment
- results of the research will be widely shared in the local community, and
- Participating employers will have reported considering applying what they learned in the project in their businesses.

Section 3: Activity Report

The first stage of the Phase II Research involved working with the data gathered in Phase I to identify a list of topics for the research phase that have the potential to generate alternative practices. These practices will assist employers to hire and retain people with barriers to employment. During the summer of 2007 further research was conducted by the project team into nine topics chosen from the pool of topics identified in Phase One.

These nine topics included:

- *Day care limitations*
- *Immigrant employees*
- *Ads and hiring practices*
- *Employees dealing with problematic substance abuse*
- *Sex workers in transition*
- *Literacy in the workplace*
- *Mentoring needs*
- *Transition to work*
- *Scheduling flexibility.*

Based on the findings of the LMD team, nine discussion papers in each of these topics were written and published on the Community Council's web page, to share information on how employers can be supported to hire and retain people dealing with these nine barriers to employment¹³.

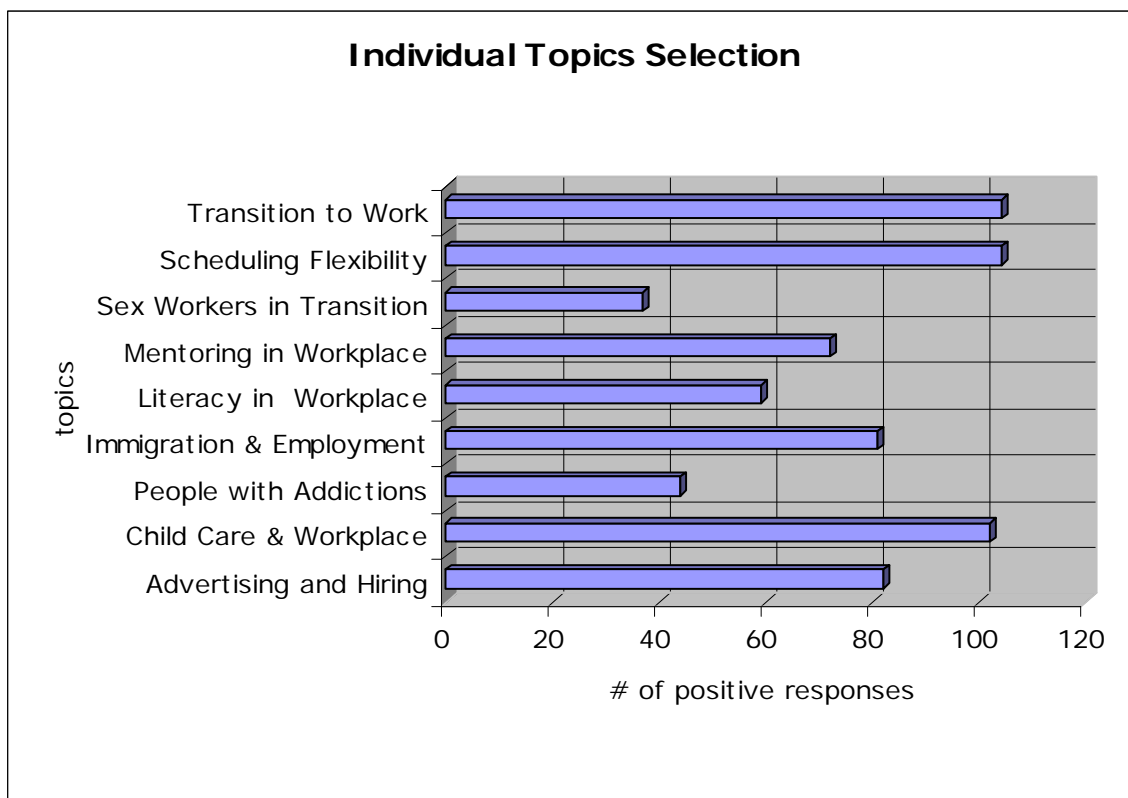
Topic Selection

Once the nine discussion papers were shared with the project steering committee, a group of 30 employers, service providers, and members of the community, including people with barriers to employment, came together to discuss the recommendations and conclusions presented by the project team. Through interactive and participatory group activities, participants discussed what kind of changes employers could make, and what kind practices would have the largest positive influence on their organizations and communities alike.

Responding individually and in small groups, participants weighed and evaluated the nine topics researched by the LMD team. Then working together, all 30 people reached a consensus, naming two topics with immense potential to benefit both employers and employees — *helping employers support people in transition to employment* and *offering flexible schedules*.

The following table summarizes participants' responses.

¹³ All nine discussion papers can be found on the Community Council's website at: <http://www.communitycouncil.ca/activities.php#lmd>



Why These Two Topics?

Transition policies help people with barriers to employment enter the workplace. Establishing personalized schedules and being flexible with staff is a simple and cost effective way to help those employees stay and succeed.

Transition and scheduling are broad topics that can incorporate other beneficial HR practices, like thoughtful advertising and hiring, which placed third in the group discussion, and childcare, which was the third most popular individual choice.

Participants recognized that the generous scope of the chosen topics could be a challenge. But, above all, they saw the opportunity — the chance to benefit a large number of employers and employees, creating a stable, satisfied workforce and stronger communities.

The following section provides a summary of the findings in these two topics.

Scheduling Flexibility

Why allow flexible schedules?

Flexibility provides an important competitive edge and benefit in today's labour market. There is solid evidence that it helps employers to increase recruitment, retention and productivity and decrease absenteeism¹⁴.

In a survey of over 10,000 small businesses, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) found that the majority were providing at least a little workplace flexibility. Small businesses in the survey were most able to practice flexibility in vacation time scheduling and giving time off to deal with personal issues. Almost half of the employers said they prefer to deal with requests for flexibility "as they arise." Small businesses that did not offer flexibility stated that the main reason was type of business (73%) such as those involving face-to-face interaction or that require being in a specific location¹⁵.

The benefits of providing flexibility include: increased productivity, improved morale, savings on overtime, increased retention and referrals of new employees. This practice can allow employers to meet business demands with flexible labour and production, and can benefit both employer and employee¹⁶.

However, offering flexibility in scheduling can be time-consuming. It can be difficult to be fair and consistent with all employees and some people may take advantage of this practice. Not all jobs are able to offer flexibility.

Some of the employees who need flexibility have deeply rooted barriers to employment. Employers have greater difficulty employing people with deeply rooted barriers, expressing concern about trust, reliability, public perception and morale of coworkers.

Who needs flexibility, and why?

Lower wage workers are more at risk of burnout due to "the nature of their jobs, limited access to time off and often greater work-life demand"¹⁷. These workers also have smaller budgets available to manage complications in child care, transportation, housing and other challenges that face low-income individuals and families.

Employers often are not aware of scheduling challenges faced by their employees, which can be various. The following lists are a range of reasons

¹⁴ "The Business Case for Work-Life Balance," HRSDC, http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/lp/spila/wlb/16benefits_costs_businesscase.shtml <accessed June 19, 2007>.

¹⁵ "Majority of small firms offer flexible work practices; Better employee relations result" (2004), www.cfib.ca/en/media/releases04/nat090804_e.asp <accessed July 17, 2007

¹⁶ "Flexible Work Schedules and Mental and Physical Health. A Study of a Working Population with Non-Traditional Working Hours" (1999), M.F.J. Martens et al, Journal of Organizational Behaviour, 20(1).

¹⁷ Workplace Flexibility for Lower Wage Workers, Corporate Voices For Working Families (2006). This publication can be downloaded here: www.cvworkingfamilies.org/issues/publications.shtml <accessed July 31, 2007>.

employees need flexible scheduling, including on-the-job, transition and periodic issues.

On the job issues –ongoing issues that need to be addressed with either flexibility for start and stop times or an alternative work schedule. For example:

- Child care –especially for shift hours, split shifts, weekend or shifting work hours/start/end times
- Personal preference for hours of work and number of hours
- Hours of availability of public transportation
- Time for educational training: skill development, GED, literacy or ESL
- Probation meetings which can be ongoing, and probation officers who may call unscheduled, mandatory meetings
- Shift work or some schedules can be physically or emotionally hard on a person.

Transition issues –temporary issues while an employee adjusts to being back in the work force and becoming financially independent. For example:

- Adjusting to length of work shift or week can be very tiring and may require shorter shifts or shorter work week in the beginning
- Time management can be difficult for people who are getting used to working again
- Mental health and physical health conditions including depression, schizophrenia, FAS, physical relapse for illnesses like hepatitis C or diabetes where low blood sugar can make it hard to work full-time or for extended periods.

Periodic issues—issues that need to be addressed with “as needed” solutions but are repeated due to the nature of the issue. For example:

- High number of medical, psychologist or physiotherapy appointments
- Legal issues that require time in court
- Drug or alcohol treatment program meetings and/or a need for unscheduled support meetings if a person has been under stress, as well as appointments at pharmacy for methadone injection
- Personal illness or family member illness that has acute symptoms or relapses that require time off.

Recommendations to support flexible scheduling

There are a number of opportunities and incentives for employers to create jobs with scheduling options, and promote them among people looking for flexible schedules:

- Create a \$500/month job for people with disabilities or other barriers, who are permitted to earn up to that amount without affecting their benefits
- Create casual work opportunities for people with temporary needs
- Promote night jobs to people who take classes in the day or are looking for full time work in the day

- Create “first job” opportunities for people trying to work and get off of streets and integrate life and work skills such as budgeting, time management, dressing for work, etc.
- Advertise training, skill development and advancement opportunities, especially for women and people with barriers.

Employment agencies can play a role in arranging an alternative work schedule or for flexibility on behalf of a person with barriers entering a job, as this requires good communication skills and can be intimidating to bring up when trying to compete with others to win a position.

Employers could be supported by a service which assesses their jobs and creates schedules and flexibility strategies targeted to accessing new pools of labour facing barriers to work.

Some flexibility strategies for employers include:

- Accept schedule changes with notice
- Accept shift swapping and requests for desired shifts (sometimes this is done by bids)
- Prepare schedules in advance and give advance notice of schedule changes
- Devise scheduling systems that workers can access and allow for self-scheduling at identified busy times
- Allow employees to use vacation time in days rather than weeks to deal with periodic or short term leave
- Create sick leave banks to use for own or family members’ personal medical appointments and illnesses
- Be open to need for unpaid short term and long term personal leave, sometimes periodically and with short notice
- Cross-train staff and/or use temporary employees to better accommodate absences or increases in work flows
- Give employees more control over how work is accomplished
- Allow part-time schedules, voluntarily reduced time and salary, or job sharing opportunities
- Allow telecommuting or work from home
- Grant flex-time or flex-weeks – daily variation of work time around core hours; this can include using banked time off for extra hours worked.

More venues should be created for employers to share successful strategies for scheduling flexibility. More research may be needed into employers’ perceptions about the need to “earn” perks like flexibility.

Transition to Work

If you don’t have a job, there’s something wrong with you

Even with the low unemployment rates today, there is still competition for jobs. A person who has been out of the labour force is competing with others who have more recent job history, or who are already working and who may be perceived as a lower risk for the employer.

Many employers are not yet comfortable with the idea of hiring at-risk youth (including aboriginal youths) with less developed skills or work experience.

Employment Agencies report currently serving a greater number of clients who have barriers to work, or who are in transition and need extra support.

As noted by employment agency staff being interviewed during this project, there are a number of different types of needs that vulnerable people in the Capital Region are experiencing in their transition to work at this time. There are people with deeply-rooted barriers and youth at-risk. There are also older workers, recent immigrants, women 45+ who need to be self-sufficient for possibly the first time, and people starting new careers by unforeseen and unhappy circumstances, such as dismissal, or mental or physical health issues.

Changing needs, changing supports

There are a variety of approaches to support people in transition to work across Canada – among them are programs that include pre-employment training and preparing for job entry, to being on the job for the first few months, adjusting to new work responsibilities and new challenges in interpersonal relationships. New approaches are also developing partnerships between agencies and businesses.

Employment agencies in our community provide job search skills for their clients such as resume and cover letter writing, as well as provide “soft” supports such as encouragement, practice interviews and follow up to build confidence.

Job-entry and on-the-job supports are also being considered or being developed to help people get and stay on the job. Counsellors informally provide people with job retention advice or follow up with clients with barriers to employment. “Job development” is another step some local agencies are taking to build relationships with employers.

In working with people with multiple barriers in transition to work, employment agencies report using new approaches to support their transition such as:

- Ongoing contact with program participants to support them with tangible life skills such as waking up for work, making bank deposits, and providing transportation to work
- Going for walks or coffee, checking with them on the job, and getting groups together where they can comfortably talk with counsellors and peers.

What’s missing?

Not everyone can access all the services at local employment agencies in the community—many services are available as a first priority to employment insurance (EI) clients or to others with visible minorities or physical disabilities. Some transition-to-work programs are for recipients of income assistance only and it is difficult to qualify for these programs.

While there are work-entry programs for youth and people with disabilities, agencies note that others that are unattached to EI or have been out of the workforce for several years can’t often access services, such as a mother who hasn’t worked in five years or an individual who for some reason hasn’t

worked for an extended period of time. There are very few resources and supports out there to help these individuals get back into the workforce.

Also, survey findings support reports from agencies that older workers, particularly women, would like more support of a personal nature in their work search. Personal supports are generally those that provide friendship and guidance and contribute to developing confidence and independence.

Some people with barriers, and often those with multiple barriers, need special accommodations on the job that can require extra communication and time management skills. For example, managing mental or physical health medication and a job is a challenge, one that can also cause a person to stand out and not fit-in. Many people with multiple barriers have pre-employment needs that employers cannot usually address, or at least not on their own.

Finally, there are very few resources for people who may be in the workforce but are having difficulty staying on the job.

