



Attracting Youth to a Sustainable Supply Chain Workforce: *A Pilot Project*

Final Report on Phase 3 – *Industry Engagement*

**Submitted to Alberta Human Services
By the Van Horne Institute
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Attracting Youth to a Sustainable Supply Chain Workforce: A Pilot Project
Industry Engagement Phase Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Alberta is one of the largest provinces in Canada and home to more than 4 million inhabitants. Despite current economic challenges, labour market demand exists for qualified workers to fill positions deemed critical to the long-term viability of business organizations.

This trend is particularly evident in the supply chain industry, where labour shortages are present in most occupational categories and are expected to increase every year (Canadian Supply Chain Sector Council (CSCSC), 2012). According to the Calgary Logistics Council “Accelerator Project” (2012), it is predicted that 50,000 vacancies will open up in Alberta, in just 10 key supply chain occupations, between the years 2011 and 2020.

Youth is responsible for 15 per cent of Alberta’s labour force. Considering the need for workers and the availability of young adults for work, it would be easy to assume that youth unemployment would not be a reality, but the unemployment rate amongst young Albertans is 8.6 per cent, almost 5 per cent higher than Albertans aged 25 years or older.

The Attracting Youth to a Sustainable Supply Chain Workforce Pilot Project, herein called “YISC” (Youth in Supply Chain), started off in 2013 with funding assistance from the Province of Alberta and the Government of Canada aiming to understand the needs of industry and youth, to help connect young adults to different career pathways in Supply Chain Management (SCM), support youth in becoming “job ready” and assist employers with ways to engage young people and to meet their future labour requirements.

The project was led by the Van Horne Institute and was initially designed with two distinct phases:

Phase 1: The Design Phase took place from February to July 2013 and included a literature review seeking to understand the causes of and solutions to youth unemployment, as well as challenges and opportunities the supply chain industry faces in employing youth.

Recommendations were made during the first phase, including the development of a program introducing youth to supply chain careers and connecting them to industry partners.

Phase 2: The Implementation Phase – Linking Up centered around a three-week Career Awareness Program for 20 young adults not in employment, education or training (NEET), ages 18 to 24. The training program took place in December 2013, followed by a two-month work placement, or internship, in the first quarter of 2014. This phase was called Linking Up and counted on the support of a PAC (Project Advisory Committee) which included several members of the supply chain sector.

After the conclusion of Phase 2 – Linking Up, a summary report was produced and recommendations were made by the project management team, together with PAC members.

One of the recommendations from Phase 2 was to organize a forum with HR professionals and hiring managers in the SCM industry to discuss ways of attracting and retaining youth, as well as discuss best practices in hiring.

Phase 3: Industry Engagement

Based on the findings from Phase 2, the Industry Engagement Phase focused on the organization of a forum for human resources professionals (HR Forum) and hiring managers in the supply chain sector. This phase also included the editing of Phase 2 footage to produce a video showcasing the journey of three Linking Up participants in their quest for work in the supply chain sector in Alberta.

The HR Strategies for Supply Chain Forum focused discussions on “Attracting and Retaining the Next Generation” during two days in October, 2014. Participants were exposed to the results of several studies and surveys, including data and information on the labour shortage in Alberta and Canada, the findings of the Linking Up program, and current tools and techniques to attract and retain young workers.

Several group discussions were held during the forum and many sector-relevant points were raised and suggestions formulated by participants. A survey was also conducted two weeks after the completion of the event.

Based on the discussions and results from the Forum and the subsequent survey, the project management team formulated the following recommendations:

1) Marketing Plan

A comprehensive marketing plan should be put together with the objectives of a) familiarizing parents and youth with career choices within the supply chain sector; b) connecting with youth who are unemployed or under-employed to steer them towards SCM careers; and c) creating a portal to link resources available to employers and job seekers.

2) Networking

The project management team suggests that a series of networking events should be planned in conjunction with partners. Before each event, participants – focusing on people aged 16 to 30 years old – would receive a coaching session on the benefits of networking and training in effective techniques to perform successfully. This would be followed by a real opportunity to meet with industry members and connect with them.

3) HR Strategies for Supply Chain Forum series

The HR Strategies for Supply Chain Forum brought forward several issues that should be subject to further discussion with industry. To attain this end, a series of short events, such as breakfasts or receptions, should be organized with the intent of continuing the discussion of industry-relevant issues and proposing solutions to the challenges identified.

4) Accessibility

An important point learned in previous phases of the project and reinforced throughout Phase 3 was the difficulty for youth to get to the locations of supply chain companies. The project management team and the PAC believe that a group representing industry and government should be formed to study transportation alternatives for shift workers.

5) Linking Up

Linking Up was an important step to understanding challenges that youth face when looking for a job. The project pointed out some of the limitations that industry faces, internally and externally, as it strives to open its doors to young workers.

After the completion of the HR Forum and after discussions with key participants and the PAC, we are pleased to be able to conclude this portion of the report by disclosing that the Government of Alberta has agreed to support an extension of Linking Up, leading to a new intake of youth which started in January 2015.

It is the project management team's recommendation that attention should be given to developing a Linking Up intake focusing on students who have just graduated from high school.

1. INTRODUCTION

Alberta is one of the largest provinces in Canada and home to more than 4 million inhabitants. A strong economy and a growing labour market demand qualified workers, and the province is currently experiencing a high rate of job vacancies and difficulty finding workers to fill these positions.

This trend is particularly evident in the supply chain industry, where labour shortages are present in most occupational categories and are expected to increase every year (Canadian Supply Chain Sector Council (CSCSC), 2012). According to the Calgary Logistics Council “Accelerator Project” (2012), it is predicted that 50,000 vacancies will open up in Alberta, in just 10 key supply chain occupations, between the years 2011 and 2020.

