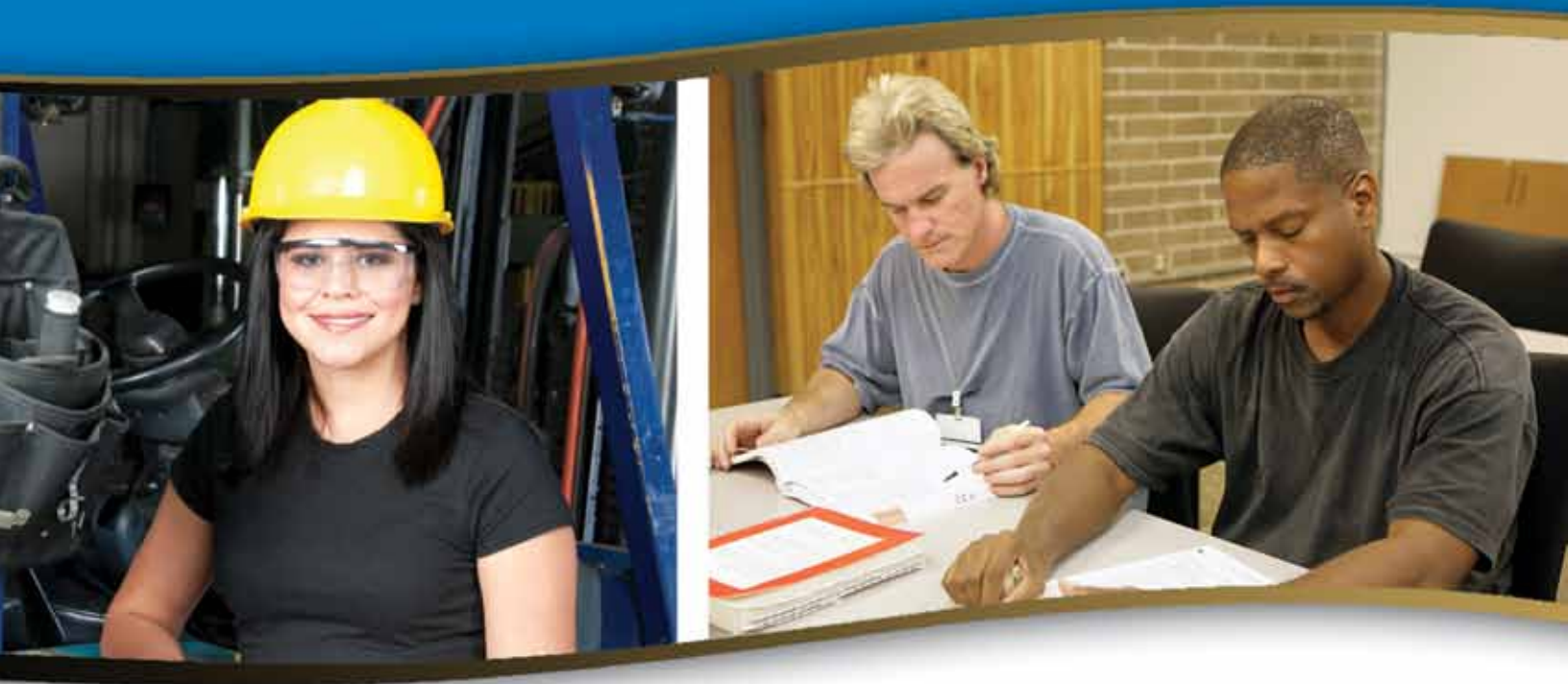


Investing in Training

A Guide to Engage Employees in Career Development



Brant - Haldimand - Norfolk

*"With the Canadian economy becoming increasingly knowledge-based, workers need to keep their skills and knowledge up to date through job-related training and life-long learning."
– Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.*



Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie
Commission de planification de la main-d'œuvre de Grand Erie

Purpose of This Guide

This guide is meant to help employers encourage their staff to pursue training and career development.