Recommendations to support transition to employment

This research piece stresses the need for supporting employment service agencies in developing their programs. One recommendation is to further advance this work by helping employers develop practices to hire and retain people with barriers and develop their employability skills, as part of the big picture of transition to sustainable incomes.

In general, employers could adopt a variety of strategies to address barriers faced by people in transition to work in the areas of job-entry and being on the job. These could be developed in business practices such as hiring, scheduling and job orientation. Employers could also help people in transition build confidence on the job by providing mentoring and skill development opportunities to support their "transition to work."

A number of specific recommendations for employers were offered by agencies:

- Design simple, friendly hiring and orientation practices including:
 - Streamline policies and procedures to remove extra challenges for employees, such as extra written materials that are not essential
 - Find a workplace mentor in an experienced employee for the new employee to ask questions of and check in with at the end of the day (for example, to simply ask, "did I do ok?")
 - Build confidence by starting people out with simple tasks, then building up to more complicated tasks such as being on the phone, the till, etc.
 - Find a way to help people having difficulties do their task in a different way or find a way to set up the task so they can do a part of it (called "job carving" on the Triumph Vocational Services *Employer Services* webpage¹⁸)
 - Make it clear and safe that people can always ask for help
 - Acknowledge people's strengths and empower them

¹⁸ www.triumphvocational.com/text_only/employer/choices.htm#2 <accessed Sept. 23, 2007>.

- Raise wages and benefits
- Provide bus passes or transportation
- Provide qualitative benefits, for example, where increased pay is not an option, promote skill development such as apprenticeships.
- Promote people from inside. Make it clear to employees how to get on that path.

One finding of this research is that *Social Inclusion* barriers are better and more easily tackled while addressing hands-on issues like skill development, job search or gaining work experience. It is also critical for people to be working and making money while they are learning these pieces, which supports merging these findings with other summer research projects that address business practices.



Photo 1: Small group discussion during the community consultation for the selection of the two research topics. November 6th, 2007 (Photo by Community Council)

Validating a new Work Plan

Once the selection of the two topics described in the previous section was completed, the project team got together to re-design the work plan, in order to better meet the recommendations arising from the community consultation and ensure that the project objectives were met. After a mid-term evaluation meeting with the Service Canada program officer, a new work plan was developed to test different forms of engaging employers.

An additional consultation session took place with members of the steering committee to validate the new work-plan, and gather participants' feedback on the different materials being suggested for the upcoming campaign to engage employers.

After the consultation, the following activities were validated and put into place during the fall of 2008.

a) Selection and Publication of Case studies

The selection of case studies as part of the outreach strategy was set up in coordination with the Quality of Life CHALLENGE's electronic "employer CHALLENGE" newsletter, which is circulated to more than 1,400 employers in BC's Capital region. A writer was hired to interview selected employers, following interview guidelines that aim at capturing the positive experiences of employers. These guidelines were revised and updated by the project team and participants at the consultation provided the following recommendations and comments.

The interview should include a question about "sustainable living wage" to raise awareness about this issue.

It is important to keep in mind that large businesses may have a general HR policy, but different branches or locations may actually apply them differently, according to their location or the demographics of the population they serve. Therefore, it is important that the interviewer focuses on practices rather than just documenting the policies.

It is important to document the reasons that motivated the employer to introduce a given policy or practice, in order to understand the needs of the employer and explore the possibility of introducing other HR practices that would benefit people experiencing barriers to employment.

The interview is also an opportunity to raise awareness about the employability of people facing barriers. Employers should be asked if they are aware of government support programs for employers and employees. This may result in the employer taking advantage of existing programs and hire people experiencing barriers.

Please see appendix 1 for a sample of the interview guidelines. Copies of the selected case studies are provided in Appendix 2.

b) Design, production and distribution of a Reference Card

The second strategy to engage employers consisted in the design, production and distribution of a reference card containing tips and ideas from local employers who are succeeding in hiring and retaining qualified employees. During the consultation with the steering committee, participants were provided with a number of tips and suggestions for employers and asked to comment on the relevance of the tips.



The card also provided information on relevant websites, including the Community Council and the Quality of Life CHALLENGE websites (Please see appendix 3 for a sample of the reference card).

A total of 316 cards were distributed among local employers together with an evaluation form. Additionally, 250 copies of the reference card were delivered during presentations, networking events and upon request by employers or employment agencies.

Activities in January 2008 focused on the evaluation of the reference card, which was completed successfully. The project staff is currently analyzing the data and preparing a complete report.

c) Presentations, Interviews and Networking

A PowerPoint presentation was designed with the idea of sharing the project findings and recommendations with employers. This presentation was designed to be used both, during a group presentation or on a one-on-one interview. Two group presentations were conducted during this period: one for the Harbour Side Rotary Club, and one for the Employment Agencies Network meeting.

The information contained in the presentation was important for conducting interviews and individual presentation delivery by the Employers' Liaison. A total of 11 interviews were completed as part of this activity, and an additional 71 employers were hand-delivered the reference card and other materials, including the evaluation form (please see appendix 4 for a copy of the presentation).

d) Evaluation plan

An evaluation of the impact of the different outreach activities and information being provided was designed by the project researcher, in order to assess the perception of employers to suggested alternative practices (for a copy of the evaluation form, please see appendix 5).

The evaluation strategy of the second half of the LMD work in Phase II had both immediate (specific) and long-term (broad) objectives, listed below for

reference. The strategy, objectives, indicators and evaluation instruments were developed with a working group of the project's Steering Committee, the LMD staff team, and the evaluation instruments were also given input from employers from both large and small business environments.

The long-term objectives of the evaluation included a count of indicators related to the overall objectives of the LMD project, namely: building relationships, diversity and inclusion, and the environment for change.

The immediate objectives of the evaluation were to:

- (1) Understand the benefits of the various employers' outreach strategies used
- (2) Validate alternatives for scheduling and transition shared with employers
- (3) Measure the change or impact of sharing alternative practices and "positive deviances"
- (4) Offer employers other opportunities for engagement
- (5) Collect employers' demographic information.

Overview of Data Collection Activities:

An evaluation survey was designed to gather information on employers' opinion about the reference card and about the alternative practices and strategies suggested in the card.

The evaluation was distributed to more than three hundred employers in a variety of ways including:

- 68 employers that have been involved in LMD research prior to November and December were sent the evaluation by:
 - Canada Post with email reminder (42)
 - Canada Post only (16)
 - Email only (9)
- 182 businesses in downtown Sidney (77) and Victoria (105) were mailed the evaluation along with the reference card with Canada Post's unaddressed admail (please see appendix 6 for a sample of mailed materials)
- 67 employers in Oak Bay (6), Downtown Victoria (47), and the Westshore (14) - were hand-delivered by the project's Employer Liaison.

The evaluation was also designed using *Survey Monkey* –an internet survey management software, and posted on the Community Council website, as well as on a pop-up window that appeared when people visited the Community Council's home page. The opportunity to participate in the draw of three small prizes was offered to encourage employers to return the evaluation form. A separate evaluation form was also design to gather feedback on the presentation.

The following section summarizes the results of this evaluation.

Section 4: Evaluation Results

A. Evaluation: Analysis Considerations

Given the community action research approach used in the implementation of this project, it is important to take into account the following considerations.

Achieving employer response rate

The LMD team determined that 10% employer response (30) would be satisfactory for the internal decision-making, analysis and reporting needed for the project. To help bring in this number of responses, LMD staff conducted a follow-up by phoning those employers that provided contact information through either previous work with LMD or personal outreach with the Employer Liaison.

This resulted in the majority of respondents being employers previously involved with LMD staff in some way (32 of 38 respondents). In interpreting the data it is therefore important to note that a high number of respondents had an expressed interest in the work of the LMD project and may have been more receptive to the information provided.

This outcome also indicates that using a one-on-one strategy for outreach, with follow up, is a key factor for achieving employer involvement in the project.

LMD outreach question

When responding to the question evaluating the outreach LMD used to distribute information, several employers referred to interactions with LMD that had taken place prior to the outreach period under evaluation. For example, five employers indicated they heard about the information through one-on-one interviews that took place prior to November. This is something to anticipate when designing the evaluation in the upcoming Phase III of the project, in order to identify the impact of previous employer engagement activities.

Measuring change and impact

Initially, the reference card described in the previous section and shown in appendix 3, was planned to reach employers in advance of the evaluation, leaving time for employers to digest the information and consider change. Due to time constraints, employers received the two pieces together in most cases. Realizing this in advance, the evaluation questions were designed to measure a "first impression" rather than change and impact, and therefore, only a small amount of reported changes or impacts were expected.

Nonetheless, the information gathered through the evaluation is helpful in understanding how employers respond to the type of alternative practices the LMD is suggesting.

Demographics

Respondents were asked to identify their industry sector and business size. They identified themselves with a total of 18 different industry sectors of various staff size and legal structure.

This made drawing conclusions based on demographics challenging, given that there were only one or two respondents in each industry sector. In an attempt to get a sense of possible comparisons, responses were clustered into broader industry groups during analysis. More on findings related to this can be found in Section 4 of this report.

B. Results: Long-term Objectives and Indicators of Success

The following section summarizes the main findings regarding the LMD's long-term objectives and indicators of success.

Build relationships

Overall, the evaluation provided the LMD team with an opportunity to build on relationships with local employers:

- Eighteen new employers became involved in the project:
 - 7 employers were involved in one-on-one interviews + 11 more responded to the survey evaluation;
- Sixty Eight employers continue to be involved in project:
 - 68 employers involved in LMD over Phase 1 and the first part of Phase 2 were sent the LMD information; 20 responded with evaluation;
- Eleven employers agreed to have their experiences presented as case studies:
 - 2 to be published in "the employer CHALLENGE e-newsletter" + 9 expressions of interest;
- Fourteen Hundred employers hearing about the project through "the employer CHALLENGE e-newsletter", through case studies published in January and February, 2008;

On the other hand, it is important to note that during this phase of the project, two employers asked to be removed from our contact list, providing valuable feedback to the project.

One of these employers indicated that she didn't employ or supervise staff so she felt her involvement didn't fit the project's goals (interviewed in Phase 1 because she hired from Cool Aid's casual labour pool). Although she

forwarded the information to her human resources department, we didn't hear back from this business.

The second employer (interviewed both in Phase I and II of the project) didn't feel that the LMD was helping him with his labour needs as much as he was being asked to help the project. He also felt that he had not been able to build a relationship to the project due to changing staff in the Community Council.

These two responses suggest that, as the project grows and develops, more work may be needed to maintain the relationship with employers who had agreed to participate in the different activities of the project.

Increase diversity and inclusion among project participants

Diversity was measured by the variety of demographic characteristics of employers involved in evaluations and network contacts:

- Number of businesses involved: 23 new businesses + 66 previously involved with LMD = 89
- Number of industry sectors involved: 18
- Number of staff employed in businesses that said they could use these ideas: 1,758 fulltime; 2,900 total
- Number of neighbourhoods involved: 6 (Sidney, Saanichton, Victoria, Oak Bay, Colwood, and Langford).

Inclusion was measured by the number of employers who indicated their interest in building accessible jobs and creating inclusive workplaces had been raised:

- 25 employers have expressed interest in building accessible jobs
- 21 employers have raised interest in creating an inclusive workplace.

Create the environment for change

The evaluation supported the project's goal of creating the environment for change by measuring the impact of resources and activities that provide access to information and resources to facilitate change:

- Number of new employers signing up for "the employer CHALLENGE e-newsletter": 30 employers
- Number of employers interested in trying strategies next year: 30 (+ 2 maybes)
- Number of employers who have already tried something: 12

- Number of employers who indicate they can try something: 35
- Number of employers involved in the project through outreach activities: 341
 - 23 new employers
 - 66 previously involved with LMD
 - 182 receiving unaddressed admail
 - 70 through the Employer Liaison's business walk.

This achievement is important for the Phase III of the LMD, which is developing a strategy to follow up with these employers and engage them in the planned activities to continue to create the environment for change.

C. Results: Immediate Objectives and Data Analysis

The following section summarizes the main findings in terms of the five immediate objectives of the project.

Objective 1: Understand the benefits of outreach strategies

Eight outreach methods were planned for November through early January to communicate and validate LMD work with employers. These methods are described on page 22. They included delivering the reference card to businesses through various means, presenting the information on the reference card to employers at various functions, etc.

There were 3 questions in this section of the interview designed to understand: (1) how successful the outreach activities of November-January were, (2) how employers usually hear about HR resources, and (3) how employers prefer to access HR resources.

- When looking at the composition of respondents, it is interesting to note that almost half of the respondents to the evaluation were employers new to the LMD project (18 respondents or 47%), and, with the exception of one, all of these employers received some level of personal contact with project staff. The remaining 53% of respondents (20) were involved in LMD activities prior to the outreach period in November through January.
- Of all the returned evaluation forms, six were received before the follow-up phone calls were made. One of these respondents was from the 182 unaddressed admail pieces delivered in Downtown Victoria and Sidney by Canada Post, and five were from the unaddressed admail delivered in Downtown Victoria by the Employer Liaison. These are all employers new to the LMD project.

This suggests that hand delivery by a project representative is more effective than postal delivery even though there was limited personal contact with employers (e.g. 5 minutes spent with employers in the longest cases). It can

also suggest that downtown service and trade businesses in the tourist district on Government and Johnson Streets are more receptive to these ideas.

It is also interesting to note that follow-up phone calls from the Employer Liaison to new contacts at the end of the evaluation period resulted in 7 additional evaluations completed by that group. This supports the idea that previously existing relationships and/or personal outreach supports employers engagement at a higher level, such as is required for a response to an evaluation survey.

