

PASSPORT TO PROSPERITY EMPLOYER FORUM 2006

On April 26, 2006, 150 participants attended the annual Employer Forum, hosted by the Provincial Partnership Council in Toronto and gauging by the positive feedback received, it was among the most successful forums to-date.

Participants indicated that they left the forum with a greater understanding of the importance of school-work experiences and with some inspiring stories and practical resources to share with their colleagues.

Want **More** **Passport** to Prosperity?

Did you miss the *Passport to Prosperity* Employer Forum? Would you like to attend the next Employer Forum or receive information about the *Passport to Prosperity* program?

If so, please contact
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for more information.



Education officer Jean Courtney and student panel at *Passport to Prosperity* Employer Forum 2006

The Employer Forum is a half-day session designed to provide potential and current employers with information they need to create or rejuvenate school-work programs for high school students. It's an opportunity to learn from those who have created effective programs in their businesses and to hear from the students about what school-work opportunities have meant to them. The forum also included information about the changing requirements for high school completion, resources for employers and important information about on-the-job safety. *For more forum details, see pages 2 and 3.*

To learn how to get involved, please visit www.obep.on.ca to find your local business-education council or training board contact. We look forward to seeing you at the 2007 *Passport to Prosperity* Employer Forum!

Offering high school students work experience provides employers with an opportunity to gain an understanding of the different work habits and expectations among generations of employees. In this four-part series, n-gen People Performance Inc., a performance consulting company, explores how employers can achieve greater organizational performance by improving processes and people management strategies across the generational divide. For more information, see www.ngenperformance.com.

YOUR MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE: PART 3 – HOW TO GET, KEEP AND GROW A MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE

In the previous two articles we discussed how the generational identities of Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y translate into different expectations and behaviours. For your organization to be able to 'get, keep and grow' all four generations, it is critical that you understand each cohort. In this article, we are going to focus on a few factors to consider in recruiting a multi-generational workforce.

To recruit successfully, you must understand what your organization has to offer that appeals to each generation. Then, you must weave these features into your recruitment messages. For example, to attract:

- Traditionalists: Talk about the legacy of your organization;
- Baby Boomers: Talk about market leadership and how they will play a role in increasing/maintaining that leadership;
- Gen Xers: Talk about results that their work will achieve; and for
- Gen Ys: Talk about the cross-functional teams on which they will work and your investment in new technology.

Whatever features and benefits you communicate up-front, it is critical that you deliver on them later on. Do not paint a picture of your organization that is unrealistic. In particular, if Gen Xers and Gen Ys think they have been sold a bill of goods, they will experience buyer's regret. That regret reduces your chances that you will be able to keep them longer than a year, and increases your chances that they will disengage. So it's important that hiring managers and recruiters work together to jointly agree on accurate job descriptions that include fair representations of your corporate culture and its benefits.

Continued on page 4...

Traditionalists

1922 - 1945
Age 61 - 84

Baby Boomers

1946 - 1964
Age 42 - 60

Gen Xers

1965 - 1980
Age 26 - 41

Gen Ys

1981 - 2000
Age 6 - 25

CELEBRATING EMPLOYER CHAMPIONS 2006

“ They truly share our vision for enabling students to succeed. ”

Rich Neufeld,
Experiential Learning
Consultant on Hamilton
Health Sciences

The *Passport to Prosperity* Employer Champion Award, now in its second year, was created by the Provincial Partnership Council to recognize and support Ontario employers who have shown dedication and commitment to providing school-work experiences to high school students in their communities. Congratulations to the 2006 Employer Champion Award Winners: Hamilton Health Sciences, Reid's Heritage Homes in Cambridge and London, Sayer's Home Hardware in Hagersville, and the Waterloo Regional Police Service. We will profile each of the Employer Champion Award Winners in upcoming issues of the *Passport to Prosperity* Update.

Employer: **Hamilton Health Sciences**
Sector: **Health Care**
Years Involvement: **More than 20 years**

Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) is a major employer in the Hamilton area and, as with the health care sector elsewhere in Ontario, it foresees challenges meeting its future needs for qualified health care workers. HHS is proactive in encouraging students to work in the health care sector and, through a broad range of programs, helps students understand that non-traditional careers exist in the sector. The programs encourage students to pursue work that interests and suits them, while also trying out their skills in a health care setting.