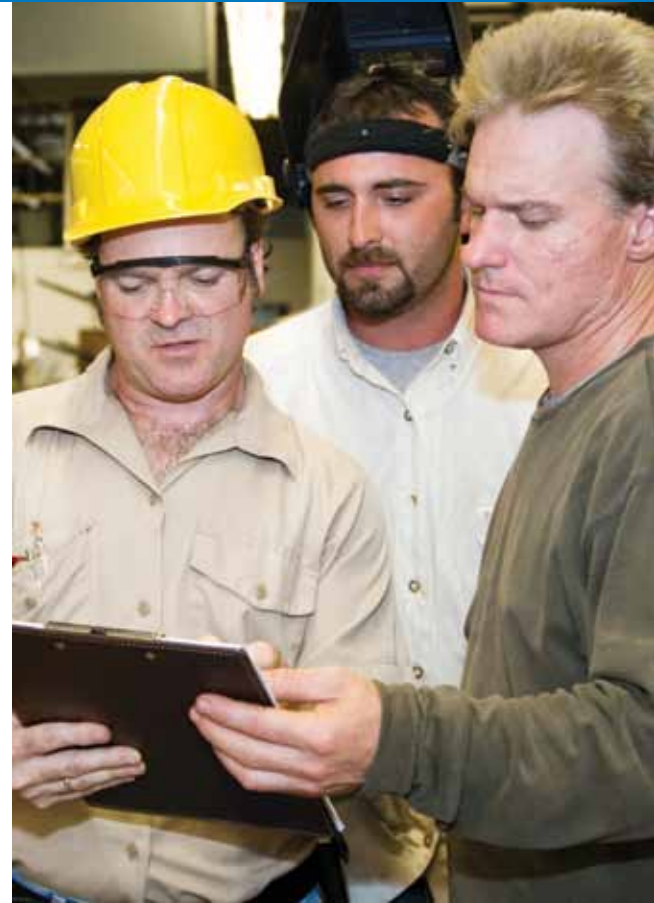
It responds to a need that local manufacturers identified during community consultations led by the Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie in 2010.

Grand Erie manufacturers look to their workers to add skills to keep pace with industry changes and give them a competitive edge. Meanwhile, workers benefit by increasing their value, abilities and knowledge, enhancing their job stability and opportunities for advancement.

Companies told us they earmark money in their budgets for employees who want to take training and education to upgrade their skills or learn new ones. However, few employees had used training dollars.

Interviews and surveys completed with a dozen Grand Erie manufacturers – collectively employing more than 1,150 workers – indicated that staff either “rarely” took advantage of training dollars or did so less than managers needed. At the same time, employers acknowledged that they could do a better job communicating about their training programs.

In the following pages, you’ll find tips on how to engage your workforce and encourage employees to pursue training.



Acknowledgments

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- Henry Technologies (Chil-Con Div.)
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- Mitten Inc.
- Myers Lawn & Garden Group
- On Time Precision Components Inc.
- Patriot Forge Inc.
- Reynolds Custom Machine Inc.
- Seams Sew Easy/Bag Tex Packaging Inc./Van Gregor Metal & Powder Coating Inc.
- Western Spring and Wire Ltd.
- Chamber of Commerce Brantford Brant
- Brant Human Resource Network

Project Co-ordination:

Mark Skeffington, Workplace Planning Board of Grand Erie

"In today's knowledge-based economy, Canadians cannot afford to stop learning after they leave the formal school system. In many cases, individual success and satisfaction in the workplace depends on continually learning in order to upgrade skills and acquire new knowledge."

– Canadian Council on Learning

professional development career development personal development continuous learning life-long learning

Those are all words that describe the same thing: Employees developing themselves by taking education and training-related courses, classes or programs.

This kind of training is optional. It's different from the formal training you require an employee to take to do their job, such as health and safety training.

In most cases, employees express an interest in going to a workshop, taking a course, or pursuing a certificate, diploma or degree.

