

**BEST PRACTICES
IN
RECRUITING
ATTRACTING
AND
RETAINING
EMPLOYEES IN THE
MANUFACTURING SECTOR**

Draft Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
2. RESEARCH PROCESS
3. SUMMARY RESULTS OF RESEARCH
4. RECRUITMENT, ATTRACTION AND RETENTION STRATEGIES
 - 4.1. GENERAL HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING
 - 4.1.1. Strategic Plan
 - 4.1.2. Employer assessment Tool
 - 4.1.3. Employee Feedback
 - 4.2. RECRUITMENT AND ATTRACTION
 - 4.2.1. Planned Recruitment Strategies
 - 4.2.2. Attracting Employees
 - 4.2.3. Finding employees with a good work ethic
 - 4.2.4. Finding Employees With the Right Skills
 - 4.2.5. Finding Experienced Employees
 - 4.3. DEALING WITH LABOUR SHORTAGES
 - 4.4. RETENTION MEASURES THAT WORK
 - 4.5. POLICY STRATEGIES
 - 4.5.1 From questionnaires
 - 4.5.2 From one-on-one sessions
 - 4.5.3 From focus groups
5. NEXT STEPS – KEEP THE MOMENTUM GOING!

APPENDICES

A - RESEARCH RESULTS

- I. Secondary Research
- II. Best Practice companies
- III. Questionnaires
- IV. On-on-One Consultations
- V. Focus Groups
- VI. Draft Findings Feedback

B - INFORMATION SOURCES CITED

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Manufacturing is an important contributor to the Nova Scotia economy. As a recent report from Nova Scotia's Department of Finance shows, the manufacturing sector directly accounts for ten per cent of all economic activity in the province. In fact, every dollar of manufacturing output in the province generates \$3.39 in total economic activity. This economic spin-off effect is higher than the national average, which is \$3.05.

Other factors increase manufacturing's relative importance to this province. First, manufacturing jobs are high-quality jobs. They pay 22 per cent more than average hourly wages. Secondly, 95 per cent of manufacturing jobs are full-time. In summary, manufacturing jobs are high-paid, stable jobs – not ones that may be here today, but gone tomorrow. For this reason, it is good policy for citizens, governments, economic development bodies and sector organizations to encourage the continued growth of this important sector.

There are a number of factors that may stop or slow manufacturing's growth here. The first is demographics. Nova Scotia is losing population, especially to Alberta. Our population is also older, on average, than that of other provinces. Secondly, Nova Scotian and Canadian manufacturers face the backdrop of competing globally against such rising economic forces as China and India. And finally, Nova Scotian manufacturers are dealing with what other manufacturers worldwide are facing -- a worldwide skills shortage.

Local manufacturers are limited as to what they can do to change global competitive forces. However, they do have the power to do what is possible to slow or stop staff shortages.

Over the past few years, manufacturing has begun to pay special attention to employee retention and recruitment issues. In the HRM area, the Greater Halifax Partnership's SmartBusiness study of 1000 local businesses showed that manufacturing, in particular, reported one of the highest rates of problems with attracting, hiring and retaining staff. 62 per cent of questionnaire respondents indicated that staffing was a top priority problem.

This finding seems to be borne out by Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters' 2005 report, "Manufacturing 20/20." This wide-ranging report focuses on a vision of how Canadian manufacturers can stay competitive – and, indeed, thrive – in 2020. In its findings, the national organization gave employment practices a top priority. In order to reduce the number of firms reporting staffing problems in 15 years, the report said, "...manufacturers will have to adopt a strategic approach to Human Resource Management to ensure that their employment practices encourage the attraction and retention of skilled and experienced staff."

Some of the larger manufacturers in the local area are fortunate to have skilled human resources help. Unfortunately, many operations do not feel financially able to afford HR staff. Some also feel that they are too small to keep a full-time staffer busy. However, research shows that having some formal human resource functions or processes – preferably formal – on the job is an investment in future viability, rather than a cost.

The following document describes the research that the Greater Halifax Partnership has undertaken on human resources challenges that local manufacturers face. As a result of research gained from questionnaires, one-on-one consultations, secondary research and focus groups, this report offers solutions to common problems and ideas that companies can 'borrow' from best practice companies and other sources.

We have structured this report to provide a useful toolkit to those having employee retention and recruitment challenges. It will provide a bunch of ideas that manufacturers can cherry-pick for practical solutions and for innovative thinking on new problems.

2. RESEARCH PROCESS

Throughout the month of June, Greater Halifax Partnership staff, researchers and SmartBusiness personnel finalized the content of a detailed questionnaire. In a series of 16 questions, it asked local manufacturers detailed questions about the factors that relate to retention and recruitment. Questions related to barriers to finding and keeping the right employees, dealing with labour shortages, training and educational issues, wages and benefits and best practices in employee retention and recruitment.

At the same time, the Partnership also developed a comprehensive mailing list of virtually all large and small local manufacturers.

During the week of July 10, 485 questionnaires were mailed out to local manufacturers.

This effort was followed up in early August by the creation of an online survey, so that busy manufacturers could log in data online, rather than returning a questionnaire. This original e-mail invitation to participate was followed up by an e-mail reminder.

In both the hard copy questionnaire and the e-mail reminder, those who completed were urged to self-identify for the purposes of further research, including focus groups and stakeholder sessions.

Starting on July 14, the Partnership's SmartBusiness team gathered further information from respondents in one-on-one sessions. The material gained fleshed out the research already captured by the hard-copy questionnaires and the online questionnaires.

During the summer, the project co-ordinator gathered research from personal interviews, Internet searches and literature searches. These findings added to what was found out from the surveys.

In early October, three focus groups were held, including those participants that self-identified. In these sessions, manufacturers went into greater depth about what their challenges were – and what their concerns for the future were.

Starting in mid-September, Greater Halifax Partnership personnel started analyzing the data to prepare for the working guide. Focus group participants provided great feedback and helped shape the final guide.

Again in November, manufacturers were invited to make suggestions to improve the working guide.

3. SUMMARY RESEARCH RESULTS

3.1 WHAT THE SURVEYS FOUND

Out of 485 potential respondents, 93 completed the survey – by either hard copy or on the website. This marks an impressive response rate of 19.2%. (A total of 103 people started the questionnaire; 12 did not complete it.)

Those responded often gave candid, detailed responses to the 16 questions. These answers helped flesh out the raw data.

The surveys also revealed some best practice companies. Few companies do all aspects of recruitment and retention well, but several have found ways to tackle specific problems with great success. They will be described later in this report.

3.2 WHAT THE ONE-ON-ONE SESSIONS FOUND

In a total of 35 completed follow-up calls, the SmartBusiness team dug deeply into the reasons why many businesses were finding challenges to recruiting and retaining a topnotch workforce.

In their discussions with the team, manufacturers detailed which positions are hard to fill – and those positions where it is difficult to keep people on the job. This digging for information revealed other new and unexpected challenges.

3.3 WHAT THE FOCUS GROUPS FOUND

On October 10, 11 and 30, 2006, a total of 17 manufacturers took part in three focus groups to test the findings and assumptions found by the Great Halifax Partnership's research team. One other manufacturer, who had to cancel due to a business emergency, submitted his answers to questions posed by the focus group consultant by e-mail. This made a total of 18 manufacturers taking part in the three focus groups.

The findings in the focus groups are explained in more depth in the Appendices. They are also incorporated into the Recommendations.

4. RECRUITMENT, ATTRACTION AND RETENTION STRATEGIES

4.1 GENERAL HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING

4.1.1 Strategic planning

Many sources estimate that if a company has 75 or more employees, it needs to have an HR department. However, many companies say that they can't afford – or are too small to support – a full HR department.

To assist companies with financial or resource challenges, some common sense solutions are proposed later in the document.

Strategic planning for HR is good for the bottom line

- **Create an HR presence that will help you develop a strategic plan. If you can't afford an HR department, you must devise strategic corporate planning including, at least, some basic human resources planning.**

A basic HR plan would cover salary benchmarking, exit interviews and staffing, recruitment, hiring, retention and recognition programs. The plan would also include measuring the success and efficiency of all your programs.

An HR plan needn't be complicated or difficult. A recent Cornell University study found that small organizations create 22% sales growth, 23% higher profits and a 66% drop in turnover when they implement three very basic HR strategies:

- 1) Organization-fit. Go beyond job-fit in the hiring process. Hire employees that can do the job and fit into your organization's culture.
- 2) Family-like atmosphere. Create an environment that provides employees with more than just money. Find ways to foster friendships at work and make employees feel that they are part of a family.
- 3) Self-management. Give employees a clear sense of what is expected of them and feedback on when they are meeting – and not meeting expectations. Then, leave them alone to do their jobs and involve employees in decisions that affect them.

You can also find good basic advice on general HR planning at:

www.hrmanagement.qc.ca/gol/hrmanagement/

- **Create a strategic plan, communicate it and live it – with the full involvement of all staff.**

Your HR plan is just one part of an overall strategic plan.

As an introduction to strategic planning, you can find a good, basic online planning resource at:

www.bdc.ca/en/my_project/Projects/growth/strategic_planning.htm

4.1.2 Employer Self-Assessment Tool

- **Use an on-line assessment tool to be completed by employer**

The Greater Halifax Partnership has created an online tool that pinpoints problem areas for employers and directs them to immediate practical solutions.

You can find the online assessment tool on the Greater Halifax Partnership website: www.greaterhalifax.com

4.2 RECRUITMENT AND ATTRACTION

Solutions to various recruitment challenges can be found in this section of the document. For best practice companies that employ many of the strategies described in this document, you can find them in the “Best Practices” section in the Appendices.

4.2.1 Planned Recruitment Strategies

- **Continue initiatives to hire young people and immigrants, but add other groups to your list of targeted populations.**

To succeed in recruitment and attraction, you have to be working on attracting many different populations of employees at one time. Even unprecedented levels of immigration will not fill staffing requirements, not while trying to recruit young people exclusively. Target multiple populations for your recruitment initiatives, including underrepresented populations such as First Nations people, people with disabilities and mature workers.

- **Use selected Internet job banks, including the upcoming CME manufacturers’ job bank.**

Many employers report mixed results in using the federal government’s job bank. It can be found at: <http://www.employers.jobbank.gc.ca>

The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters are in the process of finalizing a new online job bank for manufacturers. Called “iCME” (short for “Innovative Careers in Manufacturing”), it plans to be “the nation’s top skills portal for Canadian industry.” According to CME officials, iCME will be “the one-stop site for jobs, information and human resource-related information for Canada’s largest business sector.”

The manufacturing job bank, which is free of charge, is scheduled to go on line in January 2007. It can be accessed through the CME’s website at: www.cme-mec.ca

- **Maximize use of available apprenticeship programs as much as possible.**

Local manufacturers expressed concerns with the Nova Scotia apprenticeship system. Some say that apprenticeships should follow the European model. Others state that because present allowable pay scales are too low, they lose talented apprentices to other provinces.

In any case, not enough manufacturers – in the Atlantic Region or elsewhere in Canada – are taking advantage of apprenticeships to help them relieve labour shortages. A recent CME survey showed that only 18% of Canadian manufacturers use apprenticeship programs.

However, apprenticeship remains one of the few government-supported training initiatives available to manufacturers. On Nov. 1, 2006, the Nova Scotia government announced changes to the apprenticeship system to make it more responsive to industry. Employers may also soon get a tax credit for hiring apprentices. Draft amendments to the Income Tax Act supporting this initiative are now being considered. For these reasons, apprenticeship is still an option that manufacturers should investigate thoroughly.

If your sector has no apprenticeship program, you can often create a new program in partnership with other businesses in the same industry sector.

➤ **Get your own workforce to find new workers**

This easy measure is sometimes called the gold standard of low-cost solutions.

Best practice companies, such as the Great Little Box Company, actively offer incentives to get their own employees to find new employees. Through this measure, retention increases and recruitment costs are lower.

Ensure that an employee referral program is not just a ‘friends and family’ hiring exercise. Encourage your employees to recommend the top professionals in their field. If a successful hiring results for their suggestions, offer the employee a bonus, if financially possible.

➤ **Find employees through local co-operative education programs at universities and colleges and use local colleges and universities’ employment offices.**

While manufacturers may look at this as a source of only short-term labour, this is a pool of potential employees that has not been adequately accessed by the majority of manufacturers. Young people of varying skill sets can often be found using this method – from commerce graduates to engineers.