Paul Faguy accepting the 2006 Employer Champion Award for Hamilton Health Sciences from Provincial Partnership Council's Ian Cunningham.

CASE STUDY: LES SUITES HOTEL, OTTAWA

Les Suites Hotel, Ottawa has set up an ideal school-work program for co-op students: the program not only enhances students' learning experience but gives the employer and other employees a chance to learn. Les Suites' school-work program allows students to explore their own interests, and try their hand at the various jobs and positions to which they are exposed, from housekeeping to the executive office. This varied experience allows students to tailor their future education plans.

Les Suites Hotel's school-work program has a clear and structured itinerary, borrowing much of its structure from a place with which students are very familiar – school – and then melding it with aspects from the workplace. Attendance is taken each day and a weekly homework assignment must be completed. As in school, students are required to complete projects and make presentations. As are employees, students are involved in special projects, in which Les Suites as an organization is involved, such as the Adoption and Clean Up of a Park.

Les Suites recognizes that school-work programs not only benefit the student but also the company. Steve Georgopoulos, General Manager of Les Suites, finds that the program creates a community culture of learning. Staff members become on-site teachers, guiding the students in their assigned jobs, while the students keep the staff up-to-date on current issues affecting youth.

Having students in the workplace has immediate and long-term benefits. By having co-op students, Les Suites enjoys the immediate benefits of smiling faces and positive energy in the workplace. Long-term benefits include gaining potential future employees, since 6.6% of Les Suites' workforce is made up of students who have participated in the school-work co-op program.



Steve Georgopoulos and Alex Marchand presenting on the successful Les Suites Hotel Co-op program.

EMPLOYERS AND STUDENTS - EVERYONE WINS

Providing high school students with work experience not only makes sense for students, it also makes good business sense. This “win-win” situation was clearly highlighted at the annual *Passport to Prosperity* Employer Forum, which featured a panel of the four Employee Champion Award winners: Paul Faguy of Hamilton Health Sciences, Tim Morrison and Frank Mantler of Reid’s Heritage Homes in Cambridge and London, David Sayer of Sayer’s Home Hardware in Hagersville, and Sergeant Kathryn Emms of Waterloo Regional Police Service. The panel participants spoke candidly about what drives them to offer high school students work experiences.

“People are a scarce resource,” said Faguy. “You want people looking at your field as a destination not a default. You want them choosing early.”

In order to gauge true interest in their field, Reid’s Heritage Homes, a major southwestern Ontario homebuilder, has been offering in-class training as well as on-site work experiences.

“You get to see which students want to excel and go into the construction field,” explained Morrison. With the average age of those in the field ranging from late 40s to early 50s, Reid’s Heritage Homes feels it is vital to have a new generation of interested and properly trained employees.

After offering school-work experiences, the most obvious organizational win would be to see that student join your organization as an employee. Sergeant Emms shared a story about a high school student who completed a co-op work placement with the police service, and after her postsecondary education was completed, signed on as an officer with the Waterloo Regional Police Service.

Perhaps the biggest win for an organization is the personal satisfaction of helping a student find self confidence and self-worth. David Sayer, who operates the Home Hardware in Hagersville, has been offering students work experience for 13 years.

“It is rewarding to see a young person reach hurdles and master obstacles with or without your help,” explained Sayer. “You get a youthful smile, full of enthusiasm, when you walk in the door. You can’t buy that.” Sayer believes that giving students school-work opportunities is not only a smart business move, but a good way to show a commitment to community spirit.



Considering the advantages to organizations of having students in the workplace, it is also important to see how beneficial these experiences are to students. Following the Employer Champion Award winner’s panel, the much anticipated student panel took the stage. Four students from various Ontario schools were equally as candid when they talked about the benefits of school-work experiences.

One of the key wins for students is the practical knowledge and skills they learn while on the job. Andrew Gidge, a co-op student placed with Speedy Automotive, was excited to share his experiences. “I came in knowing little,” shared Gidge, “but came out knowing a lot.”



Jake Bloomfield, a co-op student with Hewlett Packard, expressed similar sentiments. This was his first experience in an office environment and he initially found it a little intimidating. However, he found that he loved helping people and though he was hesitant at first, he tried his best at the tasks people asked him to do.

“I felt so good that I could actually help a customer with a problem,” Bloomfield told the audience; “it showed me a lot about who I am.”