Business Walks

As part of the evaluation and LMD outreach activities, the Employer Liaison took the LMD information to business locations in personal drop-in visits. Three business communities were visited for the purpose of hand-delivering the materials (i.e. reference cards, the evaluation form) and other information (CHALLENGE newsletter or HR options for action) to the business manager or HR manager. Communities visited include downtown (Government street and Johnson street), Langford (Goldstream Avenue) and Oak Bay (Oak Bay avenue). A total of 70 employers were contacted through these visits.

Downtown

The downtown business walk was found to be very effective. Within one hour, fifty businesses had received the LMD materials and fifty-two percent of the time, the project materials were delivered directly to the employer. Three out of fifty employers returned the evaluation.

Overall, the businesses were very receptive to the information presented to them. They expressed 'thanks' for the timeliness of the project and were excited at the opportunity to win prizes, as part of the incentive associated with completing the evaluation (on-line or paper copy to be faxed-in).

Evidence of the current labour shortage is prominent in the heart of downtown Victoria. An average of one to two 'Help Wanted' signs, per block appeared in the windows of businesses in this busy, tourist area.

Langford

The aim of the Langford and Oak Bay walks was to build relationships with employers and introduce the LMD project through the distribution of materials and face-to-face communication. In addition, at the time of initial contact with the employer, if the employer was interested a short on-site interview was conducted, or an appointment for an interview at a later date was made. The purpose of the interview was to learn exemplary human resources practices from employers and at the same time, learn about their experiences and challenges in this current labour market.

In Langford, over a period of two hours, 14 businesses were visited (see attached spreadsheet for detailed information about each business that was visited) and five interviews were conducted (one interview was conducted two-weeks later). Please see the 'interview' section of this report for interview details. Seventy-one percent of the time, the employer (owner or manager)

was on-site and received the LMD information directly. Surprisingly, twenty percent more employers were on-site in Langford than in downtown. Overall, two evaluation were returned from the Langford walk about.

Out of the 14 businesses visited, two had 'Help Wanted' signs posted in their window, significantly less than downtown. Overall, the employers were very receptive to the information provided. Many noted that they are not currently looking to hire new employees; however they will be looking for more employees in the next few months as spring approaches.

Oak Bay

In Oak Bay, over a period of half an hour, six businesses were visited and one interview was conducted. Half of the time, the employer was on site. No 'Help Wanted' signs were noted in the windows of businesses visited. Overall, the interviewer was given the impression that employers were not experiencing challenges due to the current labour market crunch. One coffee shop owner mentioned having a waiting list of applicants for entry level positions – a rare occurrence in the current labour market.

- One outcome of these businesses walks was identifying different experiences of labour market needs in three sub regions of BC's Capital Region.

This raises questions about the factors contributing to these different experiences. Oak Bay, for instance, seems to be experiencing very little labour market stress, while there are "help wanted" signs distributed widely in downtown Victoria. Are employers more able to hire through word of mouth and personal connections in a smaller centre like Oak Bay? How does this compare to downtown Victoria? Does perception of personal safety play a factor in people choosing to work in downtown Victoria compared to a smaller centre like Oak Bay?

Transportation and access to child care may be become staff retention issues for businesses on the outskirts of the core, such as Langford and the Peninsula. Identifying factors such as these may be an area of interest for LMD in delivery its pilot programs and distributing materials in Phase III.

Evaluation Responses

In the first section of the evaluation survey, respondents were asked how they heard about the HR solutions from the Labour Market Dialogues Project. As noted in the section on employers responses, some employers included activities prior to the outreach period in their response. These responses are still included in chart 1 below, and impacts are noted where important to the analysis.

"How did you hear about the HR solutions from the Labour Market Dialogues Project?"

- Chart 1 below shows that email notification and one-on-one interviews were how most employers heard about the LMD information (11 and 8

employers respectively). Five of these 8 employers referring to interviews were involved in interviews prior to the outreach period of Phase II. This is still an important indicator, however, that one-on-one interviews result in more commitment by employers to the project.

- The third most frequent source of information was having the reference card delivered in person (6 respondents). This is another indication that personal outreach with employers is a successful approach.
- Four employers indicated they heard about the project at a networking event; three of the four, however, refer to activities prior to the outreach period¹⁹.
- None of the respondents had heard about the project in the media, which reflects on the fact that only one media advisory was sent out.

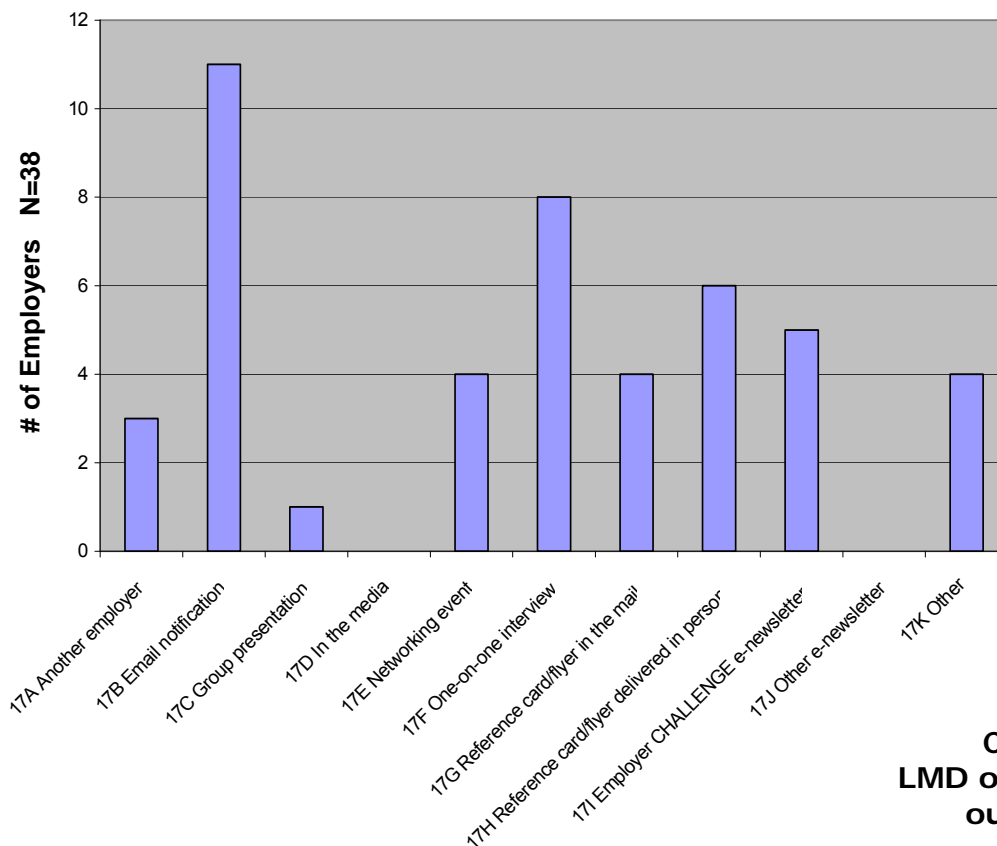


CHART 1
LMD outreach
outcomes

- Only six respondents (16%) heard about the project outreach activities in more than one way. This indicates some thought could be given to developing an outreach strategy that cross-fertilizes these ideas with employers (this is covered more in the next set of results).

¹⁹ Due to time constraints with project materials, the number of networking and group presentations was smaller than anticipated for the November – January period (though these materials are now prepared for Phase 3). These low numbers, therefore, may have some limitations for a comparison of outreach methods at this time.

“How do you usually hear about HR resources for employers?”

Respondents were asked how they usually hear about HR resources for employers, with the aim to understand which outreach methods are used most effectively in the community.

- Chart 2 shows that most of the respondents usually hear about HR resources from other employers (18 respondents) and networking events (17 respondents). This would suggest that tapping into employer networks is the most effective way of sharing information with employers.

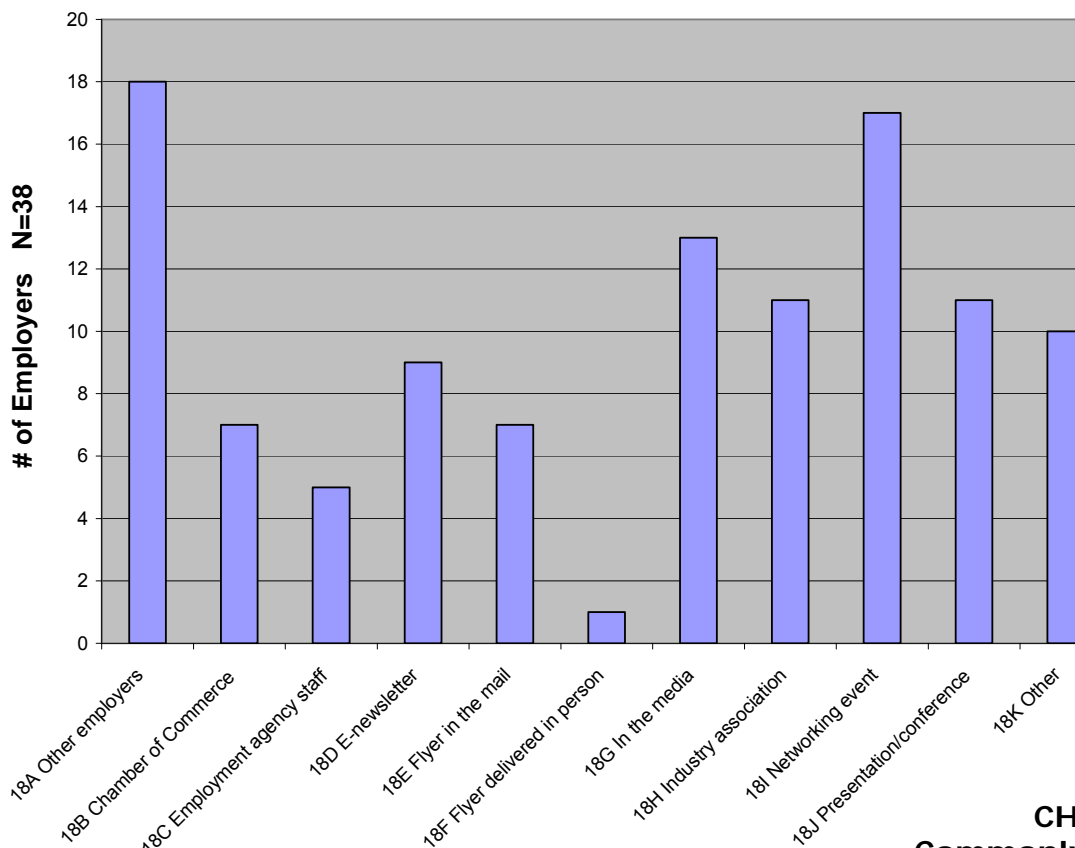


CHART 2
Commonly used
Sources of HR information

- The next most common sources of HR information for employers are the media (13 respondents), followed by industry associations and presentations/ conferences.
- Only one respondent indicated they receive HR information in person at their worksite, although 5 have received information from employment agencies.
- Other sources of HR information include the BC Human Resources Management Association (HRMA) (3 respondents), Volunteer Victoria (1 respondent), HR magazines and books such as *PeopleTalk* and *Western City* (1), and corporate head offices (1).

These findings are quite different from the findings related to LMD outreach activities in the previous question, where direct contact with project staff was the most effective method of outreach.

This suggests that more emphasis was placed by the LMD team in making a personal connection with employers, and that the opportunity to reach employers through networking events and through other employers needs to be further tested.

When looking at respondents in the retail sector, a higher number of those employers hear about resources from a flyer in the mail.

- Just over half of the 9 respondents from this sector commonly receive information in the mail and at networking events (5 respondents respectively). A smaller group of employers in the retail sector (4 respondents) indicated receiving information through the media
- The option “Other employers” was only selected by one-third of the respondents in the retail sector, in contrast to almost half of the overall group. This suggests that different sectors are more likely to receive HR information through different outreach activities, possibly due to the availability of industry conferences or associations, hours of work or other factors of each sector.

This may be an indicator of the need for diversified outreach methods in order to reach different sectors, such as: increased networking, group or industry presentations, and through the media.

- Overall, 47% of respondents indicated they usually receive information in 3 or more ways.

The fact that employers do receive information from multiple sources suggests an opportunity to reach employers through a variety of methods, thereby “cross-fertilizing” the ideas for reminding employers of alternative methods of tapping into hidden labour markets, and creating the environment for change.

“How do you prefer to access HR resources for employers?”

This third and final question in the outreach section of the evaluation provided employers with five choices to be ranked regarding how they would like to access HR resources.

Table 1 in the next page summarizes the responses to this question.

