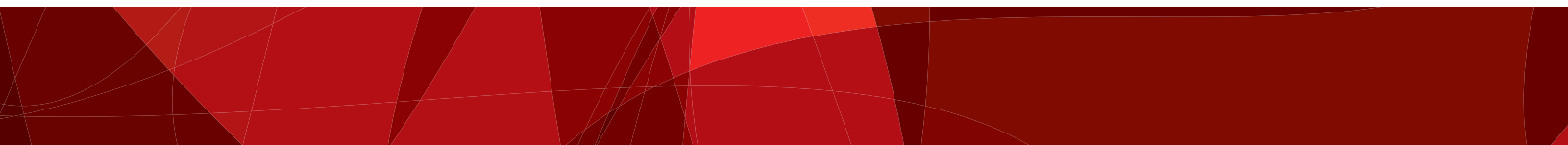


**Minister's Advisory Council  
on Workforce Development**

# **Canada Manitoba Roundtable on SMEs and Skills Development**

A summary of presentations and findings from a multi-stakeholder roundtable discussion on skills development and training in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

**Manitoba** 



# Table of CONTENTS

- Letter from the MACWD Chair . . . . . 3
  
- Introduction . . . . . 4
  - Purpose . . . . . 4
  - Agenda . . . . . 4
  
- Proceedings. . . . . 5
  - Setting the Scene . . . . . 5
  - Skills Development . . . . . 5
  - Training Delivery . . . . . 5
  - Engaging SMEs . . . . . 6
  
- THEME 1: Linking training to business success . . . . . 8
  - Discussion Questions . . . . . 8
  - Luncheon Address . . . . . 10
  
- THEME 2: Supports required to help SMEs increase training and skills development. . . . . 11
  - Discussion Questions . . . . . 12
  - New Approaches . . . . . 13
  
- THEME 3. What practices will enhance workplace learning in SMEs? . . . 14
  - Discussion Questions . . . . . 14
  
- Next Steps. . . . . 16
  
- Acknowledgements . . . . . 17
  
- Appendices
  - Appendix A: MACWD Roundtable Agenda . . . . . 18
  - Appendix B: MACWD Members . . . . . 20
  - Appendix C: MACWD Relationship Model. . . . . 20





*Chair, MACWD, John Schubert sets the stage for the event during his opening remarks.*

*The whole challenge around skills development and training is one that confronts us all and yet, if we can collectively take positive steps forward in addressing these challenges, we all win. Our business is stronger and more competitive, our people are higher skilled and more productive, and our economy, stronger and healthier.*

*- John Schubert, Chair  
Minister's Advisory Council  
on Workforce Development*

# Letter from the MACWD Chair

June 2011

Honourable Peter Bjornson  
Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade

It is my pleasure to present the summary findings “What You Told Us” report from the Canada-Manitoba Roundtable Event on Small-Medium Enterprises and Skills Development, on behalf of the Minister’s Advisory Council on Workforce Development (MACWD).

The MACWD is tasked with providing advice and recommendations to government on ideas and strategies around the development of Manitoba’s workforce. We do this by working collaboratively with a multitude of stakeholders; industry, education, labour and government. This event was one such example of collaboration.

The challenges around skills development and training is one that confronts us all and yet, if we can collectively take positive steps forward in addressing these challenges, we all win. Our business is stronger and more competitive, our people are more highly-skilled and productive, and our economy, stronger and healthier. This Roundtable model allowed us the opportunity to have meaningful discussions about topics that are important to all of us. We together will benefit from the information, thoughts and ideas that will assist us in moving toward a common, shared vision of Manitoba. This report shares a number of important findings and ideas concerning skills development and training in small-medium enterprises. It will provide the basis for further and ongoing discussion for the Council and stakeholders around opportunities for moving forward.

The MACWD looks forward to providing the Minister with advice and recommendations arising from the event and subsequent summary findings.

Sincerely Yours,

*Original signed by*

John Schubert  
Chair, Minister’s Advisory Council on Workforce Development

## Introduction

On Feb. 11, 2011, the *Canada-Manitoba Roundtable on SMEs and Skills Development* brought together 75 people (including those from The Pas and Thompson via video-conference) representing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), labour groups, sector councils, education, non-profit associations and government. It was organized by the Minister's Advisory Council on Workforce Development (MACWD), a group of leaders mandated through provincial legislation to provide advice and recommendations to the Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade on workforce development strategies and initiatives. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), Manitoba Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade (ETT) and the Alliance of Manitoba Sector Councils (AMSC) co-sponsored the roundtable discussion.