The struggle to find workers in the supply chain industry not only poses a challenge to companies who wish to attract, train and retain the right employees, but to the Alberta economy as a whole.

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUTH TO THE ECONOMY

According to Statistics Canada, 13.2 per cent of Canada’s population was aged 15–24 years old in 2013, and Alberta had the fourth highest proportion of youth in that age bracket at 13.4 per cent, after Manitoba at 14.1 per cent, Saskatchewan at 13.9 per cent and 13.6 per cent in Ontario.

Youth comprises 15 per cent of Alberta’s labour force. Considering the need for workers and the availability of young adults for work, it would be easy to assume that youth unemployment would not be a reality, but the unemployment rate amongst young Albertans is 8.6 per cent, almost 5 per cent higher than Albertans aged 25 years or older.

Canadian youth were significantly impacted after the most recent recession, making it difficult for them to complete their education, find meaningful work and live independently. Based on this reality, the Attracting Youth to a Sustainable Supply Chain Workforce Project aims to answer the following questions:

- If Alberta is currently experiencing a labour shortage, then why are so many of its youth unemployed?
- What can be done to help youth enter the job market and become successful, contributing Albertans?
- If the supply chain sector is a lucrative and growing part of the economy, why does it struggle with labour shortages?
- What can be done to encourage youth to enter and succeed in the Supply Chain Management (SCM) industry?

YOUTH IN SUPPLY CHAIN

The Attracting Youth to a Sustainable Supply Chain Workforce Pilot Project, herein called “YISC (Youth in Supply Chain),” started off in 2013 with funding assistance from the Province of Alberta and the Government of Canada. The project was led by the Van Horne Institute and received support from several industry partners.

The YISC project has the following general objectives:

Primary:

- To engage young workers and prepare them for a successful entrance into the workforce, especially targeting supply chain occupations;
- To engage employers and their companies to demonstrate what a best practice youth strategy looks like that will attract and retain youth into sustainable supply chain careers; and
- To work with the project team and others to guide the pilot project, ensuring that the YISC project’s outcomes and deliverables are successfully met.

Secondary:

- To provide industry with techniques and strategies to engage youth;
- To provide youth with an opportunity to develop essential skills and attitudes towards work and a first-hand understanding of the array of career opportunities in the supply chain sector;
- To provide Alberta with a proactive approach to economic growth by developing solutions for existing and upcoming labour shortages; and
- To prepare a best practices report and recommendations that can be shared with other regions and industry sectors.

YISC was initially designed with two distinct phases:

Phase 1: Design Phase

The Design Phase of the YISC project took place from February to July 2013 and included a literature review seeking to understand the causes of and solutions to youth unemployment, as well as challenges and opportunities the supply chain industry faces in employing youth.

This first phase also involved an in-depth analysis of relevant issues on a local level. A focus group was held with unemployed young adults during which participants discussed their challenges in finding and keeping employment. A parallel focus group provided industry participants an opportunity to discuss their challenges with hiring youth.

Recommendations were made during the first phase, including the development of a program introducing youth to supply chain careers and connecting them to industry partners. The full report is available at www.youthinsupplychain.org.

Phase 2: Implementation – Linking Up

The Implementation Phase centered around a three-week Career Awareness Program for 20 young adults not in employment, education or training (NEET), ages 18 to 24. The training program took place in December 2013, followed by a two-month work placement, or internship, in the first quarter of 2014. This phase was called Linking Up and counted on the support of a PAC (Project Advisory Committee) which included several members of the supply chain sector. Appendix A demonstrates the suggestions for continuation of the project.

After the conclusion of Phase 2 – Linking Up, a summary report was produced and recommendations were made by the project management team, together with PAC members. The main recommendations included the following:

- I. Document, in the form of a video, the experiences of three youths to demonstrate some of the challenges they faced and the successes they achieved.
- II. Build on the momentum the Linking Up brand has created, and confirm the lessons learned by offering a minimum of two more intakes to test the new model.
- III. Adjust the Linking Up program design by implementing adapted versions of the original program: Linking Up and Linking Up for young graduates and professionals, with the potential for adaptation to further sub-groups of youth.
- IV. Develop an industry forum for HR professionals to better understand and promote youth hiring practices in the SCM field.
- V. In conjunction with the industry forum for HR professionals, develop a culture of best practices for internships.
- VI. In conjunction with other industry partners (e.g. Van Horne Institute, Calgary Logistics Council, Government of Alberta, Calgary Board of Education, Calgary Regional Partnership, etc.), design and implement a comprehensive marketing strategy with the purpose of connecting industry and youth.
- VII. With the same above partners, develop tools and approaches that will specifically support youth in high school so they may have relevant career information at their disposal.
- VIII. For future projects, it is imperative to incorporate industry partners willing to act as advisors to any youth project.

The final report for Phase 2 is available at www.youthinsupplychain.org.

2. PHASE 3 – INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

Based on the findings from Phase 2, the Industry Engagement Phase focused on the organization of a forum for human resources professionals and hiring managers in the supply chain sector. During two days in October 2014, the HR Strategies for Supply Chain Forum focused discussions on “Attracting and Retaining the Next Generation.”

The project management team also edited Phase 2 footage to produce a video showcasing the journey of three Linking Up participants in their quest for work in the supply chain sector in Alberta.