TABLE 1: Data for ranked choices

RANKED CHOICE	Websites	E-news-letters	One-on-one consultations	Paper materials mailed to me	Paper materials picked up at key locations
1st	12	10	1	3	0
2nd	11	12	2	1	0
3rd	3	2	7	1	0
4th	0	2	5	5	11
5th	0	0	8	3	12
Total	26	26	23	24	23

Number of respondents: 26 (not all respondents ranked all 5 suggestions)

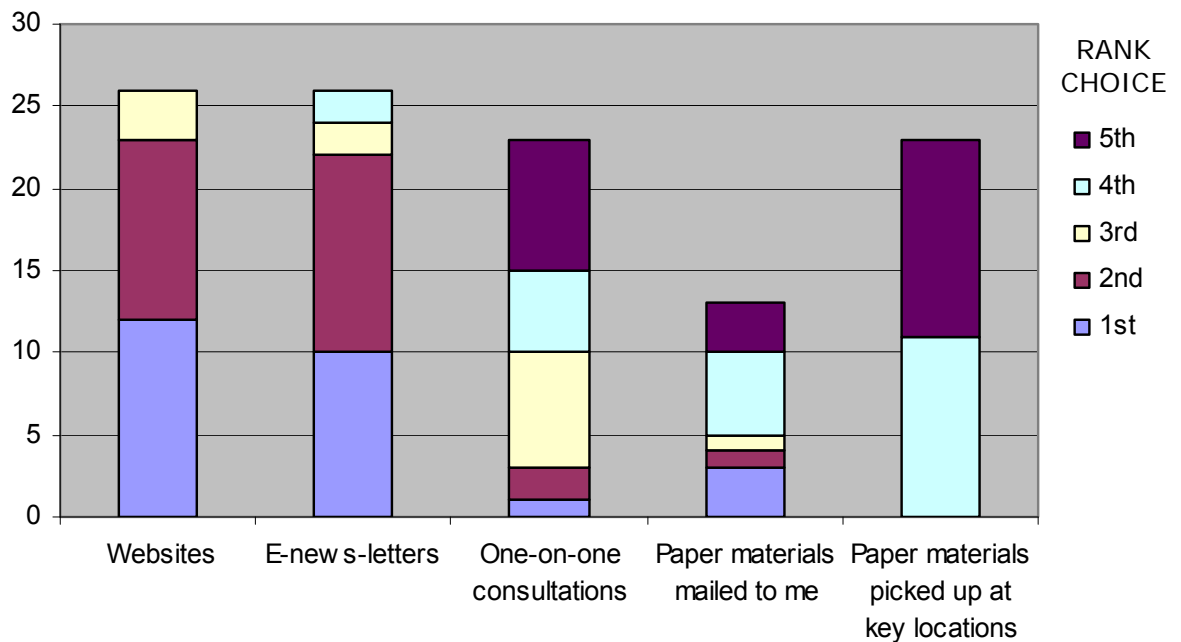


CHART 3
Employer preference
- ranked

Note that of 37 respondents, eleven indicated their preferences only with a checkmark on the paper survey, instead of ranking their choices as instructed. These responses are shown in chart 4 below.

- The results are quite similar between both groups (ranked and not ranked options), and overall websites and e-newsletters were chosen by most employers as their preferred way to access HR for employers, as illustrated in Charts 3 and 4.

- The second preferred choices are one-on-one interviews and paper materials mailed to them.

A very small number of employers were interested in picking up information at key locations. Considering that most HR and employment service agencies are located near the employers participating in this evaluation, this result may be an indicator of the lack of awareness among employers of the availability of human resource and employment services provided by local organizations.

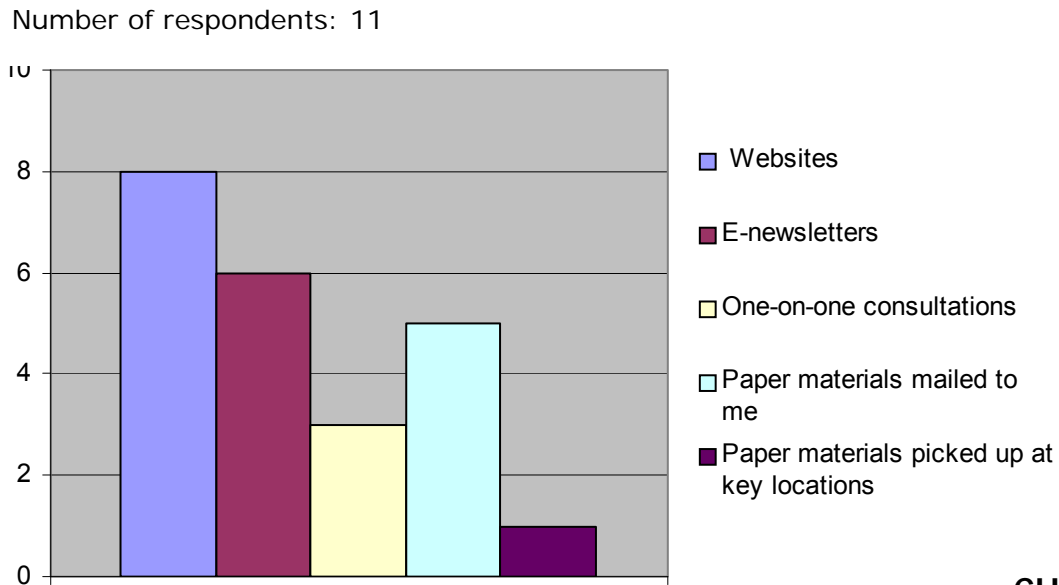


CHART 4
Employer preference
- not ranked

Objective 2: Validate solutions with employers

This section of the evaluation asked a series of questions to assess the relevance of the HR alternative practices being gathered by LMD, and to enquire about employers' interest in improving accessibility of jobs and creating an inclusive workplace²⁰.

Thirty-eight employers responded to this section of the survey. In addition to the written survey, these set of questions were also delivered to 16 employers during presentations conducted both in group and in one-on-one presentations. Six responses from these evaluations are incorporated in this analysis and of those presentation participants who responded to both evaluations, their first response was used.

²⁰ The different areas of interest were rated on the survey using the following scale: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, and 5-Strongly Agree. This scale was condensed for simplicity of analysis to three points: 1 Disagree, 2 Neutral, and 3 Agree.

- Table 2 below shows that, overall, 25 employers (66%) agreed that the alternative practices gathered by the LMD team were relevant to their business, 10 were neutral (26%) and 2 disagreed (5%).
- The 10 respondents that were neutral to the ideas overall indicated that there was some relevance to at least one of the other areas of interest included in the table (this varied in the group).

TABLE 2: Employers' rating of areas of interest

AREAS OF INTEREST	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE
This information was relevant to my business.	2	10	25
Recruiting and hiring employees.	5	4	27
Retaining employees	2	7	28
Improving staff morale	2	7	26
Increasing productivity	3	17	14
Other HR practices	0	15	9
Improving accessibility of jobs	2	8	25
Creating an inclusive workplace	2	13	21

- When looking at the size of the employers in the neutral group, it was clear that most of them (7 out of 10) were large organizations involved in different industry sectors. This may suggest that larger organizations may be indifferent to introducing changes to their human resource management practices, or that they have less interest in the type of solutions we are offering because of their own human resource capacity.
- The remaining 3 small businesses that were neutral included 3 different industries: retail (women's clothing, less than 5 staff), food service (less than 10 staff) and social services (activity-oriented, seasonal staff of 26-50). Therefore it is difficult to draw any conclusions at this point.
- Two employers working in union environments find it difficult to implement new ideas, and it was also noted that corporate affiliates need more cost/benefit information to pitch to their head office ("only after being accepted at that level will the ideas become relevant at the local level").
- As illustrated in chart 5 below, the information provided by LMD that was found to be most relevant was retaining employees, recruiting and hiring employees, and improving staff morale in that order.

- There was also significant interest in improving accessibility of jobs and creating an inclusive workplace.

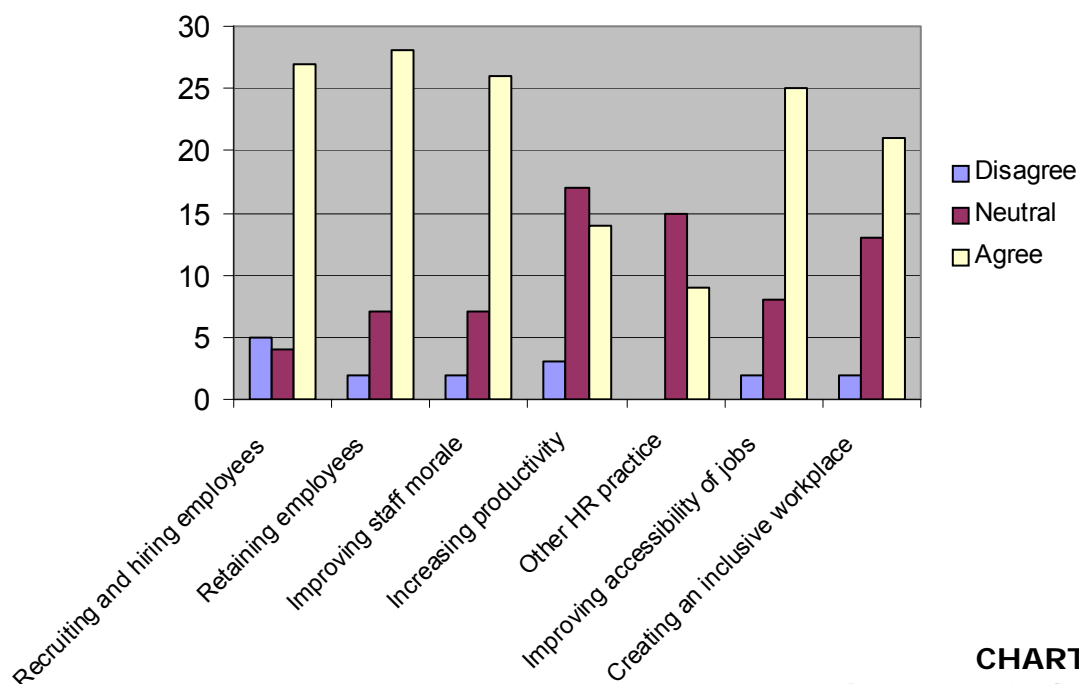


CHART 5
Relevance of Ideas
To Business

- 66% of respondents (25) agreed that the ideas increased their interest in improving accessibility of jobs, and just over half found this to be true for raising their interest in creating an inclusive workplace (21).
- The idea that was found to be least relevant to employers' interest is "increasing productivity" (only 37% agreed with this statement). This result suggests that employers may not be aware of the correlation between HR practices and increased productivity. This is noteworthy when looking at the following question, because employers do indicate that improving productivity is something they'd like to know more about. This signals an area of interest for LMD to address in its outreach information for the next phase.

"What HR topic would you like to know more about?"

Thirty-three employers responded to this question posed to find out which of the suggested Human Resources topics would be of the most interest to them.

- Chart 6 below shows that "hiring and retaining employees" were the two areas of most interest to respondents.
- The next topics of interest among respondents were "increasing productivity" and "improving morale", which seems to contradict the

responses in the previous question, where employers did not seem to be aware of the co-relation between HR practices and productivity.

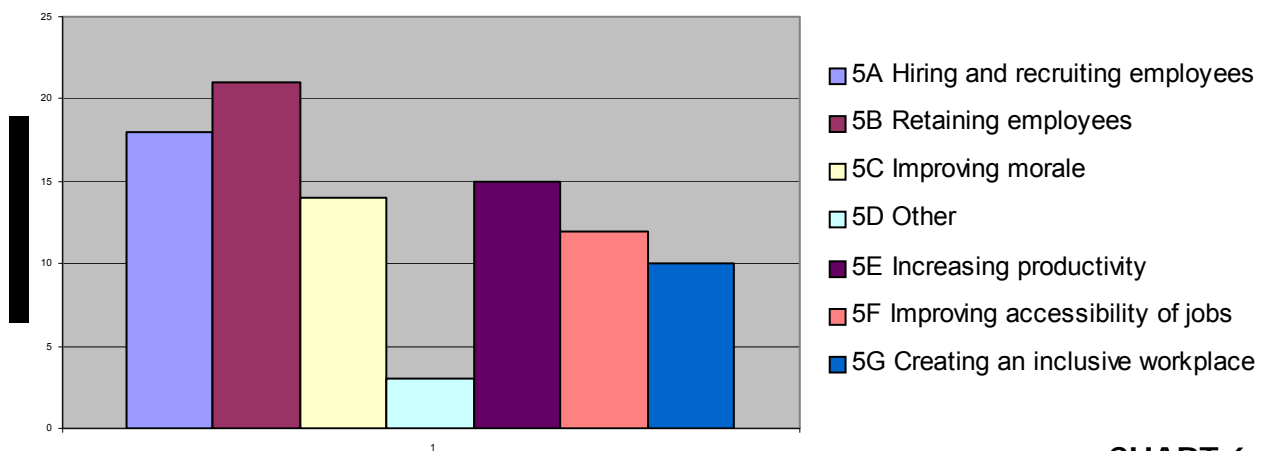


CHART 6
Areas of most Interest To Business

- One third of employers were interested in improving accessibility of jobs (12) and workplace diversity (10). These two topics came last in the list of topics employers want to know more about. This brings into consideration the need to clarify the terms “inclusion” and “accessibility”.

One of the finding in this particular area, as indicated in the evaluation and through dialogues and informal discussions with employers, is that the terms “inclusion” and “accessibility” are associated mainly with barriers experienced by New Canadians and by people with disabilities. Inclusion and accessibility do not seem to be associated to other barriers such as social inclusion barriers and other invisible barriers experienced by people living in poverty.

Other Topics of Interests

The option of mentioning “other topics of interest” was provided in the survey and a number of employers mentioned several topics such as:

- Understanding how to evaluate a professional degree,
- How to better communicate the job being offered, and
- How to access out-of-country hires.

One additional comment was made by one respondent who was requesting assistance on designing a proper interview and on posting jobs.

Overall, these additional topics fit within the findings of the LMD through the different consultations and participatory activities to define the most important topics of interest: Transition to Employment and Scheduling Flexibility.

Objective 3: Measure the change or impact of sharing solutions and “positive deviances”

Originally, this section of the evaluation was intended to measure any changes undertaken by employers upon receiving the HR resources in the reference card. Due to the short length of time between distribution of the materials and evaluation, however, the section shifted to measuring “first impressions” anticipated change, and determining which tips were of interest, and why or why not. Thirty-nine employers responded to the first question, and 32 of them responded to the questions enquiring into more detail.

“Do you think your business can use these ideas and other resources like this?”

- 90% of respondents (35) thought they can use these ideas or other resources like this and two employers indicated they are already using most of these ideas. This suggests a strong interest among employers in adopting strategies that improve their HR practices.
- Four employers responded that they could not use these ideas and resources like this. An analysis of these responses is noted at the end of this set of results.