Often, the education is related to the job a person does. Other times, an employee adds new skills and knowledge that may help them fill another role. And sometimes employees just have an interest they want to explore.

Professional development and continuous learning is well entrenched in professional occupations. Lawyers, doctors, business managers and others are expected to keep on top of the latest practices in their fields.

The concept is less associated with manufacturing. Yet, many manufacturers realize the value of professional development for all their employees, whether they work in the front office or on the factory floor. Many manufacturers have training dollars that interested employees can tap into.

Why Staff Development is Important

An Investment in Your People

Think of supporting your workers' development as adding value to your company -- not as a cost. The cost to help an employee improve themselves may be small compared to the benefits to the individual, your workplace and your company.

Benefits to You

- Enhances an employee's value to your company
- Increases your talent pool
- Creates a more engaged and happy employee
- Fosters a learning environment
- Benefits co-workers, since learning can be contagious
- Promotes sense of team
- Contributes to business success
- Increases employee retention

Benefits to Your Employees

- Increases an employee's value to the company
- Gives employees more knowledge, skills and tools to do their job
- Opens more doors for career development
- Sends right message to employer
- Shows a willingness to learn and improve
- Creates higher self-esteem and motivation

Building an Effective Program

It can be a challenge to build a training program that employees actually use.

And that's the goal – to get employees to use it. There's no sense in setting up a program if an employer doesn't really want to spend the training dollars set aside.

Programs can be effective if they are set up well, regularly promoted and respond to the needs of both employers and employees.

If a business builds a corporate culture that encourages life-long learning – believes in the benefits of a well-trained and educated workforce -- employees will get the message.

“Organizations can take a proactive approach towards making opportunities available, influencing individual choices, and recognizing and rewarding employees who pursue self-improvement.”

– Service Canada, Human Resources Management for Employers, 2009

TIP #1 Create a learning culture	Tip #2 Get employees involved	Tip #3 Lead by example	Tip #4 Have a policy	Tip #5 Ongoing communications
<p>Show and tell employees that the company values professional development</p> <p>Make this clear when hiring and in employee orientation</p> <p>Encourage employees to set personal goals for learning</p> <p>Use performance reviews for goal-setting</p>	<p>Employees are more likely to buy in if they feel they've had a say</p> <p>Ask employees what training and education they think will help them</p> <p>Set up an employee advisory committee to keep staff involved</p>	<p>Demonstrate the importance of self-improvement from the top down</p> <p>Show that managers/supervisors use the program</p> <p>Make it clear that not just managers/supervisors get to use training dollars</p>	<p>Have a policy outlining your training program</p> <p>Communicate to staff in clear language what your policy covers</p> <p>Explain the rules regarding eligible training, tuition costs, pay-back agreements, etc.</p> <p>If you turn down an employee, explain why</p>	<p>Training dollar availability has to be shared with staff on a regular, ongoing basis</p> <p>Reminding staff once or twice a year is not enough</p> <p>Communicate the program using different methods: staff meetings, memos, bulletin boards, company newsletters, etc.</p>



“The challenges of the 21st-century global economy requires a workforce who are continually curious and keen to develop and learn. Some employees will be more motivated than others to meet this challenge. Often it comes down to team culture and the manager creating an environment where learning and development is respected, supported and expected, and where the benefits to the individual are spelled out.”

– *Leading on Learning: A Hands-on Guide for Line Managers.*

<p>Tip #6</p> <p>Share information</p>	<p>Tip #7</p> <p>Be flexible</p>	<p>Tip #8</p> <p>Play up role models</p>	<p>Tip #9</p> <p>Reporting back</p>	<p>Tip #10</p> <p>Rewarding employees</p>
<p>Inform staff about potential training and education opportunities</p> <p>Set up a resource area where information is available. Colleges, universities and private trainers will send brochures and course catalogues for free; this information is also available online</p>	<p>Employees may need flexibility to balance training with their jobs and families</p> <p>Be open-minded about what qualifies</p> <p>If a course may not help a worker now, it may help them down the road</p>	<p>Publicly recognize staff who have completed training</p> <p>Use staff meetings, bulletin boards, newsletters, etc., to highlight good examples</p> <p>Holding people up as role models will encourage others</p>	<p>Require staff to report back to co-workers and managers about their training</p> <p>Written or verbal reports can cover key learnings, how they think it will help them and the company</p> <p>This also provides a role model to co-workers</p>	<p>Reward staff who complete training</p> <p>Consider linking training usage to advancement, bonuses or pay raises</p> <p>Rewards will encourage other workers</p>