Some employers begrudge the effort taken to hire and train a young employee who may only be on the job for four to eight months. However, if great care is taken to select the right young employee, it can be a win-win situation for both parties.

One employer who has had great success converting co-op students into permanent hires views hiring students as an investment: “I look upon their term with us as a three-month job interview.”

➤ **Consider using new NS Department of Education initiatives.**

With its new O2 (Options and Opportunities) program, the Nova Scotia Department of Education has started special skills and employment-related education in 27 high schools in the province. Co-operative job placements are mandatory in this program. You can get involved in this new training initiative – and perhaps find new employees – by logging on to and registering at: www.investinyouth.ca

Of interest to manufacturers, the O2 program emphasizes the teaching of soft, non-technical job skills known as ‘employability skills.’ This new program may assist employers in finding new workers with a good work ethic. (Many employers are concerned that young workers lack a

good work ethic – such qualities as basic interpersonal and communications skills; punctuality; the desire to work hard; and, taking pride in a job well done.)

You can also find more information on relevant Department of Education programs at:
O2 (Options and Opportunities) www.ednetns.ca/O2/e/index.shtml
Work It NS (promoting the trades for young people) <http://workitns.ca>

➤ **For specialized, hard-to-find technical skills, consider offshoring.**

Some local companies have enjoyed great success outsourcing highly technical, hard-to-find skilled jobs to other countries.

4.2.2 Attracting Employees

➤ **Let your company and its employees become known as an attractive employer by better defining its mission.**

Vision-driven companies -- that is, companies with a clearly defined mission or vision that is lived every day – outperform their non-visionary competitors by a factor of 15 to 1. The statement of vision or mission may be extremely simple, but it must be lived.

There are many different ways to approach the creation of a mission or vision statement. One gaining a lot of currency is the “employer of choice” concept. Becoming certified as an “employer of choice” is costly, but creating a simple mission or vision statement need not be difficult or expensive.

Obviously, a statement or mission or vision is defined during your company’s overall strategic planning process.

One useful way to approach this, and to attract employees, is by defining and promoting your Purpose for Existing (POE). You can do this by following these three steps:

- Define your Purpose for Existing and make it into a short statement
- Publicize it with your employees, through internal and external communications and through your website. In that way, you attract likeminded individuals to your company.
- Live your Purpose for Existing. In that way, you gain credibility as an employer and attract more and better staff.

Bill Black, the former CEO of Maritime Life, described an even simpler approach. Maritime Life, an insurance company headquartered in Halifax, was consistently named to lists of top Canadian employers before it ended operations in 2004.

Bill Black’s top tips for having a vision that works are:

- Don’t write values down if you don’t intend to live them. This goes from the CEO to the production line employee.
- Having a vision statement or an articulated set of company principles gives employees an anchor to hang on to in difficult times. But it also frees employees to be innovative when the circumstances call for creativity. There should be no room in the company for “That’s not how we do things around here.”

His last word on company success is succinct: “If you pay fairly, treat people with respect and give people ample training and development opportunities, you’ll do well in business.”

➤ **Become well-known for a positive working atmosphere**

Lack of a positive working atmosphere is the top reason people leave jobs. Through basic human resource planning and with creative ideas, you can remain a professional organization and still have one-third of your employees’ lives be as productive and enjoyable as possible.

Some of the ways to create a positive work atmosphere are:

- Offering varying work assignments
- Flexibility in wages, benefits and hours of work
- Performance-based raises and bonuses
- Promoting social activities designed with different employee groups in mind i.e. family events, other events targeted at young employers Being part of a team with a mission.
- Commitment to a healthy and safe workplace
- Offering training and development opportunities

Many of the other retention and recruitment factors also contribute to the creation of a good atmosphere.

4.2.3 Finding employees with a good work ethic

➤ **Adjust your company vision to appeal to workers from a variety of ages**

Many employers seek the elusive under-30 employee. However, there are not enough of these young employees available to fill all staffing needs. Employers need to consider all ages -- young, mid-career and older workers – and find places for them in the workplace.

Employers also need to appreciate the skills and experience of older workers on the job while ensuring that training options meet their needs.

➤ **Adjust to the new reality of a younger workforce with differing values.**

Employers must understand that many younger workers – and older ones – are motivated by work with a purpose and work-life balance, rather than just a paycheque.

Within reasonable limits, employers should also try to be open to different styles of dress or physical appearance with younger employees.

➤ **Hire employees from underrepresented groups such as immigrants, First Nations people, African-Canadians, older workers and/or people with disabilities.**

Many local employers have achieved success by widening their employment net to include underrepresented groups such as the above. Access to the Service Canada website can give you, the employer, ideas on how to reach these populations.

Additionally, many manufacturers wish that the immigration system worked more quickly and efficiently. There are, however, local resources you can use to help you with immigration-related concerns. Foremost among them is MISA, the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association. It can help employers with recruitment, cultural sensitivity training, employment services and other matters. For instance, it offers employers a free six-week unpaid work placement for immigrants. You can find out more about this and MISA's many other services at:

www.misa.ns.ca

The Nova Scotia Office of Immigration also helps to expedite immigration-related paperwork and gives information about the Provincial Nominee Program for Immigrants. On July 1, 2006, the Office eliminated fees for sponsoring skilled workers.

You can find out more about the Office and its programs at: www.novascotiainmigration.com

- **Offer “flex benefits” – benefits and/or incentives that appeal to the many different ages that will form the future workforce. This is called the “cafeteria approach” to benefits.**

Benefits that appeal to 25-year-olds might not appeal to 50-year-olds. Many employers are offering flexible benefits, such as a set health care expense account and other options. Your benefit provider can discuss benefit innovations that could save you time and money.

- **Provide in-house training for unskilled workers**

All workers in all workplaces should have training options. But some employers have become creative by training inexperienced, entry-level hires from the ground up. By offering unskilled workers training and advancement opportunities, these companies have created loyal members of the workforce who stay working for them. Some local employers have developed trades people by training members of their unskilled labour pool in certain jobs and then offering them apprenticeships in various trades.

Many manufacturers express concern that, in their opinion, neither parents nor the education system teach young people employability skills. A lack of these skills contributes to the perceived lack of a work ethic in younger workers. Like it or not, future workplace training programs may have to include teaching employability skills such as basic literacy and numeracy; communications skills; taking responsibility for one's work, and problem-solving.

- **Consider cultural sensitivity training for the new multi-ethnic workplace**

Many employers want to hire immigrants and make a place for them in their company. However, some have had challenges in combining multiple nationalities in one workforce. This is where cultural sensitivity training can be useful.

Halifax's Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) offers such training and many other services bridging the employer and immigrant communities. Their website is at:

www.misa.ns.ca

To see if your workplace is truly ready to accept immigrant workers, consult a very useful self-assessment tool at: www.hireimmigrants.ca

You can also find some examples of inclusiveness in action in the Best Practices section of the Appendix.

4.2.4 Finding Employees with the Right Skills

➤ **Offer varied training options**

- In-house training
- Partnering with educational institutions
- Mentoring – having senior staff train junior staff.

In-house training can be partnered with a formal mentoring program. A good, properly evaluated mentoring program has the added advantage of increasing retention of both older and younger workers. The senior employee doing the instructing has a renewed role in the company, while the younger trainee feels a part of the workplace more quickly. Mentoring has the added advantages of lowering training costs and helping document the institutional memory of a company.

Partnering with educational institutions to deliver targeted training often works with very satisfactory results. This project's questionnaire found that 64% of employers find private companies and/or local universities and community colleges to be good partners in training development.

➤ **Making a corporate commitment to training**

In today's competitive marketplace, training must be considered an investment. In fact, companies that place a premium on training are more profitable than those that don't. Investing in training and professional development is a clear signal that a company cares about its workers.

➤ **Cultivate 'alumni' employees -- or leave the option of returning to their jobs open for good employees who depart.**

This option may not be workable in the case of proprietary, trademark or copyrighted information. But it is an option in most workplaces.

Many employees who leave on good terms are often willing to refer other employees to your workplace. Also, many employees who leave your company may later wish to return. If they are valued employees, keep the option of returning open. Some companies losing staff to Alberta are finding this option very useful.

4.2.5 Finding Experienced Employees

➤ **Promote in-house training, partnered training or mentoring programs or train unskilled workers.**

Some local employers are having great success in training inexperienced employees in job skills on the job.

➤ **Consider forming an alliance with businesses in the same area or joining a sector council.**

Rather than viewing other companies in the same sector solely as competitors for market share, manufacturers in similar sectors are considering alliances to bring specialized training or skilled employees to the local area. In this way, manufacturers can boost the chance of success of the whole sector in the Atlantic region.

Membership in a sector council, which is co-ordinated through Service Canada, is free. You can find more information on them at the following website: <http://www.councils.org/>

The CME also has a national program to develop a consortium of like-minded firms and sector councils. You can get more information by contacting the CME in Nova Scotia at: (902) 422-4477.

You can also consult the following Service Canada website for more information: www.sdc.gc.ca/en/gateways/nav/top_nav/program/spi.shtml

4.3 DEALING WITH LABOUR SHORTAGES

Although 89% of employers report finding it hard to find skilled workers, only 38% have any existing plan on how to deal with these shortages.

➤ **Devise a succession plan**

Succession planning should be part of your company's overall strategic plan. Senior management should devise a succession plan on how to deal with expected and unexpected vacancies. Any plan should include strategies on handling the loss of personnel in key positions, scheduled retirements, identifying top performers and finding new workers for the industry. It also should include internal postings (of between five to ten days) of all jobs before they are advertised externally. A good succession plan should include on-the-job training options. It should also encourage employees to seek trade or professional designations and certifications.

Management should stay aware of employment trends in their business in order to foresee any hiring or recruitment problems before they occur. Management should also make promising employees aware of opportunities for advancement in the company. In the annual performance review, discuss the employee's future goals and the organization's future needs – and find ways to accommodate both.

The Business Development Bank of Canada's website is a very good source for basic, user-friendly information on succession planning. You can see this at:

http://www.bdc.ca/en/my_project/Projects/articles/succession_plan.htm

Service Canada's CanadaBusiness site is a comprehensive source for basic information on business planning. Many topics are covered, including starting a business, business planning, government assistance to business, taxation and human resources.

There are many interactive tools, including one to help write a three-year business plan. Additionally, there is an online downloadable guide to services to business in Atlantic Canada.

The CanadaBusiness site is found at:

www.canadabusiness.gc.ca

The Canada-Nova Scotia Business Centre is also a storehouse of business planning information. Some of it relates specifically to the manufacturing sector.

See and explore the following web site and related links:

http://risa.ic.gc.ca/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=CBSC_NS/display&cid=1081945275733&c=GuideFactSheet&lang=en

4.4 RETENTION MEASURES THAT WORK

➤ **Introduce a basic retention program, if you don't have one**

It can be easier to train and motivate a current employee rather than support costly staff turnover. Firms should introduce some basic retention programming as part of an overall human resources strategy. This should include salary benchmarking, regular employee surveys, annual performance reviews, reviewing wages and benefits and an overall human resources strategy with succession planning.

Previous Greater Halifax Partnership research has shown that most employers think that they are paying adequate wages, most are not. You do not have to be the best-paying firm among your competitors but your wages should be seen to be adequate, given the market conditions. This is where salary benchmarking is critically important.

In November 2006, Mercer HR Consulting completed its most recent CME Compensation Survey Suite. This suite of materials, now available to the public, is a “comprehensive source for human resource policies and pay data for the manufacturing and export sectors.” It represents pay data for 13 geographic areas across Canada (including Atlantic Canada), over 400 cities, 564 companies and nearly 179,000 individual salaries for more than 300 positions. Regional or national reports are available online at a premium price for CME members and those who took part in the survey. For more information, see the following website: www.imercer.ca/CME-MEC

➤ **Examples of low-cost, low-maintenance internal recognition programs**

Recognition programs are one of the best ways to create a team atmosphere and a good work environment. A program need not be complicated but it must be genuine. Insincere recognition can make employees cynical and less likely to stay. “Employee of the Month” programs are now considered outmoded and ineffective. But many recognition measures are effective, ranging from thank you notes, coffee gift certificates and merchandise to free vacations. All are variations on a simple theme: “Thank you.”

Manufacturers who cannot compete with higher-waged competitors could use this measure as one of their strategic linchpins.

A good example of a best practice company for recognition is the small manufacturer, the Great Little Box Company (see appendix). One national one is Greybar/Harris and Roome. (see appendix) (Its national HR headquarters is located in Halifax.)