“Which ideas do you see your business using?”

When asked which tips employers see their businesses using, there was a wide range of ideas selected by the diversity of employers that responded to the evaluation. Chart 7 below summarizes these ideas.

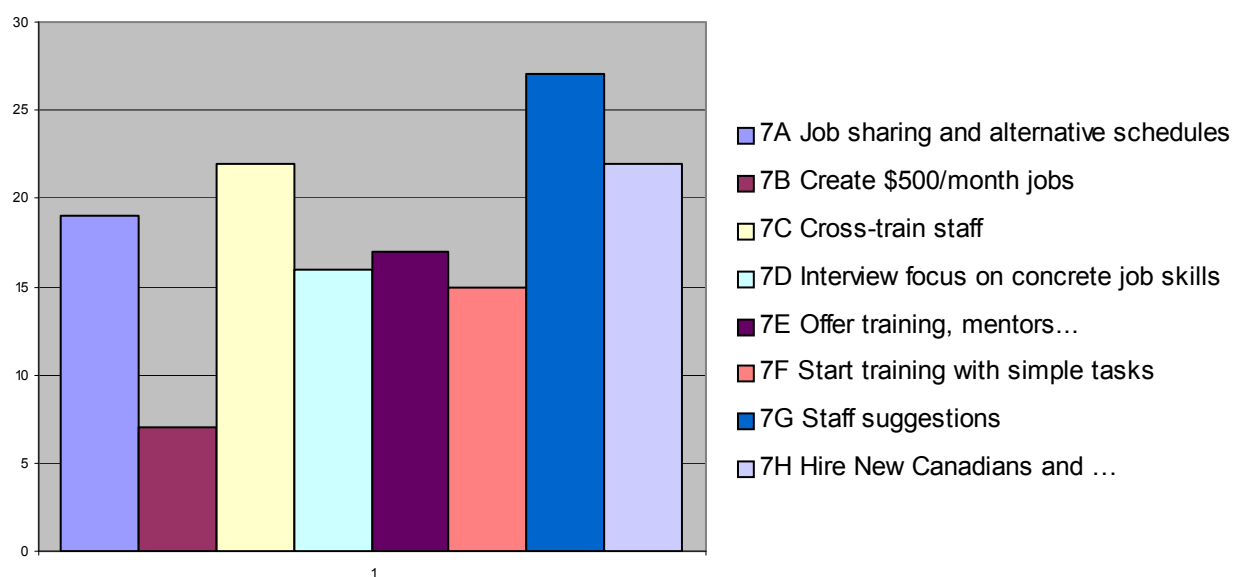


CHART 7
Anticipated use of Ideas

- The most popular tips among respondents included “using staff suggestions” (84%), “cross-training staff”, and “hiring New Canadians and others” (both 69%).
- Just over half of respondents thought they could use suggestions such as job sharing or alternative work schedules, interviewing with a focus on concrete skills, offering training, and training with simple tasks first.
- Similarly, the respondents from the retail sector had the strongest interest in using staff suggestions, but there is less interest in hiring new Canadians and others and cross-training staff. One employer of the nine (staff of 5-25) commented that it is difficult to hire new Canadians in the retail sector where they must have a good grasp of the English language.
- Instead, retailers’ second choice was “interviewing with a focus on concrete job skills,” and just under 50% were equally interested in the suggestions for job sharing and alternative work schedules, starting training with simple tasks, and offering training, mentoring and apprenticeships as their 3rd choice. This again supports the idea that different sectors have different interests and constraints. Future evaluation in Phase 3 will hopefully capture some of these qualities.
- 84% of respondents thought they could use at least three of the suggestions presented in the reference card, with eleven of these employers potentially using as many as six or more of the ideas. This is a positive response to the information LMD has been sharing.
- Only 22% of these respondents (7) thought they could use the idea of creating \$500/month jobs, with comments that business structure or collective agreements make this difficult.

“What is it that is attractive about the ideas you’ve selected?”

As part of measuring anticipated change, this and the following open-ended questions captured the qualities of ideas that were attractive or less attractive to employers.

The LMD team can use these ideas to increase promotion of employer-valued benefits and also address areas of concern. 34 employers of various size, industry and legal structure answered these questions.

- “Low cost of implementing” is the most valuable attribute of the ideas employers selected, with over one-third (11 occurrences) of employer responses
- “Creating attractive opportunities for new staff”, was the second most attractive idea (10 occurrences)
- “Increasing retention” is the third idea attractive to employers (8 responses), with 3 other respondents reporting retention-increasing outcomes as well:

- Being helpful for employees in their work-life balance (8 respondents)
 - Engaging employees (4 respondents) and
 - Providing flexibility (3 respondents).
- Another valued attribute of the ideas suggested by the LMD was the ease of implementation of these ideas (7 occurrences)
 - Four employers found the ideas to be of valuable for their qualities of innovation or practicality (4 employers)

Other attractive benefits or qualities of the LMD team suggested ideas, as reported by employers include:

- Can ease the labour shortage
- Encourage a team environment
- Tap into underutilized resources
- Attitude adjustment
- Improve morale and pride in work
- Win/win approach
- Long-term benefits
- Helps to match jobs to tasks to wages

These findings validate the final conclusion of the community research stage of LMD II, as all of these benefits can be integrated into a comprehensive HR plan with a focus on transition and scheduling practices.

“What is less attractive about the ideas you didn’t select?”

When asked what was less attractive about the ideas that they didn’t select, employers considered that those ideas were not applicable to their business (10 occurrences). For example, cross-training was not useful for a business where all staff do the same tasks or where employees need advanced training to do their job.

Another area of concern for employers is working in an environment where everyone may not have the skills to do the jobs (8 occurrences). Half of the respondents that shared this concern referred most specifically to barriers due to recent immigration status and language.

On the other hand, a number of employers responding to this question noted that they had already incorporated the ideas they didn’t select (7 occurrences).

Other than these expected challenges, the most significant barriers reported by a smaller number of employers included the perceived cost and time investment required to implement some of the ideas (3 and 6 occurrences respectively). Some respondents were concerned with having time for managing (2) and mentoring staff (2).

Working with collective agreements was also mentioned by a small number of employers, because these agreements can make it difficult to implement new ideas (4 occurrences).

Other issues reported by respondents that made the LMD ideas less attractive to them include:

- The idea(s) have been tried and don't work
- A person's skills are less important than their orientation to the type of work
- Employer believes very strongly in "soft skills" interview questions
- The ideas are unrealistic for a small business, which, for example, can't cross-train, provide alternative schedules, or offer training, apprenticeships and so forth
- Set hours of operation
- Commissioned pay structure
- Legislative barriers – e.g. must have skilled workers for licensed child care or engineering
- One's workforce is more "dedicated" than allows for hiring people to work up to \$500 per month.

Further analysis on these perceived barriers may help design adequate support tools for employers that can help them address the necessary changes in attitudes and perceptions and introduce innovative HR practices.

"Has the information from the Labour Market Dialogues project helped you to try anything new in your HR practices?"

This question on the evaluation survey was aimed to find out if any changes or impacts had occurred for employers because of the LMD information.

- Of the 33 employers who responded to this question, over one-third indicated that they had tried something new or named something specific they would try in future.

These responses indicate that there are employers already implementing alternative HR practices to address current labour market shortages. The following alternative practices were reported by 6 employers in this group:

- Encourages me to be creative and think outside the "box" right from the interview, training and retention (restaurant, 26-100 staff)
- We're making the workplace more inclusive. We contact Garth Homer Society to work with them in offering employment to people with disabilities (service, staff of 250-500+)
- Increased available shifts for employees (information and cultural services, staff of 250-500+)
- Cross-training (retail, staff of 26-100)

- We hired a sales coaching service to help "mentor" new sales staff. We pass the Quality of Life newsletter to staff and entertain their suggestions (non-profit, staff of 5-25)
- Using some of the local agencies to help find new employees in the area (wholesale distributor, 101-250 staff).

These are encouraging findings, as we move onto the Phase III of the LMD and begin to search and document "positive deviants" among local employers who are being successful in the introduction of alternative and innovative HR practices.

"Can we ask why you don't think your business can use these ideas and other resources like this?"

The final question of this section asked employers why they thought they could not use these ideas, if they had indicated this at the beginning of the section.

In total, 4 employers responded that they could not use these ideas or resources like the ones provided by the Labour Market Dialogues project. Three of these respondents reported barriers in their reasons as follows.

- One employer in retail hired less than 5 people and found the solutions just weren't applicable.
- Another viewed the suggestions as solely related to retention rather than recruitment and thus found the solutions not useful (finance; staff of 45).
- A third employer reported that their being a corporate company involves having to sell new practices to head office and then, only if that body supports these solutions, can they become relevant at the local level (property management; staff of 14).

Finally, the fourth respondent mentioned that the reason their organization could not use the ideas was because they worked in a team of HR professionals that already supported recruitment and retention for their organization with "best practices" that are updated continually (financial; staff of 500+).

This final anecdote again suggests that larger organizations neutral to these ideas may feel their in-house solutions are better designed to help with their specific labour market issues and conditions. Nonetheless, it is important to note that these kind of organizations offer a learning opportunity for the LMD III, as the project team continues to document positive experiences among local employers.

"Usefulness of reference card resources"

One goal of the LMD project is to share resources already available with employers and connect them with hiring people experiencing barriers to

employment. Employers were asked to evaluate the usefulness of the 3 web pages provided in the reference card (5-Step Solutions, BC Works and HR Options for Action). These questions aimed at understanding the level of employers' interest in these resources, and possibly provide feedback to those organizations delivering the online materials.

- Of the 38 employers who responded to the evaluation, one out of five (21%) visited the website resources listed on the reference card.

This is an encouraging sign of the receptiveness of employers to resources in the internet.

- Just under one third of respondents indicated that they had not had time to view the resources only having just received the information.

Those employers who did visit the websites were asked to rate the usefulness of each website on a scale of: 1 = not useful; 2 = somewhat useful; and 3 = very useful. Chart 8 below summarizes their responses.

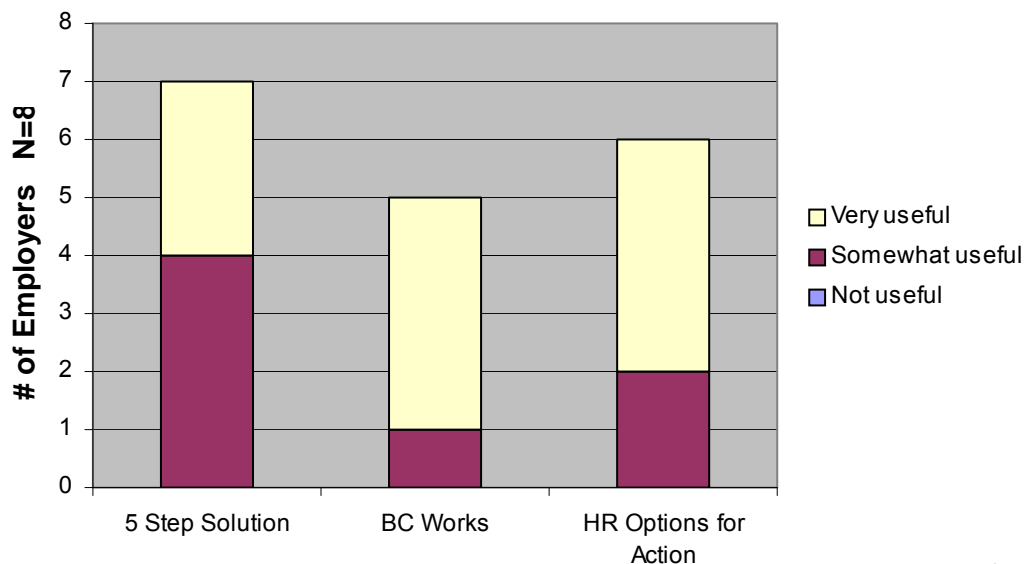


CHART 8
Usefulness of
website resources

- None of the respondents indicated that the 3 sites were not useful, though a surprising number commented on the “5 Steps Solution” website, which supports hiring immigrants specifically, responding that they found this site only “somewhat useful” (2 small businesses in retail and service; 2 large businesses in transport and banking). This may be an indication that these employers are less interested in hiring immigrants.

It is interesting to note that employers found the 5 Step Solution website only “somewhat useful” considering that the site provides several tools and resources that can apply to hiring anyone experiencing barriers to work, such as tools for analyzing workplace readiness and interview formats.

This response may indicate that benefits of tools such as these may need to be explained to employers to enable them to think creatively about using them in a way that taps into several hidden labour markets. It may also indicate that employers are not yet willing to invest this level of thought and time into their labour strategies.

- Three respondents indicated that they referred the websites to a total of 5 other employers.

This type of information sharing is a goal of the project as it both supports employers' receptivity to information shared by the project (legitimizing it in many ways) and furthers the project's goal of sharing available resources.

Objective 4: Offer other opportunities for engagement

At the end of the evaluation, employers were offered a number of opportunities to get involved with the Labour Market Dialogues project, and to connect employers with the employer CHALLENGE e-newsletter. The following are the very positive results from this section:

- The great majority of respondents (89%) are interested in receiving a copy of the evaluation report
- 82% of respondents (31) are interested in trying new strategies next year
- 79% are interested in receiving "the employer CHALLENGE e-newsletter"
- 24% have a story to share with "the employer CHALLENGE e-newsletter" (9), with another offering "not at the moment" and at least 3 others have already been involved with the CHALLENGE in this way.

One of the employers interested in trying strategies next year provided valuable input by noting they are only interested in trying strategies if it fits their business. For example, they are interested in "new Canadians and have skill level", which points to previous responses from employers to the less attractive tips: that candidates may not fit the positions employers are offering.

