



# PASSPORT to Prosperity

Wanted:  
*More Interested Employers*  
*More Work Experiences for High School Students*

# THE FORK IN THE ROAD...



*"Many of the skills you learn in school are very important in the real world. Math, science and basic understanding of physics are all important in my job."*

Richard Theriault, student, work placement at Dominion Warehousing

FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, choosing their post-secondary destination is a critical decision point. Various kinds of work experiences better prepare students to make the transition from high school to work, apprenticeship, college and university.

## More Work Experiences Needed for High School Students

The new four-year Ontario high school program includes a literacy test, community involvement, and additional mathematics, science and career education to help students succeed in our competitive economy. The new program emphasizes the importance of out-of-classroom career-related experiences, and, for the first time, requires all school boards to offer co-operative education, work experience and school-work transition programs to all interested students.

Efforts are under way to expand the availability of these programs for high school students across the province. That's where the involvement of employers is critical.

In a 1999 Roper Canada study, 95% of Canadian employers rated work experience during high school as valuable. Yet in the same survey, 45% of high school students reported zero current work experience. (Source: Junior Achievement / Amway Survey of Employers and Students)

## Employers Needed

**To meet the increased demand for work placements for students, schools need more employers willing to provide them with work experiences.**

Employers can help connect students to the world of work by increasing their career awareness and providing various kinds of work experiences. By working together, employers and schools can ensure that students develop the skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary for future success.

## Provincial Partnership Council Urges Employer Involvement

The Provincial Partnership Council was created in April 1999 to lead an employer recruitment effort and to help create more opportunities for high school students to get work experiences. Top business and community leaders from across Ontario have joined forces with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities in support of this effort.

*"The pool of 33- to 55-year-olds will decrease by 25 per cent over the next five years. Talent is becoming the currency of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Those companies that can sustain high levels of talent in their organizations will be the ones equipped to compete, and to grow."*

Source: Michael McInerney, President of Sibson Canada, September/October, 1999, *Connected in Trade*, The Toronto Board of Trade

# HELPING STUDENTS BENEFITS EMPLOYERS

## Benefits for Employers

Students look to schools to teach them academic and workplace skills. Students look to employers to give them a chance to prove themselves in real-life work settings. There are numerous benefits for employers who offer students work experiences.

## Building the Talent Pool

- Work experiences create better-prepared workers, and reduce time-consuming and costly recruiting, hiring and training efforts.
- Work experiences help enhance the work ethic in students, and provide valuable lessons, such as pride in a job well done, punctuality, dependability and honesty.

## Boosting the Employee Satisfaction Quotient

- Employees who work with students gain new leadership and interpersonal skills.
- Employees say their morale is improved and they enjoy the enthusiasm of youth.
- Work experiences reinforce the organization's commitment to its workers and their families, by benefiting the children of employees.

## It Makes Economic Sense

- Youth unemployment is persistently higher than the adult rate, while employers scramble to find good and committed employees.
- Giving students work experience helps promote a variety of career choices. It also enlarges the pool of qualified workers in sectors with shortages of skilled employees.

## Stronger Communities, Better Schools

- When employers team up with schools, the exchange of information and expertise helps enhance the curriculum and integrate classroom and workplace learning.
- Students benefit when employers and schools work together. Co-operation instills a strong sense that “this is my community.”
- The bottom line is that when students make a successful transition from school to work, it's good for all of us — our society, our economy, our workplaces and, most of all, our students.



*“The returns are great, both in regard to the contributions made by students and the satisfaction which comes from contributing to the professional growth of young people.”*

Michael Hoehsmann, Young People's Press

# BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

## Staying in School

- When students see the possibilities and understand the knowledge and skill requirements of various career options, they are more motivated to stay in school and complete their education.
- Students see the link between what they learn in the classroom and how it is applied at work.
- Students gain confidence, skills and on-the-job experience.

## Bringing Careers to the Classroom

- Students get a chance to explore a number of career options.
- A connection with business can bring the curriculum to life. Practical information about current career practices and market demands can make lessons more relevant and exciting for students.
- The importance of academic learning and literacy (including skills in communication, mathematics, science and technology) takes on new meaning for students.
- In the workplace, students are exposed to successful adult role models and mentors.