Peer recognition is also gaining acceptance. In this concept, fellow workers nominate one of their own number for incentives. This creates networks of support across the team. In one company, workers nominated a fellow employee for a “Get a Life” Award for logging the most overtime.

A recognition program should be just one part of a co-ordinated corporate human resource strategy.

➤ **Ensure that managers get ongoing leadership training**

Many companies find that ongoing management training saves money by increasing staff satisfaction and retention.

In Gallup Poll research, 49 per cent of workers say that they have left jobs because of a bad boss. Ensure that your company is not one of the ones being deserted.

Employees should not work in a vacuum. To avoid this, managers must be trained to give good feedback so a worker can know if he or she is doing well or if there is need for improvement.

➤ **Vary job assignments for workers who seek constant change and challenges**

If you are able to offer varying assignments due to the nature of your operation, the first challenge is to identify those on your staff who are most able to benefit from new job assignments or lateral transfers. In this way, you can meet staff shortages by retooling and redeploying one of your own employees.

Varying jobs within the organization also helps with retention because an employer who is at risk for becoming bored is recharged by a change of assignment. He or she also learns new job skills in a process called “cross-training.”

Cross-training can avoid expensive downtime and job boredom. The United Steelworkers of America is currently cross-training about 3,000 seasoned workers at U.S. Steel Corp. in a secondary discipline, such as teaching a pipe fitter to run a press. Ten years ago, this kind of training did not exist. But in light of today’s labour shortages, it may be worth consideration.

➤ **Promote from within**

It’s not possible to do so in all workplaces. But if you can, offering advancement opportunities within your company can spur better job performance and company loyalty.

➤ **At the very least, temporarily hire an HR consultant or student to introduce some basic HR programming.**

Even small firms with budget constraints can benefit from a short-term placement with a consultant. The services of a qualified HR student may also pay off in better productivity and lower turnover – which makes an immediate impact on the bottom line.

Capable young HR students are also available on work terms from Nova Scotia Community College’s Human Resource Management program or Saint Mary’s University’s HR Program.

These well-trained young people have learned all the latest innovations in HR. They can multitask – they can benchmark salaries, do employee surveys, start basic retention and recruitment programs and provide general HR help for those companies who need it.

Additionally, these students work for very reasonable rates. The Saint Mary’s Co-operative Employment Office will also point out any existing programs that will subsidize your hiring costs.

Lastly, the Saint Mary’s Co-operative Employment office says it needs placements for its HR students. With your involvement, this problem could be easily fixed.

Some local and national companies offer another approach to human resources management services. After a needs assessment is made, employers can contract these firms for a part-time, ongoing HR professional to work in the company. He or she is charged with making

recommendations on, and carrying out, improvements in staffing; performance management; training and development; HR policies and procedures; occupational health and safety, and HR administration. In this business model, the HR worker has the authority to make ongoing changes.

For more information, consult the “HR services” section of the website for the Human Resources Association of Nova Scotia at: www.hrans.org. You can also check the Yellow Pages under “Human Resources Consultants.”

➤ **Use employee wage, benefit and training packages creatively.**

As one commentator titled an article, “That hard-to-find employee is your new boss.” Because of labour shortages, the employer must now attempt to meet the needs of employees to an unprecedented level.

Some options that Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters have cited are flexible work schedules; time off for hours worked; short leave time for personal issues; support for worker education and training; compensation-based performance incentives, flexibility to deal with child care issues; compressed work weeks and employee wellness programs. Permanent part-time employment and job sharing are other options.

Some newer approaches allow for unpaid or paid leaves of absence, sabbaticals or time off for volunteer work. These initiatives can give an employee a new perspective on life and work. Likewise, employers get back a more productive, refreshed employee.

Employers in new businesses or those catering to younger people can offer incentives that matter to younger people, such as mountain bikes or a paid day off to pursue personal interests.

Bonuses and incentives should only be given for good performance. If workers are rewarded for doing mediocre jobs, it removes any incentive for other employees to excel on the job.

➤ **Keep your mature workers happy and on the job.**

While many commentators cite increased immigration and hiring younger workers as solutions to labour shortages, even an unprecedented level of immigration would not meet all shortages. Hiring younger workers is also only a partial solution because statistics show that there aren't enough young workers available to meet coming labour shortages. In particular, Canada is suffering from a demographic crunch – a ‘baby bust.’ There are not enough young people in the 18 to 35 age group to replace baby boomers who will soon be leaving the workforce.

By considering some of the following measures, you can find ways to keep valued mature staff on the job:

- Ensuring that the workplace values their experience and knowledge
- Involving them in mentoring programs solves training needs and helps older workers stay involved in the workplace
- Allowing for, and encouraging such measures as phased retirements, varied assignments, lateral transfers and post-retirement part-time work
- Ensuring that training is adapted to older workers.
- Encouraging workplace wellness initiatives for all workers.

4.5 POLICY STRATEGIES

The questionnaires, the one-on-one sessions and focus groups reached different consensuses on policy issues that need consideration on a governmental level

i) Results from the questionnaires

The survey listed eight potential initiatives that the public sector – municipal, provincial or federal – could take or promote to help manufacturers find the skilled labour they needed.

They were:

- Training tax credits
- Adjusting the federal immigration points system to allow skilled trades people into Canada
- Expanding and updating regulations governing apprenticeship programs
- Reducing payroll taxes
- Recognizing and promoting the importance of the manufacturing sector to the local economy and promoting careers in the sector
- Providing incentives to encourage young people to pursue careers in manufacturing
- Providing incentives to encourage trades people to remain in Nova Scotia rather than moving away.
- Ensuring that legislation and regulations affecting labour and employment practices provide manufacturers the flexibility to reorganize their workplace, manage change cost-effectively, and protect workers' health and safety

Manufacturers were also asked to list any other factors that would assist them in their work.

The most important factors listed were, in order of priority:

- Providing incentives to encourage young people to pursue careers in manufacturing (19%)
- Recognizing and promoting the importance of the manufacturing sector to the economy (17%)
- Providing incentives to encourage trades people to remain in Nova Scotia rather than moving away (15%)
- Training tax credits (14%)

4.5.2 From one-on-one sessions

i) Outmigration to Alberta is an emerging problem.

- **Multilevel government action must be taken to stop or slow outmigration to Alberta.**

Manufacturers, economic development organizations and trades sectors must continue to lobby all levels of government to slow down this rapid depopulation.

The hollowing out of other regions to Alberta is a national phenomenon. But local outmigration needs to be tackled directly on a municipal and provincial level.

ii) Manufacturers could solve staff shortages by encouraging students to stay in Nova Scotia after graduating from high school or university. Governments could encourage young people to stay by providing student loan or similar incentives.

iii) Through general community outreach, manufacturers should engage more directly with students of varying ages.

iv) Rural areas lack adequate infrastructure to encourage manufacturing growth.

Local manufacturers in rural areas suffer from infrastructure-related problems like lack of bus service to their locations. If local and provincial governments are committed to manufacturing in rural areas, they will have to ensure adequate infrastructure and public transportation options of all kinds in such areas.

Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters points out that a lack of rural infrastructure of all kinds – roads, health care, education and municipal services – is a problem to manufacturers all over Canada, but particularly in areas like Atlantic Canada.

v) Employees, particularly young ones, must be taught basic ‘employability skills’

Manufacturers said repeatedly that while many young workers may have the technical skills to do the job, many lack basic, ‘soft’ job skills – also called employability skills. Employability skills are the non-technical skills needed to perform a job adequately. These include, among others, basic numeracy and literacy, interpersonal skills, taking responsibility for one’s work, problem-solving ability and critical thinking.

- **Schools, universities and community college should consider adding instruction on basic ‘employability skills’ into their curricula.**

vi) There is a lack of skilled trades people in certain occupations

Community colleges should consider reinstating or expanding specialized programs to supply needed professionals in certain areas, such as cabinetmaking, metal fabricating and dental technology.

Failing that, manufacturers might want to train their own skilled personnel with a training partner.

For instance, the Nova Scotia boatbuilding industry, with training partners the Nova Scotia Community College and the Nova Scotia Department of Education, is training new boatbuilders through a new co-operative program.

Lastly, the provincial government should continue – and expand – its efforts to get people to enter the skilled trades.

vii) There is a perceived ‘disconnect’ between education and training systems and manufacturers

Manufacturers discussed what they saw as a lack of communication between themselves and representatives of the various education systems.

The Nova Scotia Department of Education is trying to bridge the gap between employers and the school system with its new O2 program.

➤ **Multi-party action should connect the various players involved in recruiting and employing skilled workers**

Interested parties could include the NS Department of Education, the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters local office, area universities and the NS Community College. Several manufacturers have expressed interest in this kind of summit.

viii) Continue to make manufacturing a more attractive career option

- The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association has continued to lobby for this measure, as have other American and international bodies. Along with a renewed emphasis on promoting the trades, the provincial government should encourage growth in the manufacturing sector.

A co-ordinated campaign to reach students at young ages can keep dispelling manufacturing’s unrealistic negative image and reach future employees.

4.5.3. From focus groups

The eight potential policy initiatives were presented to the three focus groups.

Of the eight potential initiatives, the four that were seen to have the greatest potential impact on attraction/retention were:

1. Streamlining immigration of skilled tradespeople to Canada
2. Reviewing apprenticeship program regulations
3. Providing incentives for workers to remain in Nova Scotia
4. Reducing payroll, business occupancy and other taxes

Manufacturing employers identified the following as the policy initiatives they would pursue themselves if given the resources:

1. Streamlining immigration of skilled tradespeople to Canada
2. Reviewing apprenticeship program regulations
3. Providing incentives for young people to pursue careers in manufacturing
4. Pursuing tax credits for employee training

What measures *don't* work

Promoting careers in the manufacturing sector and promoting the importance of the manufacturing sector to the local economy were seen as ineffective with all employers.

5. NEXT STEPS – KEEP THE MOMENTUM GOING!

Action Plan

Survey respondents, one-on-one interviewees and focus group participants had much to say about which policies would help the manufacturing sector thrive.

All of the Greater Halifax Partnership's research resulted in a list of policy concerns requiring immediate attention.

The following list underscores 11 important matters. But the first four issues highlighted in the following list are the most urgent concerns of local manufacturers – the ones they would like to address most immediately, given adequate time, resources and support:

- 1. Nova Scotia apprenticeship programs should be reformed, expanded and/or streamlined to better meet manufacturers' needs.**
- 2. Immigration of skilled trades people should be made easier and quicker.**
- 3. The federal government should increase tax credits for work-related bonuses and training.**
- 4. Governments, sector organizations and the private sector should continue and expand incentives to encourage young people to pursue manufacturing careers.**
5. A multi-party Task Force on outsourcing HR duties and responsibilities should be created.
6. Resources should be expanded to help manufacturers decrease expenses and increase profits.
7. Tax reform of business, payroll and other taxes should continue.
8. With the influx of more immigrants, general cultural sensitivity training should be expanded.
9. All levels of government should create incentive to keep skilled trades people and managerial staff in Nova Scotia.
10. The profile, knowledge of and membership in, sector councils should be encouraged.
11. The problem of out migration to Western Canada must be addressed at all three levels of government.

APPENDIX A – RESEARCH RESULTS

I. SECONDARY RESEARCH

GENERAL HR PLANNING

Several sources cite that any investment in human performance areas – training, knowledge management, performance management and advanced human resources practices – translates into growth in the bottom line. (Cuddihey)

For a small organization with a limited HR budget, the programming needn't be complex or costly. A recent Cornell University study found that small organizations create 22% sales growth, 23% higher profits and a 66% drop in turnover when they implement three basic HR strategies:

- 4) Organization-fit. Go beyond job-fit in the hiring process. Hire employees that can do the job and fit into your organization's culture.
- 5) Family-like atmosphere. Create an environment that provides employees with more than just money. Find ways to foster friendships at work and make employees feel that they are part of a family.
- 6) Self-management. Give employees a clear sense of what is expected of them and feedback on when they are meeting – and not meeting expectations. Then, leave them alone to do their jobs and involve employees in decisions that affect them. (Cornell)

Benefits of an HR department include saving money, ensuring standardization of employment procedures and policies, having specialized expertise on staff. It also sends a positive message that you care about staff.

HR professionals have expertise in compensation and benefits, training, staff retention, performance management, information, policy development, career development, and consulting and liaising.

