



For Immediate Release

Ten Reasons Why it Makes Good Business Sense to Offer Students Work Experience

TORONTO, Nov 3, 2003 – Providing high school students with work experience not only makes sense for students, it makes good business sense. To mark Canada Career Week, (November 2 – 8), the Provincial Partnership Council and its partners offer the following ten economic, labour and human resource/development reasons to offer high school students work experience.

1. Students are the future of our economy.
2. Training students today creates a labour pool of skilled workers for tomorrow.
3. School-work programs are a cost-effective solution to recruiting, training and retaining young workers.
4. Work opportunities expose students to career options they may not have known about or considered, increasing career awareness of new and traditional industries.
5. Offering high school students work experience increases competitiveness and enhances a company's productivity.
6. Students are a valuable resource with expertise in the latest technology and computer software.
7. Having students in the workplace provides an opportunity for employees to build management, team work and communication skills.
8. Mentoring students is an excellent opportunity for professional development.
9. Students bring ideas, energy and enthusiasm into the workplace.
10. Being involved in school-work programs enhances public image and consumer loyalty.

The Provincial Partnership Council and its partners, The Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Toronto Board of Trade and the Ontario Learning Partnership Group are working together to raise awareness about the importance and benefits of offering high school students work experience.

Through the awareness campaign, *Passport to Prosperity*, the Provincial Partnership Council and its partners are sending the message to potential employers that offering high school students work experience today is vital to meet the needs of tomorrow's workforce.

"In our Skills Task Force Survey, senior executives told us that one of the three elements of competitiveness is a well-educated pool of skilled workers," says Edward Scheck C.A. and Chair, Toronto Board of Trade. "If Ontario wants to stay competitive in the global market and attract investors, it must ensure a skilled labour pool. Offering high school students work experience is an easy solution to a growing problem."

According to a recent survey on labour availability by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, nearly half of Ontario small and medium-size businesses have concerns over the shortage of qualified labour, and they worry that the problem will only worsen in the future. Data also revealed that small business owners regard trial placements and co-op programs as effective hiring methods, and that this approach is high on the list of ways education institutions and businesses can help reduce labour shortages.

"To keep our economy strong we must act now," stresses Len Crispino, President, Ontario Chamber of Commerce. "We must address the issue of labour shortages at the point where we have the most impact, with our future workforce, the students of today."

There are a number of ways employers can get involved and help train Ontario's future workforce. School-work opportunities include workplace tours, job shadowing, mentoring, cooperative education, and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program. They can vary in length from one day to a semester, depending on the type of program that students select and the level of time and training employers are willing to provide.

To find out more, employers can visit www.olpg.on.ca or call 1-888-672-7996.

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The Provincial Partnership Council (PPC) leads the *Passport to Prosperity* campaign and is comprised of key leaders from private, public and voluntary sectors, representing various regions across the province. The PPC works closely with the Ontario Ministry of Education; the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities; and PPC partners the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Toronto Board of Trade and the Ontario Learning Partnership Group.