## Launching the Job Search

- Students build a network of potential future employers and a source of references.
- Students gain workplace experiences, which are essential for their future job searches.
- With first-hand knowledge, students may be more willing to pursue careers in sectors experiencing shortages of skilled workers.

## Students Taking Charge of Their Future

Students find their own lessons and inspiration from work experiences. However, one thing that they all share is a belief that work experiences will help give them an edge in their pursuit of future success.

*“Work placements introduce students to the work world, show them what to expect, provide them with guidance and encourage them to think about what they want to do.”*

Jennifer Goldsmith, CTV  
Television



# OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYERS TO WORK WITH STUDENTS



*"Co-op programs offer a great opportunity for both the employer and the student to learn from each other."*

Marie Zawerbny, Air Canada

As an employer, you can offer students a variety of work experiences. Programs range from short-term, one-day events to having a student with you for a whole semester (four months).

## Level of Involvement

## Employer Activity

### SHORT-TERM

Several hours to one day

- **Career Talks** – classroom or school visits.
- **Career Fairs/Career Days**
- **Workplace and Industry Tours**

### MEDIUM-TERM

One day to four weeks

- **Job Shadowing** – allows students to observe a workplace (as they do on “Take Our Kids to Work Day”).  
*Length of time: one to two days*
- **Work Experience** – students can participate when enrolled in a course that includes a work experience component.  
*Length of time: one to four weeks*

### LONGER-TERM

Time commitment varies from 110 to 440 hours over several months in a school year

- **Co-operative Education** – students alternate or coordinate their high school in-class studies with a job placement in a field related to their career interests.
- **Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)** – programs for skilled trades, combining school and work-based learning.
- **School-Work Transitions** – students work for an employer (paid or unpaid) for a period of time to learn various aspects of a particular industry or occupation.
- **Mentoring** – advising students, acting as a role model and resource.
- **Project-Based Learning** – serving as mentors and collaborating with students on projects aimed at providing solutions to real workplace problems.

*“With an increase in the number of knowledge-based industries, students can’t look to the traditional sources to decide ‘That’s what I want to spend my life doing.’”*

Carl Thompson, Medius Technology

# CURRENT PROGRAMS

## Job Shadowing

Job shadowing is a planned secondary school learning experience that allows students to observe an employer, employee or co-operative education student at the workplace. It may be part of a course or in addition to the student's high school program.

*Length of time: one to two days*

## Work Experience

Work experience is a planned learning experience component of any credit course, such as Introduction to Business or Hospitality and Tourism Technology. It is of short duration, usually one to four weeks. It takes place outside the classroom and is intended to provide hands-on experience as a compulsory part of the course.

*Length of time: one to four weeks*

## Co-operative Education

Co-operative education is a planned secondary school learning experience in the community. The work placement is directly related to a subject in the student's high school program.

Students are given pre-placement instruction, follow a personalized learning plan at the workplace, are monitored by teachers, and are evaluated regularly by the workplace supervisor and co-operative education teachers. Students also have the opportunity to analyze and integrate their workplace experiences with classroom learning.

Students earn credits when course expectations have been met. Students going on to university, community college, apprenticeship or the workplace are encouraged to participate in co-operative education.

*Length of time: 110 to 220 hours (over several months)*

## Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)

The Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program allows students to work on apprenticeship qualifications and become registered as apprentices while completing high school diploma requirements.

Students earn credits through co-operative education while counting those hours toward the apprenticeship. This two-year program provides opportunities in both regulated and non-regulated trades.

*Length of time: 110 to 440 hours, multi-year*



*"We're here to act as the first level of introduction for students that have never been introduced to this type of industry."*

Bernie Torchia, Mattamy Homes



## School-Work Transition Programs

Programs are designed for students planning to enter the workforce directly from high school. They combine school-based and work-based education, and build explicit preparation for the workforce into students' secondary school programs. The program duration is two to three years, while students complete their high school diplomas. Current models include the Bridges School-to-Work Transition Program.

*Length of time: 110 to 440 hours, multi-year*

## Job Connect and Summer Jobs Service

Job Connect and the Summer Jobs Service provide access to information on careers, the local job market, training opportunities and job search strategies. These year-round services can help students clarify career and employment goals, develop an employment plan and conduct job searches. Students may also benefit from placements in summer jobs.

These services are also available to youth who are out of school. In addition, these individuals may benefit from employment counselling support, job trials and on-the-job training placements.