If your shop is too small to justify a full-time HR presence, hire a consultant which “should not be a very expensive undertaking.” “Acknowledge that getting some assistance with human resource matters would benefit the whole organization.” (“Protect your assets.” CA Magazine.)

Failing that, you can probably afford the assistance of an HR student. Halifax alone has two programs in Human Resources; one is at St. Mary's and the other is at the Nova Scotia Community College. (personal research, St. Mary's Co-operative Education Office.)

SUCCESSION PLANNING

Companies that are actively involved in succession planning are likely to outperform their competitors, according to recent British research.

Four consistent indicators of effective leadership development are:

- Fast-tracking development of high performers
- Active involvement of CEOs in leadership development programs, including staff selection, recruitment and performance reviews.
- Consistent program delivery.

- Formal accountability, supported by metrics, of the development teams responsible for leadership programs. (Donkin, Financial Times)

A game plan to replace important people who leave is now critically important. (“Replacement Planning,” Miller)

There are some challenges in succession planning: retention, identifying people in the organization who could step into management roles, educating yourself about succession planning but “keeping it simple”, developing leaders internally and creating a formal succession plan.

However, companies involved in succession planning should know that it is not a quick fix. It will bear results but it takes time. (Shiffman)

ATTRACTION

Attracting the best employees has become a top of mind issue, considering looming labour shortages. There are several ways that various HR experts have come up with tackling this problem:

“Purpose for Existing”

One commentator suggested a three-part process:

- 1) Clarifying what your PFE (Purpose for Existing) is. It needn't be complex. For instance, pharmaceutical giant Merck Frosst's PFE is: “Preserving and improving human life.”
- 2) Let the world know what your PFE is. In doing so, you attract staff whose PFE is similar to yours, ensuring a good fit.
- 3) Fulfill your PFE. If you do not, you will damage your company's credibility and your ability to attract staff.

These three steps make recruiting a lot easier. (Strelecky)

Using branding principles

Create an ‘employment brand’ – Just like creating a brand for a product, the idea is to create an automatic association between employment in your company and a promise that includes a set of characteristics, attributes or emotions. (“Engage, inspire and equip your workforce”, Anonymous, Profit Magazine.)

Becoming an employer of choice

The “employer of choice” concept has gained a lot of currency in the last number of years.

While you can apply formally for an “employer of choice” designation, you can also apply some of the concepts fairly easily in the workplace. The Province of Manitoba has adopted an Employer of Choice program. Its principles can be seen at the following website:

www.gov.mb.ca/eoc/

Most importantly, let your employees do your advertising for you. Nothing attracts good employees like good word of mouth. If you have happy employees, you create a workplace that automatically draws top talent.

One low-cost measure is to hire new staff through employee referrals. Many successful companies have found this a reasonably priced measure to help them hire good staff.

CONSIDER CREATING YOUR OWN FORMALIZED RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

The public sector, which has its own staffing challenges, has many good templates in this area. One is the Nova Scotia Public Service Commission's Retention and Attraction strategy.

While it relates specifically to the public sector, many of its principles are applicable to the private sector. The Public Service Commission's Attraction and Attention Framework can be found at: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/psc/default.asp?mn=1.162.505>

FOR MANUFACTURERS

Many commentators report that despite intensive sector PR programs to get rid of the "dirty and dingy" image of manufacturing, more needs to be done to promote a positive image of manufacturing. (Millar, Panchak, "Manufacturing 20/20" report)

One commentator stated that manufacturers should think hard before getting rid of valued employees when productivity increases. They should keep employees who are "committed to growing the business" and bringing in more profitable work. By doing this, manufacturers could make great strides in rehabilitating manufacturing's tarnished image – and to reducing longstanding labour shortages. (Panchak)

Make your workplace more attractive for immigrants and people from other cultures

While immigration can't be seen as the total solution for all employment problems, it is one component of a larger strategic approach to attracting employees.

But the most important thing to remember is that if you are interested in attracting immigrants, you should make your workplace welcoming to them.

Ernst and Young, winner of a recent Immigrant Success Award from the Toronto Regional Immigrant Employment Council, has adopted measures that increase success of immigrants working for their firm in Canada. They will be discussed later in the document.

Manufacturers can't control the speed at which new people are accepted into Canada; that is a larger policy matter. But by creating a more inclusive and accepting atmosphere, you can attract more skilled immigrants to your worksite.

RECRUITMENT

Basic principles

Top performing companies all have this in common -- a rigorous hiring process and a corporate emphasis on hiring talent. This breeds an intense desire among employees to not just succeed but to succeed for that company. ("It's easier to start with great people than to make people great." Gandossy and Efron)

Avoid common mistakes in hiring, such as relying on gut instinct rather than assessment tools; not performing adequate due diligence and reference checks; checking to see that your salaries truly measure up to those of your competitors; and, failing to measure the personal qualities needed to do the job, not just the technical ones. ("What's the biggest mistake HR people make when recruiting?" Cdn HR reporter.

If you have highly technical jobs that are hard to fill, you might consider specialized hiring firms (Stevens-Huffman). Or if you are having problem with recruitment and staffing, some firms have found outsourcing the whole function to be very helpful – whether it's to a temp agency, a staffing company or to an HR consultant ("Outsources say they do better than in-house recruiters.)

In manufacturing

Recruitment needs are now at their highest levels in five years in manufacturing.

Smaller manufacturers prefer informal recruitment methods, such as word of mouth and internal recruitment. These companies consistently report fewer recruitment problems than large companies. ("Lack of skills puts a spanner in works of manufacturing revival.")

RETENTION

General principles

Although competitive wages are an attractant for employees (Plastics Council, Apprenticeship Retention reports), they are not the top reason employees stay at a workplace. A positive work atmosphere is the top reason employees stay; wages and benefits are sixth in importance. ("Apprentice Retention in the Skilled Trades")

One of the top reasons people leave workplaces is working for a bad boss. To combat that, ensure that all managers take regular management training and upgrading ("May the workforce be with you.")

Best practices in employee retention

A comprehensive study of the Canadian plastics industry showed that top performing companies with the lowest turnover in that sector all had the following characteristics:

1. Fair compensation
2. Adequate, flexible benefits
3. Innovative compensation systems
4. A recognition and/or reward program
5. A commitment to training, professional development and career training options.

6. Formalized recruitment and retention practices.
7. Healthy workplace initiatives
8. Work-life balance programs, including the ability to trade shifts
9. Job design and work teams
10. Employee participation and communication
11. Regular performance appraisal, with good feedback.
12. Knowledge transfer programs – cross training, mentoring, phased-in retirement

As the report noted, success is not the purview of just big companies. Many of the companies cited were small companies, with little or no formal communications practices. But they were “nevertheless extremely effective in speaking with, and listening to, their employees.” (Canadian Plastics Council Report)

COMPENSATION SYSTEMS – WAGES

Many commentators noted the need for competitive wages. This need should be obvious. But a recent Greater Halifax Partnership study showed that while most employers think that they are paying competitive wages, many are not. (GHP SmartBusiness survey)

While the jury is out on whether bonuses and incentives are critically important, many commentators feel they are. Profit sharing and stock options should not be the purview of just the managers but could be considered for everyone. (“Engage, inspire and equip your workforce.”) One real-life example of this is Maritime Travel, Atlantic Canada’s only entry in the “50 Best Employers to Work for in Canada.” Almost all of the team is eventually eligible to get bonuses, travel rewards and/or profit sharing. (Personal interview with Karn Nichols, HR Director, Maritime Travel.)

Most successful companies award merit bonuses to high performing non-managerial workers (73%) and executives (83%) (“May the workforce be with you.”)

BENEFITS

While adequate wages are important to 96% of employees (“Fundamental Human Requirement – Recognition”), it is far from the only thing that is important. As one commentator stated, “Don’t underestimate the value of time to employees.”

The same commentator lists a number of new or innovative practices to keep valued employees stimulated and on the job:

a) paid or unpaid leaves for elder care, child care, education and volunteer work.

The value of this is that employees return to the workplace with new energy and more loyalty to the workplace.

Because loyalty is so often absent in today’s workers according to our questionnaire, anything that increases loyalty should be considered.

b) Flexible work arrangements

Either being able to trade shifts (Plastics) or work from home can often be an incentive. Instant messaging, videoconferencing, BlackBerrys, e-mail and remote access keep employees tied to the office.

c) Flexible benefits

If you have an age-diverse workplace, consider that a package that might appeal to an older worker (such as RRSP matching) might be of no appeal to an under-30 worker (who might value a paid day off). Many commentators note that time for personal development is more valued by young workers than by older workers.

Do your own research on what benefit appeals to which worker or ask an HR professional for advice.

KEEPING OLDER WORKERS ON THE JOB

While many employers are chasing the rare under-30 employee (Rebecca Ryan), Canada is suffering from an acute demographic challenge.

In 2003, there were more people between 25 and 49 in the workplace than those aged 15 to 29. (“Revamp HR policies”) The problem is due to get worse: By 2015, 48 per cent of the Canadian working age population will be 45 to 54 years of age. (“Adapting training for older employees.”)

Because of this demographic reality, it makes great sense to keep the productive older workers you have on the job for as long as you can. Many workers who have taken early retirement could probably be dissuaded from doing so by using techniques to keep them involved in the workplace. (One advertising campaign shows a 60ish man wearing an Hawaiian shirt holding a sign that says: “Give me one good reason not to go to the beach.” An employer’s job is to do so.)

Among the factors that make a workplace appealing to older workers are:

a) Keeping retirees on the job

IBM has a “retirees on call” program where retirees are eligible for supplementary or temporary work.

b) High-retention pools of workers over 55

One commentator suggested this as an option but no company, she noted, used this as a potential source of employees.

c) new job assignments, lateral transfers, post-retirement employment contracts.

d) Involving senior employees in mentorship programs. This has the benefit of training young workers in the skills needed on the job, while keeping older employees motivated and interested.

e) revamping HR policies to encouraging delaying retirement

f) creating a friendly environment for senior workers – one where their expertise is valued and they are respected for it.

g) part-time employment, job sharing and phased retirement.

“Treating older workers with dignity and respect sends positive signals to all workers.”

(Watters)

RECOGNITION PROGRAMS

There is widespread agreement that a recognition program of some kind is vital to a company's success. However, it shouldn't be an empty gesture because if it is seen to be so, it may backfire on a company.

The measures used can be simple (such as coffee chain gift certificates, prizes, clothing etc.) or complicated (company trips to Mexico). But they must be sincere. They must also consist of measures that employees value. If they are meaningless to the employee, they will backfire. ("In praise of praise: employee recognition programs.")

The local office of **Graybar** has adopted a very successful, yet very informal, recognition program. Each manager is given a supply of merchandise coupons -- from Wal-Mart, Tim Horton's, Home Depot and Empire Theatres -- and a log sheet. As the accompanying memo states, "Whenever an employee demonstrates excellent customer service, teamwork, or goes above and beyond the call of duty, simply present a coupon to the employee, along with your thanks, and record the information on the log sheet." When all of the coupons are distributed, the manager returns the log sheet -- and gets more coupons. According to the company's HR manager, this simple program has created a great deal of goodwill across the country. (Interview with Mark Kehoe, HR Manager, Graybar)

The value of the recognition is less important than the gesture's sincerity. A thank you note can be as valuable as a gift certificate. ("Fundamental Human Requirement -- Recognition")

Programs needn't be elaborate, but should be well considered. Three simple ways to evaluate your program are, as follows:

- 1) Are there healthy recognition practices going on in your organization? If so, share them with leaders in your company through focus groups, staff meetings or management newsletters.
- 2) Are there formal guidelines as to how employees are recognized. If so, have they been evaluated lately?
- 3) As a leadership team, is recognition something you value. If so, then all leaders at all levels are accountable for it.

Some innovative practices are:

Giving employees rewards for saving the company money (Great Little Box)

Giving younger employees innovative benefits that appeal to them, such as a personal assistance service or a life-work balance account. ("Meet Your New Boss.")

CREATING A POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

- More than wages and benefits, this is the top factor to promote and attract and keep people to the workplace. A positive work environment is the top reason people stay with an employer.

How is this done?

By recognizing and rewarding good work. (“Apprentice report”)

By offering new challenges and varying routines (“

By ensuring a safe and healthy workplace (“, also plastics)

By considering an employee wellness program (“Plastics”, “NS Govt. program”)

Wellness programs are fairly new, but have acquired greater importance in the last number of years. They have started to gain acceptance in Nova Scotia because Nova Scotia is troubled by higher-than-national rates of obesity, heart and stroke, cancer and diabetes. Many employers have seen that encouraging healthy workplaces increases productivity, lowers absenteeism and, thus, increases profitability.

