

# BEST PRACTICES FOR EMPLOYERS

Employers have more than one response to skills shortages, both now and in the future. The Ministry of Skills Development and Labour generated this list of actions through research and discussions with B.C. sector groups and employers. It is intended to help employers and business groups across B.C. consider and plan new strategies for their labour needs.

## **Enhance recruiting**

- △ Marketing efforts to change the public image of work in a particular industry or business.
- △ Matching available positions within growth areas to individuals from contraction areas to maximize the possibility of keeping the talent within British Columbia.
- △ In-house immigration: Companies are developing in-house immigration expertise and strengthening relationships with post-secondary institutions.
- △ An apprenticeship program has been reactivated to address shortages in the transportation segment of the oil and gas industry.
- △ Develop a labour pool where employees would work for an association of companies to help provide better continuity.
- △ Develop partnerships with First Nations to increase participation of Aboriginal people in the workforce.
- △ Focus on seniors as a potential source of limited labour needs.
- △ Changes in wages and compensation.
- △ The use of technology in tracking work experience, training and certifications is being considered to maintain up-to-date inventories of qualified workers.
- △ Industry-specific online recruiting systems are being developed as a tool to attract qualified workers into certain sectors.

## **Improve productivity**

- △ Changes in scheduling.
- △ Changes in work organization to maximize production and employee incomes.
- △ Technological improvements to increase productivity.
- △ Greater reliance on capital and technology to fill labour gaps.
- △ Outsourcing certain activities or business areas.



## Improve retention

- △ Implement specific strategies to help employees balance work requirements with family life.
- △ Develop in-house training programs (larger employers).
- △ Provide incentives to older workers to put off retirement or work part-time.
- △ Training through schools & post-secondary institutions.
- △ Greater attention on working conditions and the working environment can yield positive and more lasting results than wage increases alone.
- △ Compensation strategies can be implemented to attract and retain certain workers.

## Build a long-term HR plan

- △ Several employers within key B.C. sectors are currently monitoring the demographic composition of their workforce and planning accordingly.
- △ Partnerships with school districts or post-secondary institutions: For example, an aviation career preparation program through the Richmond School District was initiated through the efforts of an aviation company. It has been very successful in attracting students into aviation industry careers.

### **Workplace of the Future?**

In the future, it is likely that there will be far more flexibility in employment. Employers will recruit labour from groups that have to this point been under-represented in the labour force, such as people with disabilities and the elderly.

Early retirement will probably be less of an option and perhaps a mandatory retirement age will be a thing of the past, allowing older workers who wish to continue working to do so. There will likely be more opportunities for part-time work as well as other flexible work arrangements, such as working from home. Increases in productivity through investment in capital may also help alleviate some of the labour shortage.

BC Stats  
Small Business Quarterly, June 2002