2.1 Objectives

The objectives for Phase 3 were based on the recommendations included in the Phase 2 Report and more specifically, recommendations I, IV, V and VIII mentioned above:

- Report and evaluation of Phase 2: to share lessons learned in the preparation and the delivery of the project;
- Industry forum: to survey a minimum of 50 HR specialists/hiring managers in SCM to share the results of the pilot project and discuss industry strategies;
- An opportunity to connect SCM human resources professionals to share knowledge and best practices for attracting and retaining labour, focusing on the 18–24 age group;
- The preparation of video footage that will be used in the context of the Forum, and that can also be used to reinforce the need for a youth workforce strategy;
- The ability to present in detail what internship programs entail for companies and youth, their challenges and their benefits;
- Reinforcement of partnerships between SCM companies, service providers and government agencies;
- Develop a possible template for collaboration between the private and public sector, and also tools and techniques to attract and retain young workers.

2.2 Project Leadership – Phase 3

The Van Horne Institute (VHI) formed a project management team, composed of:

- Peter Wallis – Van Horne Institute
- Joceli Marina Cardozo – CrossBridge Consulting
- Martin Desmaras – CrossBridge Consulting

Having a Project Advisory Committee (PAC) has proven to be an effective way of endowing the YISC project with a multifaceted perspective. For Phase 3, the project counted on the support of the following professionals as part of the PAC:

- Bob Miller – Calgary Regional Partnership
- Brendan Bakay – Alberta Human Services
- Corrie Banks – Triskele Logistics
- Jean-Marc Lacasse – Town of Chestermere
- June Read – Pacific Western Transportation
- Karen Blackmur – Job, Skills, Training and Labour
- Kathryn Semcow – Consultant
- Leita Blasetti – The City of Calgary Youth Employment Centre
- Linda Lucas – ELLE & Associates

The implementation of Phase 3 counted on the efficient engagement and commitment of the PAC members. The PAC supported the VHI and its project management team in making key supply industry connections and providing critical feedback on content management for the HR Strategies for Supply Chain Forum and the video production with participants from the Linking Up project.

2.3 HR Strategies for Supply Chain Forum

In order to better understand the challenges industry faces when employing youth, the need to create a context to share experiences and discuss current hiring practices in the supply chain sector became clear.

Based on the recommendations from Phase 2 of the YISC project, the VHI's project management team organized a forum, called HR Strategies for Supply Chain, aimed at discussing the attraction and retention of the next generation of young workers. Participants were exposed to the results of several studies and surveys, including data and information on the labour shortage in Alberta and Canada, the findings of the Linking Up program, and current tools and techniques to attract and retain young workers.

2.3.1 Venue and Partners

The VHI has a close relationship in Calgary with several organizations such as the Calgary Regional Partnership, Calgary Economic Development and The City of Calgary Youth Employment Centre, as well as educational partners such as the University of Calgary, SAIT Polytechnic, Mount Royal University and Bow Valley College.

This network allows the VHI to work with its educational and industry partners to find solutions to the current challenges in the supply chain sector, including labour shortages in Alberta and Canada.

SAIT Polytechnic hosted the HR Strategies for Supply Chain Forum on October 23rd and 24th, 2014, at the Aldred Centre. The forum's program was outlined by the project management team and the PAC. SAIT joined forces in organizing a Networking Reception with a focus on students. More than 100 students from SAIT, Mount Royal University and the University of Calgary were present. This opportunity allowed them to talk to the Forum participants, learn about careers in supply chain and expand their network.

Other partners that were present and sponsored part of the event were the Calgary Logistics Council, Bow Valley College, Pacific Western Transportation and the Canadian Supply Chain Sector Council.

2.3.2 Event Content

Industry engagement was an essential part of this project. One of the strategies to enhance this engagement was to provide information and tools that can be easily identified as useful to industry.

The project management team decided on the following themes for discussion at the HR Strategies for Supply Chain Forum:

a) *Theme:* Labour shortage

Rationale: It seems that the SCM industry understands their own internal labour shortages, but is not necessarily aware of the magnitude of the national labour shortages and how youth unemployment could be channelled to partially resolve this issue.

Objective: To make industry aware of the need for young workers, labour market forecasts for the coming years, the national occupational codes that lack manpower, and to introduce possible solutions to these problems.

b) *Theme:* A reality check for the supply chain sector – understanding youth

Rationale: It appears that industry is not completely aware of the challenges youth face when trying to enter the workforce. It also seems that the supply chain sector, along with other sectors, has a unilateral perspective on the behaviour of youth towards work.

Objective: To provide forum participants with a better understanding of the expectations and attitudes of youth towards work.

c) *Theme:* Tools and opportunities to develop youth as workers

Rationale: It is important that industry be informed of current best practices for attraction and retention of young workers, as well as to be aware of the opportunities that government and educational partners make available to support industry in its quest for talented young candidates.

Objective: Participants will leave the Forum with tools to implement a youth attraction and retention program to assist in the continued development of their operations.

2.3.3 Marketing Plan

The VHI and the PAC members shared their networks with the project management team in order to form a relevant database of contacts in the supply chain industry.

It was defined by the group that the best approach would be a personal one: phone calls, emails and general information on newsletters, LinkedIn and websites.

The project management team made personal contact with approximately 100 companies, focusing on HR professionals and hiring managers, introducing them to the event and emphasizing the importance of their participation. An e-flyer was distributed through emails and e-newsletters from the VHI and its partners.

The YISC website (www.youthinsupplychain.org) had a dedicated internal page developed, with information about the HR Strategies for Supply Chain Forum, the previous phases of the project and a link for registration.

A poster was produced and placed at the Aldred Centre main entrances. A brochure was also printed, with the event's agenda, messages from the VHI and the PAC, as well as important links. Another piece of marketing material was a table tent highlighting the Forum's partners and sponsors and links to some of the partners' websites. Appendix B shows the marketing materials produced for the event.