Many local employers, including **Maritime Paper** and **Farmers**, have adopted formal healthy workplace programs. Some of the same employers offer discounted gym memberships or subventions for any kind of healthy measures, like physical training.

While there is less of a direct case for profitability with these programs, they can be seen to create less workplace stress and greater productivity.

- By appreciating both older and younger workers
- By creating a welcoming atmosphere for immigrants (“IS Awards”, Xerox)
- By promoting occupational health and safety on the job
- By ensuring work-life balance
- By actively promoting training and professional development
- By encouraging social activities and/or family-friendly activities with employees

(Many of these factors can be found in the Retention section, too. It is interesting to note that most high-performing companies adopt most of these principles to keep themselves successful in business.)

As one commentator stated, “How well you engage, inspire and equip your workforce could very well make or break your company’s success.”

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

While many companies have training programs, fewer than 10 per cent of them are actively committed to training programs. (Marjorie Armstrong-Stassen, Andrew Templer. The Journal of Management Development).

While many companies offer tuition reimbursement or subsidized training, what one survey found most valuable is specialized technical training (www.brannickhr.com). Mentoring programs are seen as valuable training options. They keep older employees engaged in work, while giving young people training (see www.brannickhr.com and “Improving Employee Retention”). They may also cut down on training costs, as you are already paying the senior employee and you don’t have to engage outside trainers.

However, mentoring programs and all training programs should be continuously monitored to see whether they are effectively meeting the needs of the worker and the employer. (“Mentoring Boosts Retention.”)

For senior employees, training should be adapted to meet their needs. (Marjorie Armstrong-Stassen et. Al.)

A demonstrated commitment to training and development is one of many factors that attract people to a workplace, keep them loyal to the job and keep them on the job. (Plastics Sector Council, “Improving Employee Retention”, “Aligning Human Resources and Business” etc.)

A majority of the local employers who responded to the Greater Halifax Partnership’s questionnaires found universities and community colleges to be good training partners; others used private training companies. (GHP Survey results.)

II. BEST PRACTICE COMPANIES

i) Recruitment

Challenge: Finding skilled, experienced employees

1. Solution: If you can't find them, create your own.

Dexter Construction, Bedford, NS – In response to both a critical lack of heavy equipment operators and a construction boom, Dexter Construction partnered with NSCC to form what it calls the “Dexter Institute.” In the institutes, trainees are given in-depth training in how to run all of the machines on major construction sites. Upon the successful completion of a two-year course, graduates are guaranteed employment at Dexter. After two years’ employment with Dexter, they receive a 50% rebate on tuition for the course.

Website: <http://www.dexter.ca/dexterinstitute/index.html>

Nova Scotia Boatbuilders Association, Halifax, NS – To meet a critical shortage of skilled boatwrights, especially in rural Nova Scotia, the Boatbuilders Association is piloting a boatbuilders course. Its partners in creating new apprentices in this fulfilling line of work are the Shelburne campus of the Nova Scotia Community College and the Nova Scotia Department of Education. As a sidebar, this new program also promotes an underrecognized job source for young people or career changers.

Website: <http://www.nsboats.com/?page=training>

Challenge: Finding good employees generally

1. Solution: Involve your employees by getting them to refer future employees to you.

Best practices

The **Great Little Box Company** of Richmond, BC, a box manufacturer, is a national award-winner for HR practices. They have found, in the words of their HR manager, that this guarantees “buy-in from the get-go.” For each successful hire of a production worker, an employee gets \$200. For each successful hire of an office worker, the employee gets \$500. For referring a management employee, the worker gets \$1000.

All hires have to stay on the job for a defined period of time before the payout happens.

Involving the employees in such a program ensures “by-in from the get-go”, in the words of the company’s HR manager. It also ensures that it is within the employees’ best interests to recommend good new hires to the company.

2. Solution: Make your workplace more attractive to people of many different cultures, backgrounds and ages

Over the past generation, the key concept related to welcoming newcomers has evolved from “tolerance” to “diversity.” Right now, there is a new paradigm evolving: “inclusiveness.” **Xerox**, a worldwide HR best practice company, defines the term in this way: “Inclusiveness...is broader than gender and physical attributes. Inclusiveness refers to all differences that make us unique. To be successful today, a company needs creative, motivated employees with different backgrounds and perspectives who can create innovative solutions.”

Ernst and Young, an Immigrant Success award winner, attracts and welcomes people from other countries through the following initiatives:

- a) allowing people from all over the world to apply for jobs in Canada through their web site
- b) offering all new employees coming to Canada a one-day “Succeeding in Canada” workshop
- c) local ethnic diversity steering committees in different offices. These highlight different cultures, religious holidays and observances
- d) an inclusiveness calendar, which emphasizes all holidays important to all staff cultural groups
- e) half-day inclusiveness and awareness workshops for managers and partners.

Another example: **The Orthotic Group**, Markham, Ontario, has 112 employees and is one of the 20 best small companies to work for in Canada. To accommodate the needs of its more than 50 Muslim employees, Orthotic Group included a prayer room when it built its new headquarters in 2001.

3. Solution: Hire older workers

Michelin, the Nova Scotia tire company, is conducting a pilot project on post-retirement hiring at all its Nova Scotia locations. It is enjoying great initial success.

Retired workers are hired on a project basis to provide help in emergency and specific situations. Employees are hired for a definite period of time. They are not paid benefits because, as retirees, they already have benefits.

Retirees may provide direct help on the projects or they may train younger workers – or they may do both jobs.

The project, which has been going on for over a year, is highly successful. It keeps well-trained older workers engaged in their workplace and earns them extra money for a pre-determined amount of time. It has the added benefit of using the expertise of the retirees to train younger workers.

With this program, Michelin has cut down on overhead and training costs.

4. Solution: Hire workers with no experience and train them yourself

Several local companies, including **Marener** and **Inventive Marine Products**, have had success with this approach.

Also, **Cargo Alliance Ltd.**, a small Mississauga, Ontario freight forwarding company, was having bad luck after hiring workers who were supposed to be experienced – but were ineffective employees. Abandoning the standard recruiting process, it hired completely inexperienced workers and trained them intensively in custom-designed computer systems. The result was a lean business that gets by with about half the staff of its competitors.

ii) Retention

1. Solution: Introduce some kind of retention program, basic or enhanced.

Best practice companies

Maritime Travel, the only Atlantic Canadian company, has an attractive employee incentive program. (Details will follow.)

Inventive Marine Products creates a fun atmosphere at working by promoting social activities to appeal to employees. Deep-sea fishing, wagon rides and rafting trips are a few of the company favourites.

2. Solution: Whenever possible, make sure that your employees have stimulating, challenging work assignments.

Best practice companies

Local company **Inventive Marine Products** works hard to ensure that employees have stimulating, challenging work. In many cases, this means varying work assignments for valued employees to keep their interest level up.

The company has found that offering employees challenges and keeping them happy is much more cost-effective than trying to find new workers in a competitive job market.

3. Solution: Meet the problem of outmigration head-on by offering potential Alberta-bound employees an option.

Best practice company: In response to workers leaving for Alberta, **Maritime Paper** will offer, in the case of valuable workers and tradespeople, to keep their jobs open for them for six months. In that case, workers have the option of being able to return to their old job – just in case life in “Wild Rose Country” doesn’t agree with them.

Marener has a less formal system of keeping in contact with valued employees who leave for Alberta. It lets them know that they are welcome to come back at any time.

4. Solution: Offer flexible work options

Best practice company: **Maritime Travel** offers optional lay-offs for the summer. This option is particularly appealing for women with children. Those opting for this are guaranteed a job when they return in September. This choice creates greater work-life balance. An additional benefit for the employer is that this option lowers its employment costs.

The Shaw Group has had great success by offering flexibility with compassionate and bereavement leaves. The company finds that if they trust employees with regard to leave, the employees don’t take advantage of that trust.

Dofasco, a Hamilton steel company, offers many work options because it appreciates “...the differences in people’s individual lifestyles, and the need for healthy personal, familial and social activities.” These options include job sharing, reduced work hours, leaves of absence and flexibility in shift work.

5. Solution: Offer flexible benefits or 'flex benefits'

Many best practice companies, including **Xerox** and **Bell Canada**, allow employee latitude on what kind of benefits he or she wants. Bell Canada has "a very flexible benefits plan that allows you to choose the options you want on line." At Xerox, benefits change when a worker's needs do. It also offers a fitness subsidy to encourage employees to take part in regular physical activity.

A newer concept is the flexible benefit spending account. For instance, as of January 1, 2006, **SaskPower** employees are given an account of \$2400 for full-time, and \$1200 for part-time employees. Amounts are increased in the unionized sector as wage settlements increase.

The accounts can be used for the following options:

1. Health Care Spending Account with a \$50 minimum;
2. Voluntary Group Registered Retirement Savings Plan;
3. Millennium Registered Retirement Saving Plan;
4. Vacation purchase, capped at \$500 per year;
5. Public Employees Pension Plan; or cash pay out, with fewer deductions.

One of the most popular employee benefits **RBC Insurance** has offered its employees is the ability to buy one week of vacation each year.

6. Solution: Offer training options

Many companies have found it useful to come up with innovative training options on the job. In 1995, **National Silicates**, a Toronto chemical company, and four other industrial chemical companies realized a common need to upgrade skills of employees and to prepare new skilled workers for success in the industry. There was lots of machine downtime and the lack of proper skills -- -- both technical and soft skills -- was apparent. By devising a unique training program with Mohawk College to address the generic and technical skills required by the industries, National Silicates and the four other companies enabled their plant operators to cross-train and become multiskilled in all areas of operations management.

Some of the results are:

- 4) In the three years after the program began, there was not one voluntary turnover. Trained employees do not leave. They see training as an investment in their future.
- 5) National Silicates has reduced overtime hours, outside contractor hours and plant downtime.
- 6) Employees have increased skills in basic numeracy, literacy, operations, health and safety and computers.
- 7) Employees are multi-skilled and can work in all aspects of the operation.
- 8) There is a marked improvement in the working environment.

Dexter Construction's Dexter Institute (see above), where the company trains its own heavy equipment operators in exchange for a term of employment and a tuition rebate, has an 87% retention rate. This program came about when one of the company's executives said: "Why can't we train the people we want to hire?"

Management training

After thorough research, **RBC Insurance** found that many of its managers needed continual upgrading in management skills to be the most effective supervisors possible. With that in mind,

it has put an increased emphasis on continuing management training. It is also training managers in communications skills to better communicate with employees and with other managers.

iii) All around best practice companies

The companies listed are profitable, innovative in HR practices and are tackling recruitment and retention issues directly.

Local: The Shaw Group

The Shaw Group is a diversified group of local companies, working in manufacturing and land development. It has 600 to 700 employees at work in rural and urban locations in the Halifax Regional Municipality, other parts of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

For the last several years, The Shaw Group has been named one of the 50 Best Managed Companies in Canada. To do this, a company has to be both a successful business and well-managed.

In the company, planning is a corporate priority. Every year, the group writes a new business plan. And every year, it updates its five-year business plan. Emphasis is placed on corporate, strategic and succession planning. The company finds that by creating an overarching company vision, deal with day-to-day business matters is much easier.

Its reputation as a profitable 140-year-old company based in Atlantic Canada attracts employees. However, it realizes that it can't rest on its reputation alone.

As part of its succession planning, the company emphasizes promoting from within. This creates many advancement opportunities for employees and encourages employee retention.

The company offers stable employment. According to its HR Manager, it offers decent benefits and competitive and fair wages. However, people don't stay with The Shaw Group solely for the wages and benefits. People like the stable employment – often in areas where they don't have to commute far – with a company that is fair and flexible.

The company offers flexibility whenever possible, including working hours and needs for time off for various reasons. (Because it is a primarily male workplace, the issue of flexible child care options has not been a top priority to its workforce to date.)

It emphasizes training. Managers get regular leadership training. And regular management meetings always have an educational component. For instance, a recent management meeting was combined with a negotiation seminar from a Harvard professor. Also, through a number of programs, the company has been helping managers develop their leadership and communications skills. This training is part of a renewed company emphasis in these areas.