This kind of opinion may reflect the need for increased diversity and inclusiveness awareness in the workplace and is something to address in future project presentations and publications, and in the different components of the LMD III.

Objective 5: Collect demographic information

To better understand employers' interest in the LMD solutions, demographic information was collected on staff size, legal/corporate structure, location in BC's Capital Region, number of locations, and industry sector. Employers

were also asked to provide information in terms of the length of time in business and to give examples of entry-level positions in their workplaces.

In total, 40 respondents started the evaluation (23 on paper, 17 on the internet). Four of these employers do not fit the size criteria of 5+ staff, and three exited the internet survey before finishing and did not provide demographic data. However, all responses are included in the analysis of results and there was a surprising finding about the micro business that responded to the survey.

- Overall, 18 industry sectors of various staff size were represented among respondents.

The diversity of demographics made it challenging to determine trends in the data as in most cases there were only 1-2 employers of the same staff size self-identified in each industry. In an attempt to get a sense of possible differences and experiences, industry sectors and sizes were clustered into broader groups for analysis.

The five new industry sector groupings are:

- **Goods producing** (including construction and manufacturing)
- **Trade** (including retail and wholesale)
- **Building, business and other services** (including finance and insurance, information and cultural industries, and various other services including research, temporary employment, building maintenance and leasing among others)
- **Accommodation and Food Services** (unchanged from the original survey)
- **Health, Social Assistance, Education and Public Administration** (mainly professional environments requiring some level of certification for job entry)

The business staff size was also re-grouped in order to facilitate analysis. They are:

- **Small** - with staff of 1-100 employees
- **Medium** - with staff of 101-250 employees
- **Large** – with staff of +250 employees.

Table 3 shows the diversity of employers that participated in the evaluation of the project outreach strategy. Of the 38 employers that responded to this section of the survey, 22 were from the small staff size (almost 60%).

TABLE 3: Re-Grouped Industry and staff size numbers

RE-GROUPED INDUSTRY SECTOR/Staff size	Small	Medium	Large	Missing	Total
Goods	2	2	1	0	5
Trade	6	1	0	2	9
Building, Business and Other Services	8	2	3	0	13
Accommodation and Food Services	2	2	1	0	5
Health, Social Assistance, Education and Public Administration	4	1	1	0	6
Total	22	8	6	2	38

The industry sectors are more evenly distributed, with 13 being the largest number (building, business and other). Over two thirds of this group saw the information provided by LMD to be relevant to their business.

The industry groups that saw the greatest relevance of the LMD information to their business were:

- Accommodation and Food Services (4 of 5)
- Trade (7 of 9 respondents)
- Building, Business and Other Services (9 of 13).

Just over half of each of all respondents, regardless of industry sector and size, agreed that the LMD information was relevant to their business, which is a significant indicator of general business interest in the LMD information.

Overall, when looking at the composition of respondents, it is difficult to determine trends with regard to specific tips and interests of employers, even using the more compressed demographic groups. Therefore, it is not advisable to make any conclusions at this point.

Some specific findings related to demographics that came out in the evaluations include:

- Though one micro business (retail) did not find the solutions useful, 3 of the 4 other micro businesses that responded do find the solutions useful.

This is important to note, given that originally the LMD project considered not including micro businesses in its work; however, this finding suggests that

there may be some interesting experiences to follow up in this group, and that they would also benefit from supports specifically designed for this sector.

- One small business owner (5-25 staff) noted that it was helpful to have the Employer Liaison visit because it is hard for small business owners to find time to attend workshops/seminars and feel connected in this way.
- Another organization of the same size said this was the first time they've received anything like this and they are interested in this type of information.

These comments reflect on the findings that a personal approach is the most effective way to engage employers. They also support the finding in the outreach section that there may be a gap in the accessibility of HR services for small businesses and other groups, as service agencies may not have the capacity to come to the employers' workplace as LMD has done.

- As mentioned earlier, organizations that work with union and collective agreements have a difficult time incorporating new HR solutions.

This finding suggests the need for developing a strategy to engage unions and examine their HR standards, as a way of passing alternative practices to unionized workplaces.

- Some corporate organizations need to be able to persuade their head offices before they can use the solutions at the local level.

This finding suggests the need for further research in the unionized work environment, and the need to provide a cost and benefit analysis, to influence decision-makers who are removed from the community and less influenced by the relationships and reputations developed with managers at the local level.

Finally, employers were asked to identify entry-level positions in their workplaces. This provides a sense of the availability of entry-level jobs in the current labour market, in order to craft specific supports for employers in their willingness to hire and retain people experiencing barriers to employment. The following table shows these positions.

More than 25 types of entry-level positions were named by respondents, including:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| • receptionist | • construction crew worker |
| • sales/service associate | • line supervisor |
| • labourer | • computer data-enterer |
| • gardener | • cashier |
| • restaurant host | • processor |
| • table busser | • truck driver |
| • dishwasher | • shipping |
| • kitchen helper | • custodian |
| • dietary aide | • security guard |
| • housekeeping | |

Section 5: Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

A number of relevant conclusions and recommendations have been noted throughout the different sections of this report. This final section provides a summary of these conclusions and recommendations.

Topics Selection

Conclusions

Helping employers support people transition to employment and offering flexible schedules were chosen as the most feasible areas for addressing employers' needs when hiring and retaining people facing barriers to employment.

Transition policies help people with barriers to employment enter the workplace. Establishing personalized schedules and being flexible with staff is a simple and cost effective way to help those employees stay and succeed.

Transition and scheduling are broad topics that can incorporate other beneficial HR practices, like thoughtful advertising and hiring, which placed third in the group discussion, and childcare, which was the third most popular individual choice.

Participants recognized that the generous scope of the chosen topics could be a challenge. But, above all, they saw the opportunity — the chance to benefit a large number of employers and employees, creating a stable, satisfied workforce and stronger communities.

Social Inclusion barriers seem to be better and more easily tackled while addressing hands-on issues like skill development, job search or gaining work experience.

It is also critical for people to be working and making money while they are learning these pieces, which supports merging these findings with other summer research projects that address business practices.

Recommendations

- When developing alternative practices to address the scheduling and transition needs of people facing barriers to employment, it is important to frame these practices from a broader perspective that includes communication needs, transition needs and capacity building needs. This framework should not be limited to the needs of potential employees, but include the communication needs, transition needs and capacity building needs of employers as well.

For example, employers could adopt a variety of strategies to address barriers faced by people in transition to work in the areas of job-entry and

being on the job. These could be developed in business practices such as hiring, scheduling and job orientation. Employers could also help people in transition build confidence on the job by providing mentoring and skill development opportunities to support their “transition to work.”

- Employment agencies can play a role in arranging an alternative work schedule or for flexibility on behalf of a person with barriers entering a job, as this requires good communication skills and can be intimidating to bring up when trying to compete with others to win a position.
- Employers could be supported by a service which assesses their jobs and creates schedules and flexibility strategies targeted to accessing new pools of labour facing challenges.
- More venues could be created for employers to share successful strategies for scheduling flexibility. More research may be needed into employers’ perceptions about the need to “earn” perks like flexibility.
- The need for supporting employment service agencies in developing their programs to better include scheduling and transition strategies is arising.
- When helping employers develop practices to hire and retain people with barriers and develop their employability skills, it is important to view these practices as part of the big picture of vulnerable employees’ transition to sustainable incomes.

Evaluation Results

Conclusions

Due to time constraints, the number of group presentations and networking events planned as part of the outreach methods was smaller than anticipated. This limits the comparison of outreach results, but provides a great deal of learning in engaging employers.

Email notification and one-on-one interviews were how most employers heard about the LMD information, with some personal follow-up used to encourage completion of the evaluation. This suggests that personal contact and follow-up are successful methods for engaging employers.

One outcome of the business walks done by the Employer Liaison was identifying different experiences of labour market needs in three sub regions of BC’s Capital Region covered by the walks, which comes to highlight the impact of local environmental, demographic and economic conditions in the labour market dynamics.

Our evaluation shows that most respondents usually hear about HR resources from other employers and networking events. This suggests that tapping into employer networks is a useful way for employers to learn about ways of solving their labour needs, and an effective method for LMD to share information with employers. However, much of the evaluation data supports having a project staff person liaising with employers.

Recommendations

- Employers selected websites and e-newsletters as their preferred method of accessing HR resources. This is something the project can work to implement over the next phase, perhaps starting with simple e-newsletters that can easily be shared amongst busy employers.
- The limited impact of the media advisory sent out in January suggests the need to develop a more comprehensive communication and media strategy to engage the media and the public in Phase III of the LMD.
- Different business and commercial neighbourhoods may experience different labour market needs, and identifying factors that contribute to these different needs may be an area of interest for LMD in the delivery of its pilot programs and distributing materials in Phase 3.
- There may be a gap in outreach services for small businesses and other employers who have less opportunity to hear about resources that don't come to the workplace (as LMD has done).
- LMD Phase III needs to continue to invest and work with employers on a one-on-one basis. The impact of this practice could also be better evaluated in Phase 3 in a comparison with more networking and group presentation opportunities.

Relevance of the HR resources

The information provided by LMD during the outreach activities was found by employers to be most relevant to recruiting and hiring employees, retaining employees, and improving staff morale. Hiring and retaining employees were also the two areas of most interest to respondents.

The information was found to be least relevant to employers' interest in increasing productivity, which suggests that employers are not aware of the relation between HR practices and increased productivity. This is noteworthy because employers do indicate in the next question that improving productivity is something they'd like to know more about.

Although the project was successful in raising a significant amount of interest in improving accessibility of jobs and creating inclusive workplaces, these ideas were of less interest to employers than the other ideas mentioned above (hiring, recruiting, and increasing productivity and morale).

The low interest in the suggestion to create \$500 a month jobs (one-fifth of respondents) is another area that may need to be more clearly explained to employers. Informal feedback from the Employer Liaison interviews was that employers were not sure what this entailed or why it would be useful.

In general, when addressing "inclusive workplaces" and "accessible jobs," employers' perception seems to be limited to employing new Canadians and people with disabilities respectively.

Recommendations

- Employers are most interested in recruiting and hiring practices that help them overcome the current labour market shortages. This signals an area of interest for LMD to address in its outreach information for the next phase.
- Although employers are interested in increasing productivity, the relation between productivity and the HR practices being promoted by the LMD does not seem to be clear to them. Phase III of the LMD could find a way of explaining this relation.
- Concepts such as “inclusiveness” and “accessibility” may need to be more clearly defined as part of a diversity awareness campaign, in order to promote a better understanding of other barriers that are not visible, such as social inclusion barriers, transition needs, family situation, and external barriers among others.

Other interests

Conclusions

The number of “other” interests that were provided in the evaluations are helpful to provide LMD staff with a sense of the specific issues employers are dealing with as the project moves into designing Phase III. Some specific interests were, for example: understanding how to evaluate a professional degree, how to better communicate the job being offered, and how to access out-of-country hires. One additional comment was made requesting assistance on designing a proper interview and posting jobs.

Other interests like these were also evident in employers’ written comments about the tips. Employers were most receptive to their ease of use and creating attractive opportunities for new staff, for example, and most concerned with the tips not being a good fit for their business needs (e.g. when cross-training was not useful because staff all do the same tasks or where staff need advanced training to do their job).

Other potentials for external barriers were also identified by employers, when addressing concerns about meeting the needs of their corporate headquarters, collective agreements and existing HR departments (all concerns raised by larger organizations), before being able to introduce alternative HR practices.

Recommendations

- Phase III of the LMD can address these interests and concerns starting with an employer consultation and validation process to understand more specifically the nature of these issues.
- Strategies to address these barriers and concerns engaging corporate headquarters or unions can be tested during the dialogues with employers.

Tapping into other resources

Conclusions

Sharing existing resources, networking with other HR and employment service organizations has proven to be one constructive approach of the LMD project.

The possibility of using the Poverty Experience, an experiential exercise designed by the Community Action Team of the Community Council, as a tool for raising awareness among employers about the needs of people facing barriers to employment was evaluated during this stage of the project and participating employers were receptive to the experience.

Recommendations

- During the next stage of the LMD, the project team may consider the possibility of strengthening relationships with relevant service providers, both private and community-based, in order to be better able to access other resources and help promote coordination among peer organizations.
- A consultation and validation mechanism could be included in the next stage of the project, involving employers, agency representatives and people facing barriers, to generate a discussion forum that can provide a feedback cycle to discuss and validate resources and other alternative practices that may result from discussions with employers.

Participants' demographics

Conclusions

Overall, when looking at the composition of respondents, it is difficult to determine trends with regard to specific tips and interests of employers, even using the more compressed demographic groups. Therefore, it is not advisable to make any conclusions at this point.

Nonetheless, the diversity of employers responding to the alternative practices suggests that there is a strong interest in alternative HR practices, and yet varied range of perceptions of benefits and concerns by the different types of businesses in BC's Capital Region.

This is supported by the unique qualities of the retail sub group responding to the evaluation, in both their areas of interest and ways they are usually receiving information about HR resources.

The industry groups that saw the greatest relevance of the LMD information to their business were Accommodation and Food Services, Trade, and Building, Business and Other Services, while the business size with the largest number of respondents was small business.

It is also important to note that respondents from the goods producing sector, which had only one of five interested in the tips provided, three respondents found the tips relevant to recruiting employees and four respondents found

them relevant to improving morale. This indicates that in discussions with employers, addressing specific business needs may provide a better opportunity for engagement, rather than overall HR planning approaches.

Recommendations

- A more industry sector-oriented evaluation involving a higher number of employers during the first part of Phase III might help better understand the relevance of specific alternative strategies and develop HR plans that will be transferable across businesses working within those conventions (such as small business retail, restaurants or business-to-business services).
- Future engagement activities may be more successful with small business from the Accommodation and Food Services, Trade, and Building, Business and Other Services sectors. These groups may be the most interested in the work of the LMD project for Phase III.