2.4 Video Production

2.4.1 Linking Up Video

Throughout the implementation of Linking Up, footage was taken with the objective of producing a video to describe circumstances involving youth looking for work in Alberta in the field of supply chain.

The video showcased the reality of three young adults with different backgrounds and distinctive challenges and objectives. They were interviewed on numerous occasions during a three-month period, sharing their experiences with Linking Up and their future aspirations, building on their participation in the program.

2.4.2 HR Strategies for Supply Chain Forum Video

The HR Strategies for Supply Chain Forum was an opportunity for industry members to gather and discuss important issues related to the attraction and retention of young workers.

A video was produced during the Forum to document the event and to recognize the importance of having government, industry, associations and education working together towards the same goal.

The videos are available on www.youthinsupplychain.org, as well as on the Van Horne's YouTube channel.

3. FINDINGS

The HR Strategies for Supply Chain Forum was held on October 23rd and 24th, 2014, at the Aldred Centre (SAIT). During the event, an array of issues were discussed, and each topic brought forward important aspects and points of view on how to address the challenge of youth attraction and retention in the workplace, specifically in relation to supply chain positions.

Below is a summary of each topic and relevant inputs and findings resulting from the presentations and open discussions.

3.1 Day 1 – October 23rd, 2014

I. Supply Chain and Canada's Labour Shortage

This subject was chosen as the opening session to provide participants with an overview of the labour shortages in Alberta and Canada in the supply chain sector. Linda Lucas, President of ELLE & Associates Inc. and past chair of the Calgary Logistics Council, presented the findings of the Accelerator Project.

II. Linking Up: Youth in Supply Chain

Jean-Marc Lacasse, the project manager for Phase 2 of YISC (Linking Up), presented the project's objectives and findings. The goal of this presentation was to make industry aware of the initiative and its results and urge industry to increase their engagement in future phases of the project.

III. Group Discussion

An open discussion took place after the first two presentations.

One of the points discussed was that occupations included in the supply chain are classified as "low skilled" or "high skilled." The Canadian Supply Chain Sector Council is encouraging industry not to use the term "non-skilled" labour. The Accelerator Project Report was stressed as an important tool for industry to gather information on the positions that are (and will be) in critical need of workers until 2020. The report highlights the positions, and their National Occupational Classification (NOC), so employers may easily identify the positions that would fit their internal job descriptions.

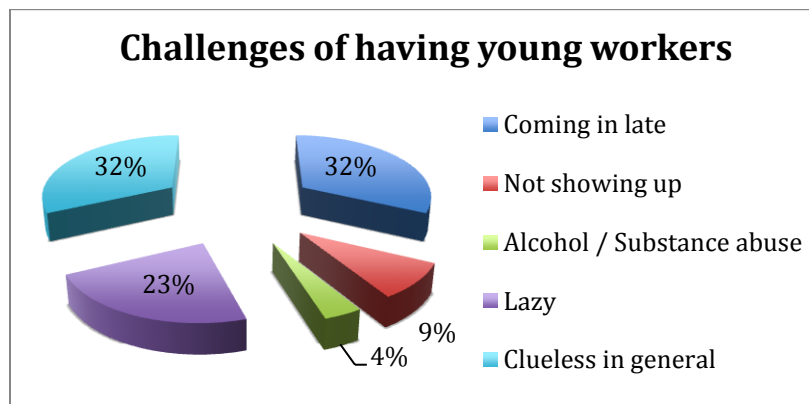
An online polling tool was used during the group discussion, asking participants to express their views online or through text messages.

The first question asked was: “Is industry doing enough to communicate career opportunities or paths to youth in high school?”. All of the respondents answered negatively.

The second question was: “Do you think youth graduated or not from high school and not in a post-secondary program are well prepared for the workplace?”. The majority of respondents (88%) believed that they were not.

This overwhelming response led to a discussion of parents not knowing what careers might be available for their children, and therefore, unable to steer them, in this case, in the direction of the supply chain sector.

The third and last question was: “What is the biggest challenge you have experienced with youth in your company?”. The graphic below shows the answers received:



One of the main points arising from the answers was that one-third of the respondents considered youth to be, in general, “clueless.” In order to clarify this answer, participants were asked to give more detail as to what this term meant to them. The general consensus was that youth did not have a clear understanding as to employers’ expectations. It was noted that many youths seem to be unsure how to behave in the workplace, thereby tending to come in late, miss work for no apparent reason or not identify boundaries in a work environment.

IV. Supply Chain Management at SAIT

SAIT’s Academic Chair at the School of Business, Heather McMillan, introduced the new supply chain management major scheduled to start in the fall of 2015.

V. The Unintended Barriers in Recruiting

a) Setting the context

A panel discussion with Corrie Banks, President of Triskele Logistics, Tom Keigher, GM Western Distribution for Tim Hortons and Joceli Marina Cardozo, Partner at CrossBridge Consulting, discussed the barriers experienced by youth in the interview process and the importance of transferable skills. This panel provided HR professionals with an opportunity to view and discuss different ways of looking at the skills young adults have and the dilemma that they face by being unable to communicate properly during an interview.

b) Transferable skills – national and international

One of the topics discussed during the panel was the similarity [and therefore the transferability] between the skills required in a certain supply chain position and positions in other fields. For instance, an IT Business Analyst position may have some of the same requirements as a Supply Chain Logistics Analyst.

When recruiting, human resources professionals tend to be very specific with their job requirements and often use keywords in order to refine their search for suitable candidates. The discussion shed light on how HR professionals and hiring managers might be able to attract more qualified applicants if they considered transferable skills when recruiting, and reinforced the concept that diversity of thinking in the workplace is critical to an organization's profitability and ultimate success.