Several workgroups within The Shaw Group of companies have recently participated in Workplace Education programs. These are offered in collaboration with the Department of Education. These programs offered employees support in the upgrading of their formal education as well as opportunities to improve their leadership and communications skills. One participant received an Ambassador's Award from the Department of Education for his role in leading and promoting workplace education.

Maritime Travel

This year, Maritime Travel is the only Atlantic Canadian representative on the 50 Best Employers in Canada list. Although it is not a manufacturer, it is useful to look at their practices and study them.

The first thing a visitor to its website sees is the company's vision statement, written by its employees: "We at Maritime Travel, through knowledgeable and caring people, take pride in providing superior service and value to our customers."

According to its head of Human Resources, the things that give it such a good reputation are:

- a) Articulating a consistent vision of the company
- b) The CEO, who talks with each and every new hire on financial matters and performance drivers
- c) A flat management structure
- d) Employees can get all the proper information they need to do their job
- e) Ease of communications, from employees to the CEO and back

Recognition is high on the list of corporate values. Each year, every branch office across Canada is shut down. All employees are flown to Halifax for an employee recognition and education weekend.

There is a generous incentive plan. While employees don't have profit-sharing, managers and partners do. And if an employee works long enough and hard enough, he or she is eventually eligible for partnership. This helps in employee retention because partners are eligible for profit-sharing. Partners acquire a keen interest in the bottom line because it's tied into profit-sharing.

Helping employees understand what's expected of them is a key factor. Maritime Travel has a hard-copy Employee Checklist that employees can refer to all the time. In that way, there are no doubts as to what the employee should do in certain situations.

Maritime Travel's annual turnover is 4 to 6 per cent a year – lower than average.

Wages are not at the top of the market, but are within competitive range.

Another bonus is a travel program for employees. Employees get extra travel for hitting defined revenue targets. This is a great employee motivator and is extremely popular with employees.

All programs align with the company's corporate vision. There are four aspects of this vision: revenue growth, productivity improvement, employee engagement, and customer engagement. If a measure does nothing to promote any of these four goals, it is abandoned.

Managers are accountable to each branch unit. They must devise plans to meet annual sales targets and stay accountable.

Staff and managers meet at least weekly to go over plans. Each manager meets with Rob Dexter, the president, at least yearly.

The staff fills out a satisfaction survey every year. Additionally, an employee suggestion box is well-used and very popular.

Recognizing employee contributions and making employees understand expectations are essential parts of Maritime Travel's business.

Maritime Travel has made employee engagement a critical factor to its success. According to its HR Director, employees need to feel engaged in their work and they need to feel that their workplace is worthwhile coming to in the morning.

National: The Great Little Box Company, Richmond, BC

The Great Little Box Company is a 170-person box manufacturing firm based in Richmond, BC. It has branch offices in Kelowna and Victoria, BC and Everett, Washington.

It is highly profitable and wins numerous "best employer awards" of all kinds. In the last year alone, it has been named one of Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies, one of the Financial Post's Top 10 Companies to work for and one of Canada's top 100 Employers.

Here are some of the factors that have made the Great Little Box Company an attractive employer – one that hires and keeps the best staff.

- Gym memberships
- Assigned mentors for new employees
- Free fruit at the plant site
- A commitment to charitable and community concerns and encouragement for employees to get involved
- A yearly employee survey, with the same 50 questions, is delivered annually. Concerns expressed therein are addressed and dealt with quickly. As a result, the list of concerns gets smaller and employees are more satisfied.
- Monthly social events
- A new plant, with an onsite daycare centre, a gym and a spacious lunchroom.
- Profit sharing
- Increased vacation time
- Bursaries for children of employees
- A very generous recognition program
- Employees are rewarded for ideas that save the company money
- Incentives, including an all-expenses-paid vacation/strategic planning session in Mexico for all employees when the firm exceeds its sales expectations.
- The company president meets with all employees, in groups of 12, at least once a year.
- Informal education to all employees in "Financials 101", the basics of reading, interpreting and understanding a balance sheet.
- New employees are interviewed at least seven to nine times before hiring to ensure proper fit.

These, and other measures, keep the staff content and on the job. Staff turnover is less than 3 per cent per year.

However, the president of the company, Robert Meggie, says that it's not the perks that keep people on the job. The company is successful because it meets the needs of its employees which, he says, are "recognition, education, advancement opportunities and security."

For more information on this company, consult its website at: www.greatlittlebox.com

International: Xerox

Xerox is known for its advanced human resources practices. For a glimpse at the corporate culture, you can refer to its website for more details: www.xerox.ca/careers

III. QUESTIONNAIRES

Barriers to finding the right employees

Recruitment

I. Finding the best staff

1. 62% of respondents stated that they found the workforce fair or poor in quality. This reinforces previous SmartBusiness studies. In these studies, the manufacturing sector had the highest percentage of firms that reported their workforce was fair or poor in quality.

2. The three main factors that make the quality of the workforce fair or poor (Multiple answers were allowed to this question.)

- a. Lack of a good work ethic – 53% of respondents
- b. Lack of job skills – 44%
- c. Lack of experience – 35%

II. Dealing with labour shortages

a) 89% of local manufacturers find it hard to find skilled workers. This bears out worldwide trends saying that it will be very hard to find skilled workers.

1. Despite the fact that 89% of local manufacturers find it hard to find skilled workers, 38% of manufacturers had a defined plan on how to handle labour shortages. 62% did not.

2. Only 43% of respondents employ underrepresented groups, such as African- Canadians, First Nations, immigrants and the disabled etc.

3. 70% of respondents do not use community resources, such as groups promoting employment of underrepresented groups.

III. Specific recruitment challenges

Of the 89% of companies that found problems, the three main ones cited were:

- i. Lack of a 'good work ethic' -- 66%
- ii. Workers with experience – 59%
- iii. Loyal workers – 29%

Multiple responses were allowed in this category.

COMPENSATION - Wages and Benefits

a) 70% of manufacturers surveyed used wage incentives and bonuses to keep staff.

- d. 63% of manufacturers surveyed used non-wage benefits, such as pensions, RRSP matching, medical and dental plans and flextime options, to attract employees.

One factor that *wasn't* a big problem

65% of them stated that labour availability was not at all important, a little important or somewhat important in a company's decision to locate in a particular community. 35% stated that it was a 'not at all important' factor in locating in a particular community.

Policy considerations from questionnaire research

The survey listed eight potential initiatives that the public sector – municipal, provincial or federal – could take or promote to help manufacturers find the skilled labour they needed.

They were:

- Training tax credits
- Adjusting the federal immigration points system to allow skilled tradespeople into Canada
- Expanding and updating regulations governing apprenticeship programs
- Reducing payroll taxes
- Recognizing and promoting the importance of the manufacturing sector to the local economy and promoting careers in the sector
- Providing incentives to encourage young people to pursue careers in manufacturing
- Providing incentives to encourage tradespeople to remain in Nova Scotia rather than moving away.
- Ensuring that legislation and regulations affecting labour and employment practices provide manufacturers the flexibility to reorganize their workplace, manage change cost-effectively, and protect workers' health and safety

Manufacturers were also asked to list any other factors that would assist them in their work.

The most important factors listed were, in order of priority:

- Providing incentives to encourage young people to pursue careers in manufacturing (19%)
- Recognizing and promoting the importance of the manufacturing sector to the economy (17%)
- Providing incentives to encourage tradespeople to remain in Nova Scotia rather than moving away (15%)
- Training tax credits (14%)

IV. One-on-One Consultations

Definite patterns of common challenges and concerns emerged from the SmartBusiness Team's one-on-one in-depth sessions with local businesses. While most of the patterns uncovered challenges that are common to many manufacturers, some manufacturers detailed concerns that have more to do with public policy.

i) Outmigration to Alberta is a very serious problem.

In the last year, many manufacturers questioned have lost 6 to 8 or more tradespeople or experienced, skilled workers to Alberta. They urge a multilevel response to this increasing problem.

Statistics Canada bears out what manufacturers are reporting. In the first quarter of 2006 alone, **1604** people left Nova Scotia for Alberta. During the first quarter of 2006, Alberta gained 25,900 people, the highest first-quarter increase ever record. Of these, 15,600 were people from other provinces. (Statistics Canada, "The Daily")

- **Multilevel government action must be taken to stop or slow outmigration to Alberta.**

Manufacturers, economic development organizations and trades sectors must continue to lobby all levels of government to slow down this rapid depopulation.

The hollowing out of other regions to Alberta is a national phenomenon. But the local phenomenon needs to be tackled directly on a municipal and provincial level.

ii) Manufacturers could solve staff shortages by encouraging students to stay in Nova Scotia upon graduating from high school or university. Governments could encourage young people to stay by providing student loan or similar incentives.

Up until now, there has been no co-ordinated attempt to encourage high school, university or community college graduates – a potential labour pool --- to stay in the province. Accessing this untapped source of labour may go a long way to solving long-term labour shortages. Ideally, the government and the post-secondary education sector would work with manufacturers on measures to persuade students to work and live here.

One measure encouraging students to stay is the Nova Scotia student loan program that offers student loan relief for students who stay here after graduating. (Information on this program can be found at the Nova Scotia Student Loans website: <http://studentloans.ednet.ns.ca>).

iii) Manufacturers should more engage more directly with students of varying ages at through general community outreach.

For many years, manufacturing has been trying to rehabilitate its 'dusty and dirty' image – with moderate success. These campaigns could be more successful if manufacturers would get more directly involved with all levels of education.

Manufacturers may want to take inspiration from local engineering societies and faculties of engineering. These bodies go into schools, taking part in science fairs and encouraging

students to enter that profession. Concerted community outreach campaigns have been very effective, particularly for the Dalhousie Faculty of Engineering. Manufacturers could start a similar campaign.

iv) There is a lack of adequate infrastructure in rural areas

- **If local and provincial governments are committed to manufacturing in rural areas, they will have to ensure adequate infrastructure and public transportation options of all kinds in such areas.**

Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters points out that a lack of rural infrastructure of all kinds – roads, health care, education and municipal services – is a problem to rural manufacturers all over Canada, but particularly in areas like Atlantic Canada.

v) Employees, particularly young ones, need to learn basic, soft ‘employability skills’

Employers have said repeatedly that while many young workers may have the technical skills to do the job, many lack basic, non-technical job skills.

- **Schools, universities and community college should consider adding instruction on basic ‘employability skills’ into their curricula. Failing that, employers might want to consider introducing these skills to their own training programs.**

Employability skills are the soft, non-technical skills needed to perform the jobs adequately. They include, among others, basic numeracy and literacy, interpersonal skills, taking responsibility for one’s work, problem-solving ability and critical thinking.

vi) There is a lack of skilled tradespeople in general – and in certain trades, in particular.

- **Community colleges should consider reinstating or expanding specialized programs to supply needed professionals in certain areas, such as cabinetmaking, metal fabricating and dental technology.**
- **If you can’t find the right skill set from an apprenticeship program or a school, you can train them yourself with a training partner.**

The Nova Scotia boatbuilding industry, with training partners the Nova Scotia Community College and the Nova Scotia Department of Education, is training new boatbuilders through a new co-operative program. (See the Appendix for more details.)

Besides a lack of skilled tradespeople, manufacturers also notice a shortage of both entry-level employees and experienced managers.

- **Continue lobbying the provincial government to continue encouraging people to enter the skilled trades.**

vii) There is a perceived ‘disconnect’ between education and training systems and manufacturers

Many manufacturers noted this phenomenon. However, the NS Department of Education seems to be trying to bridge that gap by changes in the Apprenticeship Act and with a number of new programs.

You can also find more information on other Department of Education programs at: O2 (Options and Opportunities) <http://www.ednet.ns.ca/O2/e/index.shtml>
Work It NS (promoting the trades for young people): <http://workitns.ca/>

viii) Multiparty action should connect the various players involved in recruiting and employing skilled workers

Interested parties could include the NS Department of Education, the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters Nova Scotia Division, area universities and the NS Community College. Several manufacturers have expressed interest in participating in this kind of summit.

ix) Continue to make manufacturing a more attractive career option

- Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters has continued to lobby for this measure, as have other American and international bodies. Along with a renewed emphasis on promoting the trades, the provincial government could be lobbied to encourage growth in the manufacturing sector.

A co-ordinated campaign to reach students at young ages can keep dispelling manufacturing’s unrealistic negative image and reach future employees.

V. Focus Groups

A. Policy Themes

A few themes tended to recur in the focus group sessions:

i) Immigration of skilled trades people takes too long.