*"Don't think of the co-op experience as a non-paid job. Think of it as a stepping stone to where you want to go."*

Mabjit Kaur, student, work placement at C-Biz Interactive



# OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYERS TO WORK WITH TEACHERS



*"My job has been to teach students the responsibilities and roles required for their co-op positions, and report the student's progress as the co-op unfolds."*

Tanya van der Wouden, C-Biz Interactive

Educators need to be knowledgeable about today’s world of work in order to teach young people to be contributing members of society and the workforce. Therefore, employer interactions with teachers are as important as those with students.

Educational System Activity

Employer Activity

BUSINESS PRACTICE ADVICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information and support to counsellors and teachers on current industry/professional practices.</li> </ul>
CURRICULUM SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with educators to integrate academic and workplace knowledge and skills.</li> </ul>
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in the development of compatible, inexpensive products, services and software to support the teaching of workplace and industry knowledge and skills.</li> </ul>
INDUSTRY/ PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share copies of industry/professional skill standards to assist educators in program planning.</li> <li>• Help integrate those standards with academic standards and workplace experience.</li> </ul>
TECHNOLOGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide educators with information and support to increase their skills with current technology.</li> <li>• Provide access to technology.</li> </ul>
INTERNSHIP/ SABBATICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities for educators to spend time in a workplace to develop their knowledge of specific workplace skill requirements.</li> </ul>

*“We are involved with co-op programs because we rely on these students for future recruitment.”*

Rick Legate, Active Burgess Mould & Design

# PREPARING STAFF IN THE WORKPLACE

*"Don't underestimate us just because we're teenagers. Many of us are very mature and can handle the jobs given to us."*

Nadia Hasan, student, work placement at TG Magazine



Preparing your organization to work with students is critical. Employees are the front-line link to the students and will need information and support.

## Employer Practice

## Employer Activity

### ENCOURAGE EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

- Prepare employees to supervise students in defined, work-based learning opportunities.
- Communicate regularly to employees about your organization's involvement in these programs, and solicit their ideas.
- Provide employees with the tools and support, including safety training, to effectively work with high school students.

### IDENTIFY STAFF RESOURCES/SUPPORT

- Receive help from schools with recruiting, screening, matching and ongoing problem-solving.
- Ask the school for background information about different types of school-work programs.
- Work closely with the school to develop a learning plan for each student.

### EXTEND CORPORATE LEADERSHIP

- Show visible senior management support for school-work initiatives.
- Spotlight the organization's commitment to education programs through high-visibility activities.
- Adopt policies to support parental involvement in their children's education.
- Encourage employees to participate in education activities as parents and community volunteers – and recognize their efforts.
- Consider opportunities to work with the children of employees (for example, "Take Our Kids to Work Day," job shadowing, co-op placement).
- Align the organization's resources (including communications, corporate philanthropy, volunteerism and human resource policies) with school-work priorities.
- Use involvement in industry and professional associations to strengthen the connection between earning and learning.
- Submit editorials or articles to industry and professional magazines, addressing the role of workforce and career preparation in supporting economic success.

*"School-work programs provide a great opportunity for organizations and their employees to work with energetic and positive young people who are eager to learn."*

Julie Jukes, Mississauga Living Arts Centre

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT STUDENTS IN THE WORKPLACE



*"I am developing ... skills and aptitudes that I didn't know I had. This is an experience you can't learn from a textbook."*

Tania Kalwani, student, work placement at Credit Valley Hospital

# DESIGNING THE STUDENT WORKSITE

Worksite logistics will be particularly important to employees and students. Here are some questions that employers may have about a student work placement. Each workplace experience should meet the unique needs of the employer and student.

## How is the work placement planned?

Before a student begins his or her work placement, the employer, the student and the teacher jointly develop a learning plan. This plan identifies the work skills and learning expectations to be pursued at the workplace, and how they relate to classroom learning. This process helps structure the student's workplace experience so that an employer can plan specific and appropriate tasks.

By including the expectations for the employer, the student and the school, the learning plan will help to minimize misunderstandings about roles, responsibilities and expectations.

## What are the students expected to learn in work experiences?

Worksite learning helps students develop good work habits and behaviours, and employability and citizenship skills. The experience should instruct students in general workplace competencies, including:

- managing resources;
- working co-operatively with others;
- acquiring and using information;
- understanding organizational systems; and
- working with technologies.