A suggestion made by the panellists is that job descriptions for recruiting purposes should be more adaptable, considering that young workers might have a set of skills and may not necessarily know how to relate them to the position.

The executive director of the Canadian Supply Chain Sector Council (CSCSC), Kevin Maynard, reminded participants that CSCSC provides descriptions of the main supply chain occupations on their website. This tool helps companies understand the skills required for a specific job and supports them in putting together a job description that is more flexible, taking into account transferable skills while still covering all of the professional requirements.

International skills should also be considered. The example of a truck driver with experience in another country was given. This professional will, in addition to driving, also have experience in shipping, receiving and customer service. In any case, training will most likely be needed for candidates with either Canadian or international experience. Panellists called participants to action, asking them to be more accepting of international experience and to avoid potential biases.

c) Experience and productivity required for entry-level positions

A point of contention was that many companies require two or three years of experience for entry-level positions. The panellists stressed that recent graduates or youth with no such experience can be coachable and mouldable, and companies that invest in training and mentoring tend to have better results in retaining young workers.

Productivity is also very important in supply chain, especially in warehouse environments. The panellists suggested that KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) for new workers should be flexible and should take into consideration their need for training, especially if the aim is to retain these young professionals for a long period. It was suggested that managers should ask themselves the following question: “what do my people need to develop and deliver the way we need them to?”. Managers should also recognize different learning styles and invest in building relationships of trust with every employee, not only those initially deemed to have higher potential.

d) Flexibility and accessibility

The supply chain industry has the potential of being flexible with shift workers, but this flexibility is seldom put into practice. Companies tend to have fixed shifts which do not necessarily take into account situations such as commuting challenges (it is frequently assumed that everyone will have a driver’s license and a car) or family needs, such as single moms who need to drop children at daycare. The failure to incorporate such flexibility into the work environment results in a potential loss of undiscovered talent.

e) Union structure

A matter brought up by participants was the union structure. Candidates may have the right attitude and transferable skills, but the union structure may impose limits on the recruiter’s freedom to hire and/or advance them in the company. The panellists suggested that employees should be cross-trained, offered experience in different areas of the company’s business, keeping them engaged until they can be advanced.

f) Inclusiveness

There was consensus that HR professionals and hiring managers should ensure they watch for possible biases such as “females cannot lift an 80-pound box,” “an amputee cannot drive a truck,” or “young workers are not here for the long term,” amongst others.

Another common practice is that recruiters will look for “holes” in resumes in order to speed the recruiting process. The panellists reinforced the importance of overlooking details that are not essential, as sometimes these candidates might still be the right fit for a company. Hiring new

workers with suitable soft or people skills and training them may sometimes be more cost-effective than finding professionals with the required experience and/or education, but who are not flexible or coachable.

The panel concluded with a question to be answered and analyzed by participants at the end of the Forum: “What are you willing to invest on a talent [professional]?”.

VI. Youth Panel: My experience looking for a position

Ryland Brennan and Karine Araújo, two young adults living in the Calgary Region, shared their experiences looking for a position in Alberta. The panel was mediated by Leita Blasetti, from the City of Calgary Youth Employment Centre.

The panel generated several discussion points, including:

Internet recruiting is not worth the time spent doing it

Both students felt that recruitment through websites (specialized or company sites) did not give them a good return on the time they spent filling out forms and sending resumes.

They also mentioned that several online applications are very lengthy and asked questions that they did not know how to answer (e.g., salary expectations).

The value of networking

Ryland and Karine agreed that networking with industry professionals, not only during career fairs or industry nights promoted by post-secondary institutions, was much more valuable than applying for positions online.

The slow timing for industry to respond to applications

It took several months for companies to get in touch with students who applied for positions. Our panellists were unable to recall position details and did not feel comfortable answering questions over a phone call.

Expectations on the employers

There seems to be a deeply rooted bias held by currently experienced workers that the new generation is not interested in long-term commitments. To the contrary, the views of both our panellists indicated that this premise may not be always true, as they expressed their objectives as follows:

- Opportunities to be trained and grow within the company;
- The possibility of working in the same company for a long time;
- A positive work environment and corporate culture; and
- The feeling that the company cares about them (investment in a positive relationship with superiors).

VII. Networking Reception

The reception focused on giving students from our educational partners an opportunity to talk to industry members, learn about positions available in supply chain and expand their networks. Approximately 100 students from SAIT, University of Calgary and Mount Royal University were present and networked with many of the HR Forum participants.

3.2 Day 2 – October 24th, 2014

I. Youth Recruitment and Retention Practices, Results from the 2013 Calgary & Area Employer Survey

Lisette Cameron, consultant for Alberta Human Services, provided participants with information on the results from the 2013 employer survey in the Calgary area. This presentation focused on giving employers current information on the growing gap between Alberta’s adult and youth employment rates, as well as strategies that employers in the Calgary area are using to attract and retain youth.

II. Group Discussion

A group discussion was facilitated by Corrie Banks, President of Triskele Logistics. Participants were divided into groups and asked to respond to four questions. Their answers are summarized below, together with the comments derived from the group discussions.

a) What kind of tools are we using today for recruitment?

Websites: company websites, job banks, Indeed, Kijiji, Craigslist, association websites, etc.

Facebook: affordable, and an effective way of using social media for recruiting.

LinkedIn: more expensive, so it is often used to recruit experienced professionals.

Job Fairs: focused on post-secondary level (U of C, MRU, etc.).

Others:

- Word of mouth
- Internship
- Open houses
- Signs

- Walk in
- Through networks
- Centre for Newcomers
- Calgary Catholic Immigration Services
- Temporary positions becoming permanent positions
- Referral bonus
- In-house training
- Incentive pay (performance based)
- Housing/accommodation incentive

b) Are we reaching youth through the right channels?