Many focus group members said that the immigration process for skilled foreign workers needs to be fast-tracked and streamlined.

ii) Nova Scotia apprenticeship programs should be revamped or expanded.

Some focus groups members expressed frustration at the school system in general. They stated that despite the fact that not all students are college material, the vast majority is put into the university and college preparatory stream. Some stated that vocational education and work-related programs, such as shop classes, have been virtually eliminated. They said that this was the source of a lot of the lack of skilled labour that is found today.

Focus group members said that they found apprenticeship programs lacking – and lacking in flexibility. Several recommended that the whole apprenticeship system in the province should be completed revamped.

With its November 1, 2006 amendments to the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act, the NS Department of Education has already started to make changes.

iii) There is a general need for more cultural sensitivity training in the province and in the workplace.

Many employers stated that there is a more urgent need for greater cross-cultural training but that too few organizations provide it. Today's new workplace could have four or five nationalities in a 12-person workplace. The Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) in Halifax provides cultural sensitivity training, but it is one of the few local organizations offering this kind of programming. Those attending stated that there should be more cross-cultural training options available.

iv) Outmigration to Alberta is a great concern.

Alberta companies are actively recruiting for skilled trades people and managers. Some even recruit directly out of trades training programs.

Employers state that they cannot compete with the high wage offers coming from Alberta. Additionally, Nova Scotia companies find it hard to compete with Ontario and Alberta employers because the marginal tax rates here are much higher than those in the two other provinces.

Several stated that they try to improve working conditions to make their company more appealing. Those and others stated that they try to emphasize the positive lifestyle factors here when recruiting or trying to retain employees.

Several stated that they try to appeal to the basic loyalty of Atlantic Canadians to the region in order to attract or keep employees here.

v) There is general openness to the concepts of outsourcing generally and the use of fee-for-service HR teams in particular.

Many companies say that they find it hard to master all the human resources challenges on the job. Most are sadly under-resourced in this area. The ideas of outsourcing in general and of using the new concept of fee-for-service HR teams received a favourable reception in the groups.

vi) Payroll, business occupancy and other tax rates need to be made more competitive.

Several focus group attendees stated that lowering payroll, business and other tax rates would help make recruiting new employees a lot easier. Others said that the large differential between taxes in Nova Scotia and those in Alberta and Ontario makes Nova Scotia less competitive.

vii) Incentives should be offered for workers to remain in Nova Scotia.

viii) Incentives should be given to encourage young people to try careers in manufacturing.

VII. General Discussion Themes

In the previous section, main policy concerns of employers were explored. The following is a short discussion of the themes covered in the focus group sessions.

Human Resources Planning

Suggested strategies included establishing an in-house HR resource; using an external HR service delivery model; and active succession planning.

Members of the focus groups also said that the education system should teach basic employability skills and prepare young people for the expectations of employers. In this way, educators could prevent some of the 'lack of a work ethic' complaints manufacturers have with younger employees.

Recruiting

There was general agreement that Employee Referral Programs (ERPs) were worth trying. However, they should not turn into a 'friends and family' exercise. Valued employees should be encouraged to recommend other employees who are at the top of their field.

Apprenticeship Programs

Many employers complained about the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship program. Almost all participants said that Nova Scotia apprenticeship programs needed a comprehensive overhaul to meet employer and industry needs.

Manufacturers also said that there should be flexibility in existing apprenticeship pay scales. They are losing some talented apprentices due to the perceived rigidity of NS apprentice compensation rates, which are mandated by the law.

Co-operative Student Employment

Many employers are using co-operative student employment as part of their long-term recruiting strategy, while some appreciate the new perspective and fresh energy student employees bring to a workplace.

However, some employers expressed reservations about such programs, calling it a 'waste of time' to train employees that only leave. But if students are chosen carefully, the consensus is that the payoff can be tremendous.

Employers agree that both they and industry associations need to do more to encourage young people to follow trades. They also agreed that they would like more information on international co-op employment programs. Participants also expressed the desire that the provincial co-op program would be reinstated.

Sector Councils

These organizations, such as seafood manufacturers or construction trades council, can be effective ways to band together to solve staffing and/or training problems.

Other recruitment measures

Some manufacturers have used external recruiting agencies for office staff.

Several employees have used a one- to three-day on-the-job trial as part of their hiring process to witness the job fit and performance. For these employers, this process has improved hiring and lessens the error rate on the production line.

Manufacturers also recommend offering leaves of absence for employees who relocate to Alberta, but change their minds. In a related development, CME Nova Scotia Division is providing a workshop for Nova Scotia manufacturers who want to do business in the Alberta market.

Offshore Production

Some employers have offshored highly technical and specialized jobs to Asia when there's no available local expertise. Others have considered doing offshoring such tasks as AutoCAD drafting; this kind of skill is very difficult to find locally.

Factors that *don't* work

Most participants reported that Service Canada's community employment resources, university career fairs, and the Government of Canada Job Bank are not particularly helpful in finding skilled workers.

Retention

HR experts say that keeping employees happy on the job is a result of increasing employee engagement. Using some of the following measures can increase employee engagement:

Providing meaningful, challenging work

The things that attract employees to the workforce are not the same as the ones that keep them there. The ones that keep them there include varied work assignments; performance-based incentives; interesting training options and coaching and mentoring. Ideally, incentives must be tailored to the employee to have the maximum benefit.

Provide ample professional development opportunities

This can include encouraging internal development and promotions; skills upgrading; courses and seminars, and making it easy for employees to pursue accreditations and certifications.

Never underestimate the gift of time to an employee

Employers should be flexible in helping top employees achieve work-life balance. For performers who regularly score 'Superior' or higher on their performance review, some of the following options can be made available: leaves of absence for education or volunteer work; flextime; compressed workweeks; permanent part-time employment and job sharing.

Improving the organizational culture – or improving the workplace

Many of these initiatives valuable in improving workplaces were detailed in previous sections of this document.

Wages and benefits

Many initiatives to improve wages and benefits have been detailed earlier in other parts of this documents. Above all, employers are urged to do their homework – ideally, at least every two years – to see that they are offering the best benefits available, considering their financial circumstances.

Some of the following options, called 'retention bundles', can be considered as retention strategies for different kinds of employees:

- Career development strategy (professional development, fast track to management);
- Remuneration strategy (cash incentives; RRSP matching);
- Lifestyle Strategy (non-core work hours schedule);
- Job Flexibility Strategy (telework; job sharing);
- High Roller Strategy (international travel; share purchase offers);
- Body and Mind Strategy (gym memberships, health coverage including massages)

It is recommended that employers survey their employees – at least, informally – to see how well their benefit packages are received and what they might prefer within the same price ranges. Many employers are now finding that travel incentives or extra vacation time are often more powerful incentives than extra money.

Benchmark salaries

Use salary scales or get an HR professional to find out if your salaries are competitive.

What *doesn't* work

Outmoded concepts like “Employee of the Month” contests are not found to be effective. Also, manufacturers are not using employee surveys because of limited financial and time resources.

APPENDIX B – WORKS CITED

Articles

1. Apprentice Retention in the Skilled Trades.” Summary of research report prepared by the Wilfrid Laurier Consulting Team for the Industry Education Council of Hamilton (Ontario). August 2001. Available at: http://skilledtrades.ca/html/new_window_elements/iec_hamilton_frm.html
2. Strelecky, John B. “Don’t recruit the best people – attract them.” (undated) Available at: www.hr.com
3. “Best Practices in Retention.” Canadian Plastics Council Report.
4. “IS Awards celebrate best employers of immigrants. Ann MacAulay, Canadian HR Reporter. Toronto: May 22, 2006. Vol. 19, Iss. 10.
 2. Bouchard, P.J. “Fundamental Human Requirement – Recognition.” Available at: www.hr.com
5. Watters, Marge. “Improving Employee Retention.” Canadian Printer 111 (2003): p. 30.
6. Brown, David. “Great Expectations” Canadian HR Reporter 16 (2003): p. 15
7. Singh, Susan. “When the going gets tough, the tough hold on to top employees.” Canadian HR Reporter. 16 (2006): pg. 17
8. Cuddihey, Alden. “Aligning human resources and business.” The Canadian Manager 28 (2003): p. 26.
10. “What’s the biggest mistake HR people make when recruiting?” Canadian HR Reporter. Toronto: Apr. 17, 2004
11. Brown, David. “Outsourcers say they do better than in-house recruiters.” Canadian HR Reporter. April 19, 2004.
12. Brown, David. “Mentoring boosts retention, T&D...but it’s a long-term game.” Canadian HR Reporter. 17 (2004).
15. Cohen, Claudia. “Protect Your Assets.” CA Magazine. 137 (2004): p. 45.
16. Lowe, Graham. “Revamp HR policies to retain older workers.” Canadian HR Reporter Nov. 8, 2004.
18. “Engage, inspire and equip your workforce.” Profit 23 (2004).
19. Gandossy, Robert and Marc Effron. “It’s easier to start with great people than to make people great.” Canadian HR Reporter. 18 (2005): p. 14
20. Armstrong-Stassen, Marjorie and Andrew Templer. “Adapting training for older employees: The Canadian response to an aging workforce.” The Journal of Management Development. 24 (2005): p. 57
21. Templer, Andrew and Marjorie Armstrong-Stassen. “Contrasting perspectives of the public and private sectors in the factors driving pro-active human resource practices.” Management Research News. 28 (2005): p. 19.
22. “...while private sector employers struggle to retain staff.” Personnel Today. Jun. 6, 2006.
23. Panchak, Patricia. “Reversing U.S. Manufacturing’s skilled worker challenge.” Industry Week. 253 (2004).
24. Stevens-Huffman, Leslie. “Turning to niche staffing firms to fill specialized hiring needs.” Workforce Management. 85 (2006): p. 50. Available at: www.workforce.com
25. Donkin, Richard. “Time to pay attention to management succession: There is a strong correlation between well-run leadership programmes and financial success.” Financial Times. London (UK): Sept. 15, 2005. p. 15.
26. Millar, Michael. “Lack of skills puts a spanner in works of manufacturing revival.” Personnel Today. Feb. 10, 2004. p. 4.
27. Shiffman, Kim. “May the workforce be with you.” Profit. 25: 2006, pg. 43.
28. Rutledge, Tim. “Accept that employees will leave.” Canadian HR Reporter. 18 (2005).

29. Joseph, Rhonda et. Al. "What are the biggest challenges in your succession planning?" Canadian HR Reporter. 19 (2006); pg. 19
30. Miller, Marcus. "Replacement planning." CA Magazine 138 (2005): pg. 43.
31. Bechet, Thomas. "Action plans must replace dubious reports on recruitment needs." Canadian HR Reporter. Toronto: May 9, 2005. Vol. 18, Iss. 8; pg. 12.
32. "Great Little Box Company: A team approach to success." Article at: <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inmfbs-gprea.nsf/en/lu00055e.html>
33. "Canada's population." "The Daily: June 29, 2006". Article at: <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/060629/d060629d.htm>
34. "Employability Skills 2000+". Report available at: www.conferenceboard.ca/education
35. "Great Little Box Company." BC Business, December 2004.
36. "From Attraction/Retention to Financial, 50 Best Employers Outshine the Competition, Says Hewitt and Associates." Press release at <http://hewittassociates.com/Intl/NA/en-US/AboutHewitt/Newsroom/>
37. "Maritime Paper recognized as Environmental Leader." Press release at <http://www.halifax.ca/mediaroom/pressrelease/pr2006/060711MaritimePaperProducts>
38. "Working with Heart." Article at: http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Health/Heart_Health/Demonstration/working.html
39. Johnson, Rick. "Do you have a human resources strategy?" Industrial Distribution. August 2, 2006. Available at: <http://www.manufacturing.net/ind/article/CA6358516.html?ref=nbra>
40. Pfeffer, Jeffrey. "The Real Keys to High Performance." Leader to Leader, No. 8, Spring 1998.
41. Hein, Treena. "No time to lose in getting skilled workers to Canada: Is the Immigration system broken?" 20/20 Magazine (CME Magazine). Toronto: July/August 2006; p. 38-44.
42. Cook, Beverlie. "Apprentices make good business 'cents'" 20/20 Magazine (CME Magazine). Toronto: May/June 2006: p. 32-33.
43. "Employers lack action to address aging workforce." Heather Scofield, July 27, 2006. Article at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20060727.waging0728/BNStory>
44. "Retention Study is a Success." Industrial Relations Center, Human Resources Research Institute, Carlson School of Management, University of Minnesota. Fall 2003.
45. Cawood, Scott. "Why Employees Stay: Top Companies Share Their Secrets." July 31, 2006. Available at: <http://www.hr.com/>
46. "Keeping a cut above the rest: Employee Retention Strategies." Management Briefing from Deloitte Ireland. Available at: <http://www.deloitte.ie>
47. Baldwin, Stephanie Lako. "How to Hire the Crème de la Crème. Hint: Profile your top performers." Gallup Management Journal. Available at: <http://gmj.gallup.com/content>
48. Blackwell, Richard. "2007 will be the year of the raise." Sept. 1, 2006. Available at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/>
49. "Canada's labour crunch." Globe and Mail Update Forum on August 29, 2006. At: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20060829>
50. "People leave Managers, not Companies: How to increase Employee Retention." Available at: www.advantagepoint.com
51. Bushen, Danielle. "Recruiting for Skilled Trades: Are you looking for talent in the right places?" 20/20 Magazine. Toronto: May/June 2006: p. 43.
52. "The 20 best small companies to work for in Canada." April 25, 2006. Available at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com>
53. Sethi, Chanyaka. "Flexibility is new HR mantra in hot job market." June 16, 2006. Available at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/>
54. Jiminez, Maria. "Canada not welcoming to immigrants, study finds." July 11, 2006. At: www.theglobeandmail.com