Having switched placements part way into the term, co-op student Joanna Walczak took the opportunity to drill down into the broad field of retail and discover her interests. For Joanna, it was important to try working in the field she thought she would like. When she realized it wasn’t the right fit, she explored other fields of interest and study.

Student panel sharing their success stories. From top to bottom: Andrew Gidge, Joanna Walczak, Jake Bloomfield, Dialo Kinghorn.

Work experiences have transformed students such as Dialo Kinghorn, who after a meeting with his guidance counsellor and family, set out to become a professional chef. With the encouragement of his teachers, co-op supervisor and family,

Dialo has gone on to finish high school, win culinary medals in national cooking competitions, and enter a chef apprenticeship program at Humber College.

“I made long-term and short-term goals,” Kinghorn explains; “I don’t know what I would have done without this program.”

It’s no secret that offering students work experience is a “win-win” for both organizations and students. To create your own experience visit www.obep.on.ca.



2006 Employer Champion Award Winners with Provincial Partnership Council co-chairs Jon Hamovitch and Tom Flanagan. From top to bottom: Kathryn Emms – Waterloo Regional Police Service, David and Cheryl Sayer – Sayer’s Home Hardware, Tim Morrison and Frank Mantler – Reid’s Heritage Homes, Paul Faguy – Hamilton Health Sciences

**...YOUR MULTIGENERATIONAL
WORKFORCE continued
from page 1**

Many managers are finding today that the younger generations – mainly Gen Ys – are more direct in the recruitment process. They ask questions that previous generations would not have dared—such as career paths, overtime pay, management style. That's because GenXers and Gen Ys insist on finding employment that is a win-win relationship. During the recruitment process, younger employees are trying to figure out what return they will get if they invest their knowledge, skills and time with you.

To successfully recruit all four generations, your process, and the people involved, should demonstrate transparency, partnering and responsiveness. Layering on a generational approach allows you to create an integrated recruitment strategy that will tap into the motivations of all four generations. This enhances your chances of *getting* the right people, for the right job, at the right time.

In the next article we will highlight considerations on how to 'keep and grow' all four generations.

SO YOU HAVE BUY-IN ... WHAT NOW?

Your organization has taken the first step by agreeing to offer on-site work experiences which may include workplace tours, mentoring, job shadowing, school-work transitions, project-based learning, cooperative education and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program. Here are some simple steps to follow in ensuring a successful experience for both the student and the organization:

- 1 Designate a point of contact. This person or team will be the vital link between the student and the workplace and will be actively involved in the school-work experience.
- 2 Outline the work opportunities your organization can offer. Be sure to include as many opportunities as possible to maximize the range of experiences for the student.
- 3 Outline the roles and responsibilities of both the student and the organization's contact. This is an important step to clearly identify what is expected of both the student and the organization.
- 4 Determine what existing resources and equipment the organization has or will require for the student.
- 5 Ensure all safety and collective agreement requirements are met.
- 6 Inform all employees of your involvement with *Passport to Prosperity* and let them know that a student will be in the workplace.

Every school-work experience is different and can vary by organization, school and region. By following these steps, you will be on your way to a successful school-work experience.

SHARE YOUR SUCCESS STORIES!

Are you an employer, educator or student who wants to share your story about a positive and successful school-work program? We want to hear about it! Send in your successful school-work stories to chrystal.boudreau@avantsc.ca to be considered for one of our upcoming *Passport to Prosperity* newsletters.

Join the Campaign!



Provincial Partnership Council co-chair Jon Hamovitch encouraging everyone to join the *Passport to Prosperity* campaign at the 2006 Employers Forum.

For more information about *Passport to Prosperity*, please call 1-800-387-5514 or visit the website at www.edu.gov.on.ca/passport.

For information on providing a school-work opportunity to a high school student in your community, please contact the Ontario Business Education Partnership (OBEP) at 1-888-672-7996 or visit www.obep.on.ca. OBEP is a province-wide network of 26 business-education councils and local training boards facilitating partnerships with employers and schools in local communities.

The Provincial Partnership Council and the *Passport to Prosperity* campaign are supported by the Ontario Ministry of Education and the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities. Partners include the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario, Junior Achievement, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Toronto Board of Trade, Landscape Ontario and TVOntario.