The prevalent answer was “not necessarily.” Participants mostly agreed that companies should take advantage of social media. Several mentioned Mayor Naheed Nenshi, with the City of Calgary, as a success case in getting youth involved in different causes through social media.

Participants also provided examples of venues, strategies and tools that companies should focus more effort on when intending to recruit youth:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Network events
- Involve parents and younger children in information sessions
- Provide a defined career path so that youth can better envision a future in supply chain
- Identify possible career progressions and opportunities for growth in the company
- Keep youth informed of enterprise-wide opportunities
- Have an ongoing recruitment strategy
- Change the mindset in recruiting (moving boxes is not viewed as interesting)
- Invest in participating in different career fairs

Nonetheless, all participants agreed that there is not one specific way of attracting youth, but a series of possible channels. It was stressed that companies need to have a strategy for youth attraction and retention.

c) What strategies have helped us attract and retain youth?

Participants mentioned some of the main strategies and tactics they have been using and which have had a positive return in attracting and retaining young workers:

- Retention bonus
- Intern programs
- Flexibility
- Allow for creativity
- Co-op work program

- Mentoring
- Scholarships (youth < 23)
- Incentive pay (performance)
- Orientations that include expectations and career paths
- Creating a fun environment (events, social leaders)
- Post-secondary involvement: volunteer to do mock interviews
- High school presentations to educate teachers and students on career paths
- Creating opportunities for youth to see the big picture and what the company does
- Coaching and training: target positions with highest turnover
- Outside mentorship programs: Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council, Calgary Immigrant Women's Association, International Training Professional Program.

Suggestions were made during the discussion:

- Make youth see the big picture: tour other areas of the company, invest in job shadows, and include business etiquette, i.e., explain what is expected of them as appropriate workplace behaviour as part of the orientation;
- Work on ways to create a sense of belonging and commitment; and
- Help youth develop computer skills through training, not just on-the-job support.

Other issues were raised as part of the discussion:

- The need for companies to pay more attention to retention strategies;
- The need to analyze why some departments have more youth than others and engage in benchmarking;
- Industry needs to work on changing its image with respect to youth; and
- Industry needs to be more aware of the financial challenges youth face (can they afford a driver's license? Or a cell phone?).

Participants also brought to light some ideas of proactive steps industry could take to address the challenge of hiring youth into supply chain positions:

- Educate parents in supply chain [as it is common for parents to orient their children to follow careers they are familiar with];
- Offer supply chain and logistics courses in high schools, so students can be more aware of the possibilities in the industry;
- Create more opportunities for networking, outside of the college/university venues; and
- Encourage a supply chain specific linkage with the current and new generation of workers, inside and outside the workplace (e.g., career coaching / counselling, mock up interviews, etc.).

d) What barriers do we face when deciding to employ youth?

These are the most common barriers mentioned by the HR professionals:

- Lack of awareness of the supply chain sector: industry needs to be more pro-active in advertising positions to youth;
- Multi-generation expectations/motivators need to be better understood;
- A change sometimes is needed in corporate culture, including assumptions and approaches;
- A need to engage students in meaningful work: youth needs to feel that they are part of something bigger and with a purpose;
- The lack of support within the company (mentorship versus time available for mentoring);
- Unrealistic expectations: youth seem to expect quick advancement in their careers; and
- Lack of social or “soft” skills, especially with youth just out of high school who may, for instance, not know how to behave properly in the workplace (e.g., to not text while talking to the employer/recruiter).

Company barriers

- Full-time training is required for part-time jobs;
- Age requirements exist for certain positions;
- Experience is required for entry-level workers;
- Lack of flexibility on shifts;
- Difficulty balancing shift work with education;
- Supply chain logistics parks tend to be located in areas underserved by public transport;
- Terms and workplace language – we should not assume that youth will know them; and
- Safety: youth tend to not pay attention to safety rules.

General barriers

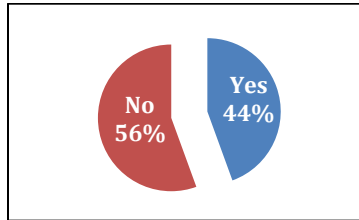
- Union based seniority
- Cost of living (affordable housing)
- Cost of insurance
- Language barriers (ESL)
- Scope of government credentialing needs to be re-examined

III. The Skills Connector Project

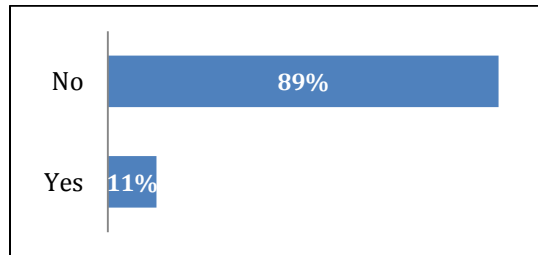
The Canadian Supply Chain Sector Council (CSCSC) presented the Skills Connector Project to attendees and asked for their input on some of the questions that will be part of the online tool. The presentation was led by Kevin Maynard, executive director of the CSCSC, and Michael and

Divona Herzog, partners at Essential Skills. During their presentation, an online polling system was used, asking participants the following questions:

- a) Before coming to this conference were you aware of the Canadian Supply Chain Sector Council (CSCSC) products? National Occupational Standards



- b) Before coming to this conference were you aware of the Canadian Supply Chain Sector Council (CSCSC) products? Recruitment and Retention Toolkit



Participants were made aware of the products available for industry through CSCSC and the projects that are underway and will be available in 2015.