55. Powell, Bruce. "Hang on to your top talent." Dec. 16, 2003. At: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com>
56. Immen, Wallace. "Managers hold key to keep staff happy." June 16, 2004. At: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com>
57. Gadd, Jane. "Dental, drugs and a Catch-22." March 17, 2005. Available at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com>
58. Galt, Virginia. "War for talent requires new strategies." March 23, 2005. Available at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com>
59. Galt, Virginia. "Keeping key workers a tougher task." Oct. 25, 2005. Available at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com>
60. Immen, Wallace. "Executives worry about staff churn." March 1, 2006. Available at: www.theglobeandmail.com
61. Marron, Kevin. "Peer-recognition programs." Kevin Marron. Feb. 14, 2006. At: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com>
62. Galt, Virginia. "What's the perfect perk for worker performance?" Feb. 3, 2004. At: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com>
63. Brethour, Patrick. "Meet your new boss: Your hard-to-get employee." Patrick Brethour. August 23, 2006. At: www.workopolis.com
64. Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada. "The Strategic Human Resources Study of the Upstream Petroleum Industry." Updated April 2004. Available at: www.phrsc.ca
65. Madigan, Carol Orsag. "No fail hiring." July 1999. Available at: <http://www.businessfinancemag.com/magazine/>
66. "Eco-Efficiency Centre: 2006 Environmental Excellence in Business Breakfast." Article available at: <http://eco-efficiency.management.dal.ca/breakfast2006.htm>
67. Belford, Terrence. "Drowning in a sea of HR difficulties?" *Globe and Mail*, Sept. 23, 2006.
68. Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters and the Government of Canada. *Manufacturing 20/20: Building Our Vision for the Future*. Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2005.
69. Bushen, Danielle. "Canada's skill crisis." *20/20 Magazine*. Toronto: July/August 2006: p. 46-47.
70. Nova Scotia Department of Finance. *Nova Scotia Manufacturing Profile 2001 to 2005*. Halifax: Department of Finance, November 2005. Available at: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/finance>
71. Nova Scotia Public Service Commission. *Attraction and Retention Framework: Overview*. Available online at: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/psc>
72. Duplovici, Andrea. "Labour Pains: Results of CFIB Surveys on Labour Availability." Toronto: Canadian Federation of Independent Business, April 2003.
73. "Best Practices: Recruiting and Retaining Talented Employees." Available at: <http://www.microsoft.com/office>
74. Canada. Service Canada. "Overview of Human Resource Planning – All Employers." Report available at: <http://hrmanagement.gc.ca/gol/hrmanagement/site.nsf/en/hr05211.html>
75. Nova Scotia Department of Education. "Occupational and Skill Shortages: The Backgrounder." Report available at: <http://www.skillsnovascotia.ednet.ns.ca/pdf/backgrounder.pdf>
76. "Young college-educated workers predicted to decline in New England." Press release on "New England 2020" report. Available at: <http://www.nmefdn.org>
77. Sullivan, Dr. John. "Seeking out "Next Practices," the Next Generation of Best Practices." Available at: <http://www.ere.net/articles/>
78. Monaghan, Danielle and Howard Adamsky. "Why should I work for your company? Examine your corporate culture, rewards, career paths and corporate citizenship." Available online at: www.ere.net/articles/
79. "Working at Xerox." Details of workplace enticements at: <http://www.xerox.ca>

80. Canadian Labour and Business Centre. Workforce Profile of the Manufacturing Sector. March 2004.
81. Holloway, Andy. "In praise of praise: employee recognition programs." Andy Holloway, Canadian Business Magazine. Feb. 13-26, 2006. Available online at: www.canadianbusiness.com
82. Collins, Christopher J. and Matthew Allen. "Human Resource Management Practices and Firm Performance in Small Business." Available online at: <http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cahrswp/409/>
83. Saint Mary's University Sobey School of Business and Business Development. A Human Resource Guide for Small Business in Atlantic Canada. Available at: <http://www.smu.ca/partners/smubdc/htmls/documents/HRManual.pdf>
84. Government of Nova Scotia, Department of Education. "Changes to Apprenticeship Act Respond to Industry." News release, Nov. 1, 2006. Available at: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20061031015>
85. Grant Thornton. Greater Halifax Partnership Focus Group Summary. Nov. 7, 2006.
86. Greater Halifax Partnership. Key Findings from the Business Community: Executive Summary. SmartBusiness Greater Halifax Partnership Business Retention and Expansion Initiative. December 2005.
87. Government of Canada. Your Guide to Services in Atlantic Canada. November 2005.
88. Greater Halifax Partnership. Best Practices in IT Labour Recruitment: Towards a Comprehensive IT labour recruitment and retention initiative for Nova Scotia. April 2006.
88. Bush, Kim. "Flexible Work Options." (1994) Available at: www.context.org/ICLIB/IC37/Bush1.htm
89. Dessler, G., N. Cole and Sutherland, V. (2005) Human Resources Management in Canada: Ninth Edition. Toronto: Pearson Education Canada.
90. "Apprenticeships in the U.S." Report available at: www.doleta.org
91. Towers Perrin Talent Report. Report available at: www.towersperrin.com/tp/getwebcachedoc?webc=HRS/USA/2006/200603/Talent_mgmt.pdf
92. Collins, Jim and Porras, Jerry. Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies. (1997) New York: Harper Collins.

Websites consulted

Name of website consulted	URL
1. Wikipedia	www.wikipedia.org
2. Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters --- national site	www.cme-mec.ca
4. Alberta site	www.cme-mec.ca/ab
5. Nova Scotia site	www.cme-mec.ca/ns
6. The Globe and Mail	www.globeandmail.com
7. Workopolis	www.workopolis.com
8. HR.com (site for HR professionals)	www.hr.com
8. Advantage Point	www.advantagepoint.com
9. Gallup Management Journal	www.gallup.com
10. Tech Online site	www.teconline.com
11. Deloitte Touche Ireland	www.deloitte.ie
12. Carlson School of Management, U. of Minnesota	www.csom.umn.edu
13. Petroleum HR Council of Canada	www.petrohrsc.com

14. Business Finance Management Article archives www.businessfinancemaq.com
15. Virginia Business online www.gatewayvirginia.com
16. Grant Thornton Canada www.grantthornton.com
17. MediaSpark (CB-based media business) www.mediaspark.com
18. Leader to Leader Institute www.leadertoleader.com
19. Industrial Distribution www.manufacturing.net/ind
20. Chebucto Net (local umbrella website) www.chebuctonet.ns.ca
21. NS Business www.novascotiabusiness.com
22. Eco-Efficiency Centre, Dalhousie University www.eco-efficiency.management.dal.ca
23. Export Achievement Awards www.exportachievementawards.com
24. Halifax Regional Municipality www.halifax.ca
25. "50 Best Employers in Canada" www.was7.hewitt.com/best
26. Conference Board of Canada www.conferenceboard.ca
- Government of Canada sites
27. Statistics Canada www.statcan.com
28. Strategis (Industry Canada) www.strategis.ic.gc.ca
29. Service Canada www.servicecanada.gc.ca
30. Great Little Box Company, Richmond, BC www.greatlittlebox.com
31. Virginia's Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partn. www.vpmep.org
32. HR Village www.hrvillage.com
33. Ultra-Electronics Maritime Systems www.ultra-uems.ca
34. Tradeability www.tradeability.ca
35. Construction Association of NS www.buildingfutures.ca
36. Skills Canada www.skillscanada.com
37. Schulich Executive Education, York University www.seec.schulich.yorku.ca
38. Nova Scotia Immigration Office www.novascotiaimmigration.com
39. National Assn. Of Manu. Workforce site www.nam.org/s_nam
40. Improve (British food and drink manu. Site) www.improveltd.co.uk
- Nova Scotia Government
41. Dept. of Finance www.gov.ns.ca/finance
42. Dept. of Education www.ednet.ns.ca
43. Public Service Commission www.gov.ns.ca/psc
44. Toronto Training Board www.ttb.on.ca/ttb/reports
45. The Manager www.themanager.org
46. Employee Retention www.EmployeeRetention.com
47. Superfactory (US manufacturing site) www.superfactory.com
48. Calgary Economic Development Office www.calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com
49. Search Manufacturing www.SearchManufacturing.com
50. Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium www.emccanada.org
51. Association for Manufacturing Excellence www.ame.org
52. Executive Recruiters site www.ere.net
53. Global Benchmarking Council www3.best-in-class.com/qbc
54. Canadian Plastics Sector Council www.cpsc-ccsp.ca/skills
55. Staffing www.staffing.org
56. Delta Partners www.deltapartners.org
57. Nova Scotia Community Colleges www.nsc.ca
58. Maritime Travel www.maritimetravel.ca
59. Haskayne School of Business, U. of C. www.haskayne.ucalgary.ca
60. Saint Mary's University www.smu.ca
61. Human Resources Association of NS www.hrans.ca

62. Canadian Council of Human Resources Assns. www.cchra-ccarh.ca
63. Human Resources Professionals Assn. Of Ont. www.hrpao.ca
64. Google www.google.com
--- Google Scholar www.google.com/scholar

Personal Interviews and Significant Correspondence

1. Shalini Richards, outgoing President, Human Resources Association of Nova Scotia. Telephone interview. July 5, 2006.
2. Bill Black, former CEO, Maritime Life. In-person interview. July 27, 2006.
3. Carrie Hotton, (title), Strategic Services Consultant, Nova Scotia Public Service Commission, author of Nova Scotia Public Service Commission's Attraction and Retention Framework. In-person interview. July 26, 2006.
4. Karn Nichols, Vice-President, Human Resources and Operations, Maritime Travel. Telephone interview. July 27, 2006.
5. Mark Kehoe, HR Director, Graybar Canada/Harris and Roome. Telephone interview. July 21, 2006.
6. Denise Moore, Office Manager, Co-operative Education Office at Saint Mary's University. Telephone interview. September 22, 2006.
7. Paul Clipsham, Policy Director, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, Ontario Office. Telephone interview. October 10, 2006.
8. Ronda Landygo, Associate Publisher, 20/20 Magazine and Director of Advertising for CME. October 13, 2006.
9. Glenda Hill, Shaw Group Limited. Telephone interview. October 19, 2006.
10. Gary Johnston, President, Maritime Paper Products Limited. October 13, 2006.
11. Linda Theriault, Acadian Seaplants. Telephone interview. October 19, 2006.
12. Merilee Gordon, Office Manager/ Human Resources, Great Little Box Company, Richmond, BC. Telephone interview. Sept. 8, 2006.
13. Chip Dickinson, Program Manager, Nova Scotia Boatbuilders Association. Telephone interview. August 16, 2006.
14. Susan Thompson-Graham, Head Instructor, Advanced Diploma in Human Resource Management. Nova Scotia Community College, IT Campus, Halifax, Nova Scotia. E-mail correspondence. October 3, 2006.
15. Bob Daniels, Employee Services Manager, Michelin Canada Ltd., Bridgewater, Nova Scotia. Telephone interview. Oct. 13, 2006.