Outreach Strategy Design – Final Considerations

Without following up with employers that received LMD information through impersonal contact such as unaddressed airmail, it is challenging to measure the success and impact of this outreach method. This indicates that we need to use a more personal approach in order to gather feedback on the information we are providing.

Impersonal methods of outreach will still have some use to the project in Phase III. Outreach methods like unaddressed airmail, media promotion or placement of the reference card in key locations can transmit the information to a large number of employers, while also contributing to the visibility of the project in the business and employer community.

While we recommend this, we are aware that unmediated messages can result in employers' misunderstanding the goals of the project, or not connecting them with their businesses. These methods are, however, relatively inexpensive to reach employers to introduce, remind, and raise awareness of the project's goals and of the employers' ability to contribute to that goal (creating accessible jobs and inclusive workplaces and reducing barriers to work). They can also help to connect interested employers to the project.

A more strategic communications and media plan might create these opportunities for LMD, including increased exposure of the tips via networking, group presentations and media presence in Phase III.

Cost of Outreach Activities

For project management information purposes, the cost of the different methods of engagement were calculated in order to have a sense of the investment required in each method and determine the most cost-effective approach. The cost of delivering the reference card, from less expensive to most expensive, was of \$58 per 100 employers in the case of the unaddressed airmail; \$84.08 per 100 employers for the hand delivery; \$371.50/100

employers reached through networking events; and \$406/100 employers through hand delivery of the card plus dialogue time.

Only one response was received from the unaddressed airmail approach, while the hand delivery of the materials resulted in 6 responses, 5 of whom responded without follow-up and very little time spent with the Employer Liaison (all from the Victoria core; 1 from Oak Bay and 5 from Downtown).

Therefore, for comparison purposes only, it is safe to assume that the cost per responses through airmail is \$58. Seven responses were received from the hand delivered approach, which means that the cost per response is \$12.

This comes to support the argument that the most effective way of reaching employers for evaluation follow-up purposes, is through personal contact.

The least expensive outreach method used during this evaluation was the email to contacts, which was calculated at \$0.33 per employer. Sixteen employers came from this group (3 were contacted by email only; 13 were sent an addressed letter through Canada Post with email follow-up).

There was a successful number of responses to the evaluation from the Employer Liaison's one-on-one interviews with employers (11 out of 40), followed by a phone call request to complete the evaluation.

Without having done a sufficient number of networking activities or group presentations, it is difficult to measure the impact these type of outreach activities may have.

Similarly, the lack of response from the media to the news release does not necessarily indicate this is not an effective method, especially when employers seem to like to pick up ideas from the media. However, it is presumed that these outreach practices are low cost methods of reaching a larger number employers.

Judging by the results of the outreach phase of the project, one-on-one outreach can be the most time-consuming yet also the most relationship supportive -- although it is noted that the level of relationship needs to be consistently delivered by the same person or handed off thoughtfully to others who will be working with that employer.

Section 7: Appendixes

Appendix One: Case Study Employer interview guidelines

Appendix Two: Samples of Case Study publications

Appendix Three: LMD Reference Card

Appendix Four: LMD PowerPoint presentation

Appendix Five: Evaluation Form

Appendix One: Case Study Employer interview guidelines

CASE STUDY QUESTION GUIDE

Bring with you:

- Employer Task Force Rack card
- Quality of Life CHALLENGE brochure
- Business card for contact info

Be prepared to give a short pitch on what the CHALLENGE and the Labour Market Dialogues Project are all about:

The Labour Market Dialogues is a project to explore how employers in BC's Capital Region could be better supported to hire and retain people experiencing barriers to paid employment.

Explain what we are trying to do:

Collect local case studies of employers who engage in exemplary human resources practices which work to reduce poverty and improve quality of employment for their employees. Some examples of policies we have profiled are – (choose a few that seem appropriate)

- Hire through job placement agencies
- Provide on the job training
- Hire people with disabilities
- Quick raise from starting wage
- Have starting wages above minimum wage
- Promote from within the organization
- Profit share
- Mentorship programs
- Provide health care or dental benefits
- Provide child care
- Provide scheduling flexibility
- Provides transition-to-work support

The case studies will be shared through the e-newsletter “the employer CHALLENGE” and on our website which gets on average 15,000 hits a week.

The employer will get a chance to edit the case study and to review the text of the newsletter it will be distributed in. We won't publish anything they don't want us to publish.

Through sharing this kind of information, already four employers have reported changing their human resource practices.

You may already have a policy in mind – if you do – tell the employer what that is. You will want to ask specific questions about that policy, and give the employer the chance to tell you what it is they are proud of that they want shared with other employers.

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

1. Please find out some basic information about the business:

- When did the business start?
- Industry sector (eg. Tourism, Hospitality, Energy, Construction)

- Specific business activity (eg. restaurant, guiding outfit, telemarketing, research, etc.)
- Number of full-time employees
- Number of part-time employees
- Number of entry level jobs
- Number of seasonal jobs
- Number of locations and structure of business:
 - independent,
 - non-profit,
 - franchise,
 - co-op,
 - regional,
 - national,
 - international
- Where are you located?
 - Peninsula (Central Saanich, North Saanich, Sidney)
 - West Shore (View Royal, Colwood, Langford, Highlands, Metchosin, Sooke)
 - Victoria Core (Saanich, Oak Bay, Victoria, Esquimalt).

2. Ask the employer to tell you about human resource practices and policies they are proud of. Make sure you focus on a practice that can give readers a tangible idea of the usefulness of the practice.

3. With each policy, and particularly the one you think you will highlight, ask for the following information:

- the number of employees benefited by the policy and practice
- when was the policy and practice brought in
- what motivated the employer to introduce that policy and practice
- their perspective on the impact of the policy / practice on hiring, retention, employee satisfaction and productivity
- the costs and savings related to this policy / practice (if they can estimate it)
- how would they recommend other employers try this policy / practice

4. If in the interview it is clear to you which policy / practice you think you will highlight, tell them.

5. Ask them if there is a particular month that they are interested in having the case study published – tying into other events etc. of theirs.

6. Let them know your timelines in writing it up and getting a draft back to them (within two weeks is about right, unless you are swamped)

7. Ask them if they want to sign up for the employer CHALLENGE biweekly e-newsletter
Make sure you have their email if they do

8. Tell them about the idea of the employer mentorship program, and the speaking and networking opportunities at business and employers' events.

We are hoping some employers might be willing to talk to one or two other employers / year about the practice that was highlighted in the case study if they are looking for more detailed information. We would do referrals, we wouldn't publish contact information. Is that something they might be interested in?

Appendix Two: Sample of Case Study publications

Thrift Store Schedules Creative Solutions

Thrift Store Schedules Are a Creative Solution to Staff Shortages

More and more employees want flexibility. They are looking to balance work and the demands of a full and rich life. And employers that accommodate them are more likely to attract and retain a strong staff.

The Value Village thrift store in Victoria has adopted practices to become one of these choice employers. "When I first started, production employees could work Monday to Friday, 8 to 4:30, cut and dried," says Jennifer Crotenko, the store's Operations Manager. "Now, we're extremely flexible about scheduling."

Some staff members work non-traditional schedules, or "alternative work schedules" as the Labour Market Dialogues project refers to them. These afford staff the time to pursue other passions, from family to further education. Working a shorter shift, or simply starting and finishing an hour earlier or later, helps employees balance work and the other elements of their lives.

"I can only work on Tuesdays, Thursdays and a little on Sundays," says Sarah Opferkuch, a retail clerk who also studies at Camosun College. "I can schedule school and my social life around [the job]."

Of course, being flexible has its challenges. Managers must oversee a complex master schedule and be available to supervise any employees who work shifts outside of regular hours. To overcome this, Value Village has designed several calendars and forms that keep them organized.

At the same time, communication is essential. Managers stay in touch with staff and keep them informed. They're also there to help employees work through any challenges and changes that arise in the employees' lives. "The office door is always open," said Opferkuch.

The fact is that Value Village's management tries to be approachable in a variety of ways. For example, they don't require a resume before granting a job interview. This, too, is new, said Crotenko. "We're really adapting to changes in the job market."

On staff are people with disabilities and exchange students with limited English skills. The store enables them to get important work experience. "It's a foot in the door," said Crotenko.

Add to this flexible and approachable workplace everything from paid holidays and sick time to profit sharing and an extended health plan, and it's clear that employees have more than a few reasons to choose and stay at Value Village.

According to Opferkuch, Value Village makes sure that their team members are happy and productive. They even keep food in the fridge to ensure employees get lunch.

Now that's a flexible employer and an employer of choice!

The Labour Market Dialogues is a project to explore how employers in BC's Capital Region could be better supported to hire and retain people experiencing barriers to paid employment. Currently, the project collects and shares successful practices of employers that are attracting and keeping employees through creative scheduling and offering opportunities to people in various stages of worklife.

The project is especially interested in those practices that successfully open doors to employment for people by providing flexible and alternative work schedules, and training and development opportunities. Value Village provides a great example of tapping into new labour markets and providing creative flexibility for employees.

Employers can get involved in the project by contacting the Labour Market Dialogues at 383-6166 or info@communitycouncil.ca.

Innovative Hiring Plan Engages New Canadians

Clint Reece has a hiring strategy that is helping his company succeed while others struggle to find and keep employees. Reece's company offers approximately double the minimum wage to start, medical and dental benefits, use of company vehicles, and flexible scheduling. And it recruits landed immigrants and new Canadians.

Reece is the president of Victoria-based Island Fryer Management. The company uses special equipment to vacuum clean deep fryers and micro-filter cooking oil at restaurants and commercial kitchens.

Employees do not need to speak a lot of English; they work through the night while the businesses they serve are closed and empty. And Reece has found that landed immigrants and new Canadians are stable, loyal employees who deliver excellent service.

"It's a labour pool that [is] sort of a niche in terms of finding people," says Reece. "We're trying to make this a win-win."

To that end, Reece works hard to overcome the linguistic and cultural barriers that can stand in the way of the employer-employee relationship.

Employees who are new to Canada "may not understand my expectations," says Reece. "I may not understand [theirs] in those first few weeks. It's difficult."

Reece relies on the help of the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS). In fact, in place of a reference letter – a big obstacle for many newcomers – Reece accepts recommendations from case workers at VIRCS.

When a case worker finds a potential employee, Reece shows the individual exactly what the job entails through photographs. Reece also asks the individual to go for a ride-along before accepting the job, making sure everything is clear from the start.

After that, it's a matter of being open-minded about cultural differences.

Through GPS, Reece noticed that one driver made an unauthorized stop every day. It seemed the employee was taking advantage of one of the perks of the job — hanging onto a company van to get to and from work.

Reece continued to build a relationship with the employee before asking about the stops. "A lot of [the people] I have hired have histories of being taken advantage of and frankly it takes a long time to build up any kind of trust."

The employee explained that the stops were at a mosque — to pray. Reece happily worked with the employee to make a schedule accommodating the employee's needs. Similarly, Reece provided flexible scheduling for another employee during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Sukhmeet Grewal, a job coach at VIRCS, praises Reece's high wages, excellent benefits, and empathetic attitude. "It's about having the patience to work through any misunderstandings that might come up," says Grewal. "It's about coming down to VIRCS when he needs to and letting us help him and his employees work things out."

Reece's HR practices work well for Island Fryer Management. "I've been able to find guys – they're not looking at this job as a stepping stone. They're looking at it and saying, 'yeah, this is a good gig that I could do for a good period of time.'"

For Reece, hiring new Canadians makes sense, especially given the help of an agency like VIRCS with the knowledge to support employers and employees as they navigate new legal, linguistic and cultural territory — together.

The Labour Market Dialogues is a project to explore how employers in BC's Capital Region could be better supported to hire and retain people experiencing barriers to paid employment. Currently, the project collects and shares successful practices of employers that are attracting and keeping employees through creative scheduling and offering opportunities to people in various stages of worklife.

The project is especially interested in those practices that successfully open doors to employment for people by providing flexible and alternative work schedules, and training and development opportunities. Island Fryer Management provides a great example of tapping into new labour markets and providing creative flexibility for employees.

Appendix Three: LMD Reference Card

Labour Market Dialogues

TAPPING INTO THE HIDDEN LABOUR MARKET

Tap into hidden labour markets by re-thinking the way you hire and train staff:

- Create a \$500/month job for people receiving provincial disability benefits
...LIKE ROGERS' CHOCOLATES
- Hire new Canadians, Aboriginal people or people with disabilities
...LIKE SWAN'S SUITE HOTEL
- Put your interviewee at ease: focus on concrete job skills and ask soft-skill questions later in the interview
...LIKE THE COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM
- Build confidence: start training with simple tasks and let new staff know it is safe to ask for help
...LIKE THE BEACON THRIFT SHOP

You can't always keep your staff by paying more. Consider these other ideas to make you an "EMPLOYER OF CHOICE:"

- Offer job-sharing or alternative work schedules
...LIKE THE BOTTLE DEPOT
- Cross-train staff to accommodate flexible schedules
...LIKE EXECUTIVE PLACE SERVICES INC.
- Provide training, apprenticeships or mentors
...LIKE THRIFTY FOODS
- Encourage and use staff suggestions
...LIKE COLD STAR FREIGHT SYSTEMS INC.

For more suggestions on how to make your business more attractive to potential employees, join the Labour Market Dialogues.



Labour Market Dialogues

TAPPING INTO THE HIDDEN LABOUR MARKET

The Labour Market Dialogues is offering employers the chance to learn from other businesses about HR strategies that work.