IV. Stocking Up on Skills Project

Bow Valley College is working with the Government of Canada and CSCSC on a project that aims at developing essential skills in workers in the supply chain sector. This project offers employers a tool to develop essential skills in their workforce, which in turn would be a motivator for the retention of workers.

V. Canada Alberta Job Grant

Karen Blackmur, workforce consultant for Job, Skills, Training and Labour, gave details on the Canada Alberta Job Grant¹ program and encouraged HR professionals to look into this opportunity as a way of retaining workers of all ages. Information on requirements and eligibility were laid out, as well as a channel of communication for enquiries.

¹ Check <http://www.albertacanada.com/opportunity/employers/jobgrant.aspx> for more information

VI. NextGen Intern Program

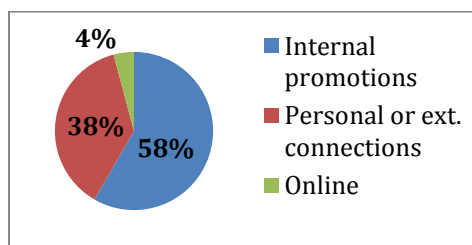
June Read, Director of NextGen and Special Projects for Pacific Western Transportation, shared her experiences with the project, giving attendees a detailed explanation as to the challenges faced in their internship program and outlined the positive results experienced.

The return on investment for an internship program was of great interest to participants. June clarified their internal processes and costs, and mentioned that their first option was to bring in external consultants instead of putting together an internal group to be responsible for the project. After a cost-benefit analysis, the company decided to invest internally and have a director overseeing the program. This strategy gave the company the advantage of tailoring the content and direction to its needs, counting on the expertise of its senior professionals.

It was explained that the focus of the internship program was not to train interns in one specific area, but to provide an overview of the company's operations and have flexibility in placing these interns in permanent positions where they felt comfortable and could achieve success. Pacific Western also invested in a coach/mentor approach, empowering employees in different areas to work with the interns and share their knowledge of the company's operations.

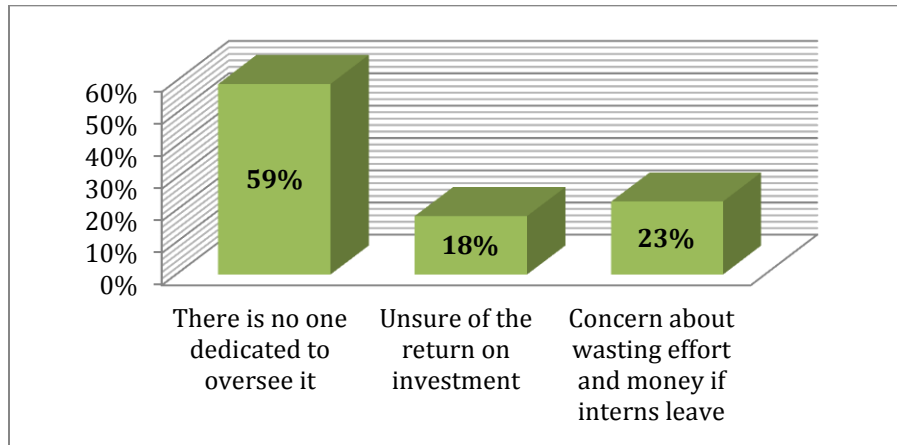
Participants inquired as to the benefits of having an internship program. It seemed clear that the return on investment was greater than the risks in putting together such a comprehensive program. June used the online polling system to ask the following questions of the attendees:

a) Where do you plan on recruiting your future leaders?



This answer is in line with the comments made during the forum, that while Internet search engines are an important part of recruiting, they are not the definitive way of attracting employees.

b) What do you see as the main reason your company may not invest in an intern program?



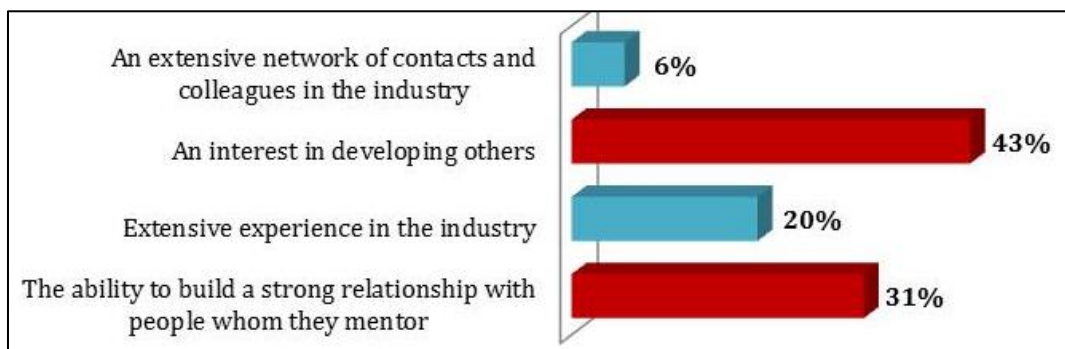
The majority of respondents stated that having no one dedicated to oversee the program was the main reason they would not invest in internships. The discussion stressed that companies should calculate the real return on investment for such a program rather than simply discarding this opportunity.

VII. The Practice and Impact of Mentoring

Mentoring is a very important part of attracting and retaining young adults into any sector. The project management team invited Fred Jacques, consulting principal at Jacques & Associates Inc., to discuss the concept of mentoring with participants and give them a rationale as to why this practice should be introduced into their workplaces.

Participants expressed interest in the concept of cross-functional mentoring. Fred Jacques stated that having a cross-functional mentoring strategy gives companies a competitive advantage, as it prepares employees to take on challenges that have a company-wide impact.

The online polling system was used to ask participants: "What do you consider is the most important attribute for a mentor?"