*“Employers can draw from the enthusiasm that students bring into the workplace and students can gain valuable experience in the process. It is important, however, to make the work meaningful for the students.”*

Michael Hoechsmann, Young People's Press



## What are employers expected to do?

Employers help demonstrate the culture and work ethic required of a successful and responsible employee, and provide a safe and healthy environment for the student.

A student workplace supervisor may perform a variety of functions, including:

- **Training** – instructing students about how to perform tasks, including teaching safety requirements, monitoring performance and providing feedback.
- **Mentoring** – advising students and acting as a role model.
- **Supervising** – overseeing and evaluating the student's performance and behaviours, and interacting with teachers.
- **Coordinating** – organizing work schedules and tasks.

## Which students are eligible for this program?

All students, no matter what their future destination after high school – whether it be work, training, apprenticeship, college or university – can benefit from work-related experiences. The programs they choose will vary according to their interests and future goals.

Students are screened (counselled and interviewed) to ensure that they have the maturity, interest, skills and knowledge needed in a work placement.

## Are there any requirements or prerequisites for students?

Students have to demonstrate their readiness for a placement with an employer, and student eligibility requirements vary by program. The longer and more involved the program, the more rigorous the application/selection process. Information about specific prerequisites and corequisites is available from each school.

## What are the time frames or length of involvement?

Work experiences vary in length, depending on the type of program that students select and the level of time and effort employers are willing to provide.



## How are students evaluated?

Everyone needs feedback and guidance to help reach higher performance goals. Students also need feedback and recognition for their efforts. Employers play an important role in measuring and recording student achievement. Assessments are competency-based and focus on what students know and can demonstrate. Supervisors complete a written performance appraisal.

## What kind of support do employers receive?

School staff work closely with employers to ensure that students are ready for the work experience. Schools help with recruiting, screening, matching and ongoing problem solving. Students with special needs may be assigned a job coach during the first week of the placement. Teachers arrange and attend monitoring meetings with the student and supervisor at the workplace.

## How will this program work in a small business?

Many small businesses are currently involved in programs such as co-operative education. The program requirements for students are the same regardless of the size of the business. All employers benefit from the support provided by the school. The school ensures that each student has the appropriate maturity, interest level, skills and knowledge before going to a work placement. The school maintains an ongoing relationship with the employer, providing support and problem-solving assistance.

## Is there a cost associated with participation?

No, there is no obligation for employers to pay students. However, some employers choose to compensate students for after-school or summer work, and some offer an honorarium. The cost of personal protective equipment may be covered by the employer.

## Do employers have to pay for insurance and workers' compensation?

Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) coverage is paid by the Ministry of Education for students on work experience, co-operative education, Ontario Youth Apprenticeship and school-work transition programs. Once employers start to pay wages and benefits, WSIB coverage becomes the responsibility of the employer.

*"You have to be organized and committed to educating, but the returns far exceed the effort you have to put into it."*

Glynis Dupuis, Response



# GETTING STARTED

## Getting Involved

- Not sure where to start? Call toll-free at **1-800-387-5514** for the name of a key contact in your school board to help you get matched with your local school.
- Check out the Government of Ontario's education web site ([www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca)) for more information on resources, programs and contacts in your community.
- Another way of making a local connection is through the **Ontario Learning Partnership Group (OLPG)**. The OLPG is a consortium of business-education councils across the province with a network of relationships with employers and schools. The OLPG will help match interested employers with local schools.

### **THE ONTARIO LEARNING PARTNERSHIP GROUP**

3340 Schmon Parkway, Unit #2

St. Catharines, Ontario

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TEL: 1-888-672-7996

FAX: (905) 684-1276

WEB SITE: [www.olpg.on.ca](http://www.olpg.on.ca)

## Spreading the Word

Pass it on – high schools are looking for additional employer partners.

- Invite your professional or trade association to explore opportunities for giving students a workplace experience.
- Promote the concept in newsletters, seminars or presentations.
- Share the names of interested employers with your local school, and follow up by endorsing the value of work experiences.

Special thanks to the Ontario high school students and employers who are featured in this publication.

Une publication équivalente est disponible en français sous le titre suivant : *Passeport pour la prospérité.*

**PASSPORT**  
*to Prosperity*



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