GET INVOLVED! CONTACT:

ÁLVARO MORENO, PROJECT MANAGER
Tel: (250) 383-6166
email: alvaro@communitycouncil.ca

Information and outcomes from this Community Council project contribute to the work of the Quality of Life CHALLENGE.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

See WorkBC's website with tips for employers "looking for workers"
www.workbc.ca

See the 5-Step Solution website with helpful resources for successfully employing immigrants
www.5stepsolution.ca

See the Quality of Life CHALLENGE's "HR Options for Action" booklet with 50 tips about positive human resource practices: Click the "Helpful Resources" link, and go to "Employer Resources"
www.qolchallenge.ca

Vancity Credit Union has contributed funds to this project.
The Government of Canada has contributed funding to this initiative.



Appendix Four: LMD PowerPoint presentation

Slide 1



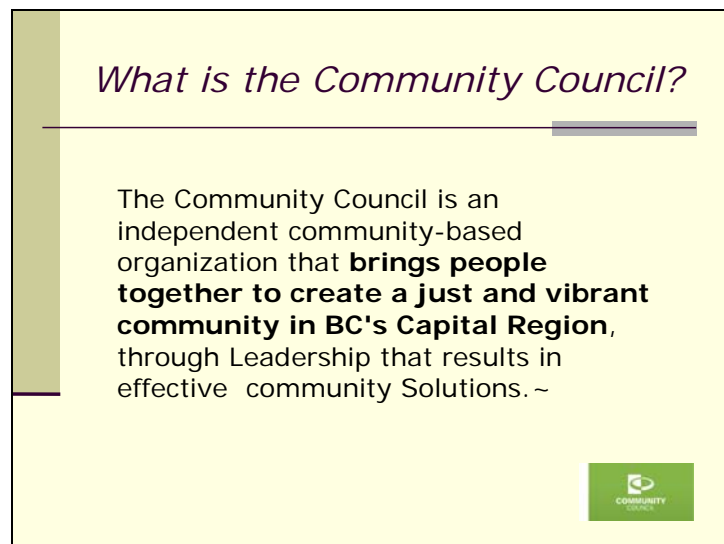
Labour Market Dialogues
TAPPING INTO THE HIDDEN LABOUR MARKET

Labour Market Dialogues:

Tapping into the hidden labour market


 Community Council
Leadership that brings the community together

Slide 2



What is the Community Council?

The Community Council is an independent community-based organization that **brings people together to create a just and vibrant community in BC's Capital Region**, through Leadership that results in effective community Solutions. ~



Slide 3

What is the Labour Market Dialogues Project?

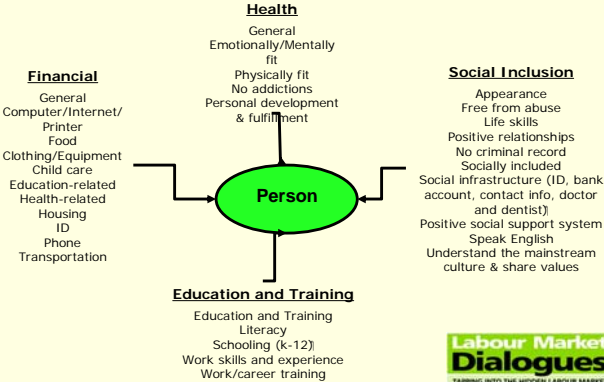
A project of the Community Council to explore **how employers in BC's Capital Region could be better supported to hire and retain people experiencing barriers to paid employment.** ~



The slide features a title, a descriptive paragraph, and a logo at the bottom center. The logo consists of the text 'Labour Market Dialogues' in a bold, sans-serif font, with 'TAPPING INTO THE HIDDEN LABOUR MARKET' in a smaller font below it.


Slide 4

Understanding Barriers to Employment



The diagram illustrates various barriers to employment that affect a central 'Person'. The barriers are categorized into four main areas:

- Health:** General, Emotionally/Mentally fit, Physically fit, No addictions, Personal development & fulfillment.
- Financial:** General, Computer/Internet/Printer, Food, Clothing/Equipment, Child care, Education-related, Health-related, Housing, ID, Phone, Transportation.
- Social Inclusion:** Appearance, Free from abuse, Life skills, Positive relationships, No criminal record, Socially included, Social infrastructure (ID, bank account, contact info, doctor and dentist), Positive social support system, Speak English, Understand the mainstream culture & share values.
- Education and Training:** Education and Training, Literacy, Schooling (k-12), Work skills and experience, Work/career training.




The slide features a title, a central diagram with four categories of barriers, and a logo at the bottom right. The diagram shows a central green oval labeled 'Person' with four arrows pointing towards it from the categories: Health (top), Financial (left), Social Inclusion (right), and Education and Training (bottom).

Slide 5

Now What?

- We want to *find employers of choice*.
- We want to *understand what makes them better*.
- We want to *share the best practices and ideas*. ~





Labour Market
Dialogues
TAPPING INTO THE HIDDEN LABOUR MARKET

Slide 6

Opportunities for you

- Case Studies
 - *Employers of Choice* and their stories will be profiled in coordination with the Quality of Life *employer CHALLENGE E-Newsletter* like this one. ~



Quality of Life
CHALLENGE

Labour Market
Dialogues
TAPPING INTO THE HIDDEN LABOUR MARKET

Slide 7

Tapping into the hidden labour market

What are the benefits in participating?

- Share and promote your stories.
- Learn from other employers.
- Increase your business' capacity.
- Increase your staff's capacity.
- Learn ***simple changes can open doors.*** ~



Slide 8

Tapping into the hidden labour market

Here are some tips!

- Create a \$500/month job for people receiving provincial disability benefits...*like Rogers' Chocolates.*
- Put your interviewee at ease: ask soft-skill questions later in the interview... *like the Community Action Team.* ~



Slide 9

Tapping into the hidden labour market

Here are some tips!

- Build confidence: start training with simple tasks and let new staff know it is safe to ask for help... *like the Beacon Thrift Shop.*
- Hire new Canadians, Aboriginal people and people with disabilities...*like Swan's Suite Hotel.* ~




Slide 10

Tapping into the hidden labour market

You can't always keep your staff by paying more. Consider these other ideas to make you an Employer of Choice:

- Offer job-sharing or alternative work schedules... *like the Bottle Depot.*
- Cross-train staff to accommodate flexible schedules ... *like Executive Place Services Inc.* ~




Slide 11

Tapping into the hidden labour market

You can't always keep your staff by paying more. Consider these other ideas to make you an Employer of Choice:


- Offer training, apprenticeships or mentors... *like Thrifty Foods.*
- Encourage and use staff suggestions... *like Cold Star Freight Systems Inc. ~*



Slide 12

Opportunities for you


- Participate in today's evaluation and we will report back to you on:
 - Employers' response to the information delivered to them;
 - New ideas that employers tried and shared after hearing this information;
 - Preferences for the delivery of future solutions and resources. ~



Slide 13


How to participate:

- Follow-up will be done in February to find out how useful this information was for you and gather more ideas and stories.
- Take a copy of the reference card and share it with others.
- Register for “the employer CHALLENGE e-newsletter” on the evaluation form.
- Share and promote your successful stories, have your story profiled. ~



Labour Market Dialogues
TAPPING INTO THE HIDDEN LABOUR MARKET


Slide 14



Thank you!
Labour Market Dialogues Project II
Community Council
Leadership that brings the community together


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www.communitycouncil.ca



Labour Market Dialogues
TAPPING INTO THE HIDDEN LABOUR MARKET

Vancity Credit Union has contributed funds to this project
The Government of Canada has contributed funding to this initiative.



Appendix Five: Evaluation Form

LABOUR MARKET DIALOGUES - EMPLOYER OUTREACH SURVEY

SECTION 1: Solutions for Scheduling and Transition

1. Have you recently filled out an evaluation on the enclosed reference card (or similar information) at a presentation or interview with Labour Market Dialogues staff?

- Yes (if yes, please skip to *Section 2: Change & Impact of Sharing Solutions, p.2*)
 No

Please use this scale to rate the following statements:

1 Strongly Disagree - 2 Disagree - 3 Neutral - 4 Agree - 5 Strongly Agree

2. This information was relevant to my business. 1 2 3 4
5

3. More specifically, this information was relevant to my interest in:

Recruiting and hiring employees	1	2	3	4	5
Retaining employees	1	2	3	4	5
Improving staff morale	1	2	3	4	5
Increasing productivity	1	2	3	4	5
Other HR practice: _____	1	2	3	4	5

4. This information has increased my interest in:

Improving accessibility of jobs	1	2	3	4	5
Creating an inclusive workplace	1	2	3	4	5

5. What HR topic would you like to know more about? (Please check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiring and recruiting employees | <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing productivity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retaining employees | <input type="checkbox"/> Improving accessibility of jobs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improving morale | <input type="checkbox"/> Creating an inclusive workplace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): | |

SECTION 2: Change and Impact of Sharing Solutions

6. Do you think your business can use these ideas and other resources like this?

- Yes No (if no, please skip to question 12)

7. Which ideas do you see your business using? (Check all that apply)

- Create \$500/month jobs schedules Offer job sharing & alternative work schedules
 Cross-train staff Interview with a focus on concrete job skills
 Start training with simple tasks Offer training, mentors and apprenticeships
 Hire New Canadians and others Encourage and use staff suggestions
 Other (please specify) _____

8. What is it about these ideas that is attractive to your business? For example, they are inexpensive or easy to implement, or they may help a lot of staff, or ...?

9. What is less attractive about the ideas you didn't select? For example, they may seem time-consuming or expensive, don't work for your business, or...?

10. Has this information from the Labour Market Dialogues project helped you to try anything new in your HR practices?

- Yes No N/A (e.g. I just received the information)

11. If yes to above, please share your experience. What did you try?

12. **If you responded "no" to question 6**, can we ask why you don't think your business can use these ideas and other resources like this? (Your feedback helps us to design better supports for employers.)

SECTION 3: Usefulness of Reference Card Resources

13. Did you visit any of the website resources listed on the reference card?

- Yes
- No (if no, please skip to the next section)
- N/A (e.g. I just received the information – if N/A, please skip to the next section)

14. How useful was this resource for you? (Rate all that apply)

5 Step Solution	1 Not useful	2 Somewhat useful	3 Very Useful	N/A
BCWorks	1 Not useful	2 Somewhat useful	3 Very Useful	N/A
HR Options for Action	1 Not useful	2 Somewhat useful	3 Very Useful	N/A

Comments:

15. Have you told other employers about these resources?

- Yes
- No

16. If yes to above, how many employers have you told?

- One
- Two
- Three or more

SECTION 4: Outreach Strategies

17. How did you hear about the HR solutions from the Labour Market Dialogues Project?

Please check all that apply:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Another employer | <input type="checkbox"/> Reference card/flyer in the mail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Email notification | <input type="checkbox"/> Reference card/flyer delivered in person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Group presentation | <input type="checkbox"/> Employer CHALLENGE e-newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In the media | <input type="checkbox"/> Other e-newsletter _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Networking event | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One-on-one interview | |

18. How do you usually hear about HR resources for employers?

Please check all that apply:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other employers | <input type="checkbox"/> In the media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chamber of Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry association |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment agency staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Networking Event |
| <input type="checkbox"/> E-newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation/conference |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flyer in the mail | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flyer delivered in person | |

19. How do you like to access HR resources for employers?

Please rank all those that apply, starting with #1 for the best method.

- ___ Website
- ___ E-newsletters
- ___ One-on-one consultation
- ___ Paper materials mailed to me
- ___ Paper materials picked up at key locations

20. Do you have any other suggestions on how best to provide resources for employers?

SECTION 5: A Little Bit About Your Business...

21. What industry sector is your business in?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodation and Food Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Construction | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Administration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance and Insurance | <input type="checkbox"/> Retail Trade |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Care and Social Assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> Wholesale Trade |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information and Cultural Industries | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

22. Your specific business activity? (e.g. restaurant, whale watching, telemarketing, business software development, retail grocery, etc.)

23. How long has your organization been in business?

- Less than one year 1 - 5 years 6 - 10 years More than 10 years

24. Legal structure? (Please check as many as apply)

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Branch Office | <input type="checkbox"/> Franchise | <input type="checkbox"/> Regional |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Co-operative | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit | <input type="checkbox"/> National |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporation | <input type="checkbox"/> Sole Proprietorship/Partnership | <input type="checkbox"/> International |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ | | |

25. How many locations in the Capital Region? _____

26. Where are you located? (Please check all that apply)

- Peninsula (Central Saanich, North Saanich, Sidney)
 West Shore (Colwood, Langford, Highlands, Metchosin, Sooke)
 Victoria Core (Saanich, Oak Bay, Victoria, Esquimalt, View Royal)
 Other _____

27. Approximately how many employees does your business have?

Full time _____ Part time _____
Seasonal _____ Casual _____

28. Please list 1-3 examples of your entry-level positions.
(E.g. receptionist, cashier, food server, groundskeeper, etc.)

SECTION 6: Other Opportunities

29. Would your organization be interested in trying out strategies like this next year?

- Yes No

30. Are you interested in receiving "the employer CHALLENGE" e-newsletter? **This free monthly electronic newsletter shares stories about successful HR practices being used by employers in BC's Capital Region.**

- Yes No

31. Do you have an HR practice you would like to share through "the employer CHALLENGE" e-newsletter with over 1,400 local employers? If yes, a staff person will contact you in the next few months.

- Yes No

32. Would you like a report on the results of this evaluation?

- Yes No

33. If yes to any of the above, and to be entered in the prize draw, please provide your contact information (we will not share this with anyone else).

Name of business _____

Contact name _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Prefer phone or email? Phone Email

Best time to reach you _____

34. If you have any final comments or suggestions, please enter them below.

THANK YOU! We are grateful for your contribution to the *Labour Market Dialogues Project*. If you have any questions, please contact us at info@communitycouncil.ca or 383-6166.