In response, Fred Jacques stressed that even though experience in the industry and an extensive network are very desirable traits in a mentor, the most important skill is the ability to connect with people and develop a genuine interest in supporting others towards success.

VIII. Group Discussion with PAC members

Coordinated by Peter Wallis, President and CEO of the Van Horne Institute, the last discussion of the HR Strategies for Supply Chain Forum took input from the YISC Project Advisory Committee Members.

Peter Wallis highlighted four key concepts that summarized the discussions during the forum: networking, flexibility, experience and personal connections/internships/mentorships. PAC members and participants were asked to give their opinion on these keywords.

- *Networking*

There was consensus that networking is an important element to connect youth to the supply chain industry. Participants emphasized: a) the need for industry to get more involved in networking events and b) the need for youth to learn how to network properly.

- *Flexibility*

The discussions revealed the importance of flexibility, especially for shift workers. Industry members shared the challenges they have in changing inflexible corporate paradigms while, at the same time, ensuring that the business is run in an effective way. PAC members encouraged their peers to be innovative and set a benchmark for others.

- *Experience... or the lack of*

The dilemma or inconsistency of youth needing experience to enter the workforce and not having opportunities to develop this experience continues to be the predominant reality. Participants placed strong emphasis on transferable skills and on the need to help youth identify these skills, which may be used across sectors and functions. There was consensus that industry needs to be more aware of this incongruity and pay attention to transferable skills and how they are described in order to improve talent attraction.

- *Personal connections / internship / mentorship*

Using personal connections and reaching out to youth is an effective way of attracting them into supply chain occupations. Recent graduates (from high school or post-secondary) are not necessarily confident in the skills and knowledge they possess, and having support and guidance from industry was deemed an attractive reason for them to join the supply chain sector. There was general agreement that investing in formal programs would be very

beneficial for the supply chain sector in attracting and retaining the next generation of workers.

Participants were asked to provide feedback on the next steps in the YISC program. The need to develop a marketing plan for the YISC project was strongly suggested. This marketing plan should embrace different outlets to reach youth who are unemployed or under-employed, and should focus on career options, connection to jobs, and education in supply chain.

Appendix C shows the complete program for the HR Strategies for Supply Chain Forum and appendix D details the companies and organizations that participated in the event, and

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The main purpose of YISC Phase 3 was to work with industry to identify tools that were successful during the Implementation Phase, discuss the challenges encountered during Phase 2 and engage SCM human resources professionals on best practices for attracting and retaining youth.

Throughout the HR Strategies for Supply Chain Forum, several sector-relevant points were raised and suggestions formulated by participants. A survey was also conducted two weeks after the completion of the Forum (results can be found in Appendix E).

Based on the above, the project management team, together with the PAC, would like to make the following recommendations:

4.1 Marketing Plan

The YISC project management team recommends the development of a formal marketing plan that would spotlight the myriad opportunities that exist for a career in supply chain, logistics and transportation. This plan should be developed with the involvement of associations, agencies and industry members to:

- a) Familiarize parents and youth with career choices within the supply chain sector,
- b) Connect with youth who are unemployed or under-employed and steer them towards SCM careers, and
- c) Create a portal to link resources available to employers and job seekers.

The marketing plan should cover the production of printed and online material containing summarized information on career pathways in the supply chain sector. The material should be tailored to three different audiences:

- a) Educators and Parents,
- b) Youth, and
- c) Industry.

4.2 Networking

There is a need to create more networking opportunities for youth to connect with industry. These networking opportunities should not only involve youth with post-secondary education, but also reach young people who have recently graduated from high school and are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). Since networking is also a skill, youths should be encouraged to participate in coaching sessions to better prepare them to make meaningful connections.

The project management team suggests that a series of networking events should be planned in conjunction with partners such as Calgary Board of Education, The City of Calgary Youth Employment Centre, Calgary Immigrant Women's Association, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, Centre for Newcomers, etc. Before each event, participants would receive a coaching session on the benefits of networking and training in effective techniques to perform successfully. This would be followed by a real opportunity to meet with industry members and connect with them.

4.3 HR Strategies for Supply Chain Forum series

The forum organized by the YISC project management team brought forward several issues that should be subject to further discussion with industry.

A series of short events, such as breakfasts or receptions, should be organized with the intent of continuing the discussion of industry-relevant issues and proposing solutions to the challenges identified. These events could be organized every two months, and topics would be chosen by industry through online polls or other methods.

The objective of this initiative would be to share best practices/initiatives taken that will increase the number of young workers in the workforce. This program should be designed to offer practical and focused suggestions to resolving issues identified by the participants.

In furtherance of its education and public policy outreach to industry, this could be a challenge that the VHI should take on.

4.4 Accessibility

An important point learned in previous phases of the project and reinforced throughout Phase 3 was the difficulty for youth to get to the locations of supply chain companies.

The project management team and the PAC believe that a group representing industry and government should be formed to study transportation alternatives for shift workers. During the course of the YISC project, collaboration between the private and public sectors proved to be an effective way of tackling challenges.

Why not use this collaborative approach to resolve this apparently “unsolvable” problem?

4.5 Linking Up

Linking Up was an important step to understanding challenges that youth face when looking for a job. The project illuminated some of the limitations that industry faces, internally and externally, as it strives to open its doors to young workers.

After the completion of the HR Forum and after discussions with key participants and the PAC, we are pleased to be able to conclude this portion of the report by disclosing that the Government of Alberta has agreed to support an extension of Linking Up, leading to a new intake of youth which started in January 2015.

It is the project management team’s recommendation that attention should be given to developing a Linking Up intake focusing on students who just graduated from high school.

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