Communication

How you communicate about a training program will go a long way to determine if employees use it.

Increasing employee interest and usage depends on reinforcing the message – again and again and again. People need regular reminders.

When to Communicate

Hiring and Orientation

- When hiring, make it clear to employees that your corporate culture encourages employees to participate in professional development. This expectation applies to everyone, from managers down to production workers.
- Make it clear to new hires that there's money in the budget for training.
- Explain your policy and how your program works in simple, clear language.

Performance Reviews

- A performance review is a perfect time to remind staff of your company's belief that professional upgrading and training is expected and encouraged, and even rewarded.
- This is an opportunity to talk to employees about whether they need any education, skills or training to move forward in the company.
- It's also a good time to help employees set personal goals.

Staff or Team Meetings

- Regular staff or team meetings are a good time to remind employees about your program.
- Use meetings to recognize employees who have completed courses.
- Use meetings to have staff report back on their learning.
- Use meetings to share information about resources or upcoming courses.

Other ways to remind employees

- Posters on company bulletin boards
- Periodic memos to staff
- Information slips in pay cheques
- Company newsletters
- Company Intranet



Resources

Where To Go

Area educational facilities offer a wealth of programs and courses, often delivered in flexible formats and times, to meet the needs of people in the workforce. These offerings include academic upgrading, continuing education, online or distance learning, apprenticeships, certificates, diplomas and degrees. Visit their websites to learn more or to access their course calendars:

Mohawk College

Campuses in Brantford, Hamilton and Stoney Creek
www.mohawkcollege.ca

Fanshawe College

Campuses in Simcoe, Woodstock, St. Thomas and London
www.fanshawec.ca

Wilfrid Laurier University

Campuses in Brantford (Laurier Brantford) and Waterloo
www.wlu.ca

elearnnetwork.ca

Offers access to thousands of online courses and programs; also offers support services.
www.elearnnetwork.ca/en

Grand Erie District School Board -- Grand Erie Learning Alternatives

Offers adult, continuing education and general interest courses.
<http://schools.gedsb.net/gela/>

Private career colleges also offer courses and programs. A private career college must be registered and approved by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU).

For more information about how to choose a private career college and for private career colleges in your community, contact the MTCU toll-free at 1-800-387-5514 or visit the MTCU website:
www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/postsecondary/schoolsprogram/pcc/

Other Resources

Canadian Council on Learning

Good source for information and research on learning.
www.ccl-cca.ca

The Canadian Society for Training and Development

The society has several chapters in Ontario, including Hamilton-Niagara, and promotes Learn@Work week every September.
hwww.cstd.ca

HR Council for the Non-Profit Sector

Offers resources the private sector can use as well.
<http://hrcouncil.ca>

Background Documents

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Leading on Learning: A Hands-on Guide for Line Managers, Campaign for Learning.

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Education Matters: Recent Trends in Adult Education and Training in Canada, Statistics Canada, 2008.

Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie

The Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie serves the communities of Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk as a leader in local labour market planning. The Workforce Planning Board delivers authoritative research, identifying employment trends, targeting workforce opportunities and bringing people together to act on solutions. The Workforce Planning Board conducts annual research on the trends, opportunities and priorities impacting the local labour market and releases regular updates, reports and an annual publication that captures strategic actions to address key labour market priorities.

OUR VISION

A skilled, adaptable workforce contributing to a vibrant economy.

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