## Purpose

The purpose of the roundtable was twofold:

1. To initiate discussions about how roundtable participants can individually and collectively contribute to increasing skills development in SMEs for a more productive and competitive Manitoba
2. To contribute Manitoba's voice to an international research project on SMEs and skills development led by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Local Economic and Employment Development Programme, and coordinated in Canada by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)

## Agenda

The proceedings opened with a discussion of international perspectives titled "Setting the Scene" followed by a series of themed presentations, roundtable discussions, panel/plenary session and a wrap-up networking mingler attended by the Minister of ETT and MACWD members. The agenda is attached as Appendix A.

This document is a synopsis of the presentations and roundtable discussions.

*Overall literacy levels in Manitoba – and Canada – leave about 42% without the skills they need to have choices about their goals. Low literacy and Essential Skills levels limit Manitobans' choices in the labour market, impair business' ability to compete, and hinder our competitiveness provincially as well as in global markets.*

# Proceedings

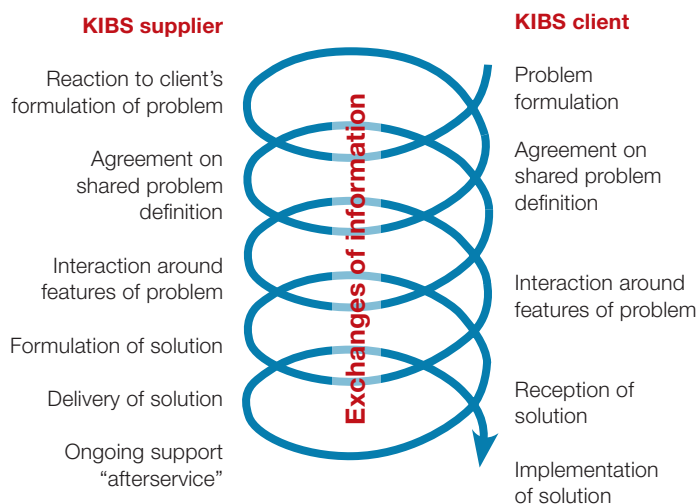
## Setting the Scene – International Perspectives and Comparisons

**Dr. Cristina Martinez-Fernandez**, Project Coordinator, LEED Programme, OECD and Jean-Pierre Voyer, President, Social Research and Demonstration Corporation shared findings from the latest international and Canadian research respectively.

Dr. Martinez-Fernandez joined the roundtable from Paris, France via video-conference and provided both information and examples from other countries on new approaches to training and skills development in SMEs.

One approach attracting interest is the KISA (Knowledge Intensive Service Activities) model, where learning occurs through activities undertaken at work in collaboration with other professionals/experts in-house or outside the company.

### **KISA: Learning through Interaction**



The following OECD research findings resonated with roundtable participants:

### **Skills Development**

- SMEs lack systematic and continuous “skills needs” assessment.
- SMEs need generic skills and particularly sophisticated management and technical skills training (high cost).
- SMEs are increasingly aware of the importance of entrepreneurial skills, but do not know how to enhance them.
- Innovative firms focus on green skills, but there is a gap in training available from external providers to equip firms for “green-growth” opportunities.
- Lower-skilled employees participate less in formal training, and even less in informal learning, which affects skills development, mobility and career development.

### **Training Delivery**

- Generic, standardized programs do not match demand - a need exists for tailored content and flexible training delivery channels (ex: mentoring).
- Informal training through knowledge intensive service activities (KISA) rises in importance – there is a significant gap in policy programs and strategies.
- Develop train-the-trainer programs. Training providers should have ground-level experience in the SME field.

## Engaging SMEs in Policy Design (empowerment)

- Policy programs should develop ways to measure impact and the return on training investment to send SMEs a clear message that training is an element of success.
- Policies need to be segmented to adapt to entrepreneur types:
  - medium and high investors: facilitate mechanisms for training
  - low investors: introduce programs to foster cultural change about investing in training (ex: through dissemination of success stories)
- Policies need to stimulate training and skills ecosystems through networking, collaboration among stakeholders, communication and coordination mechanisms.



*MACWD member Alan Copeland, Vice-President, Academic, Assiniboine Community College (centre) participates in the discussion with his table of fellow participants.*

*The number of payroll employees in Canada increased by 28,893 in the second quarter of 2010, corresponding to a year-over-year job gain of 0.2 per cent. Small businesses created 35,549 jobs, while large firms contributed 728 jobs. In contrast, medium-sized firms experienced a loss of 7,385 jobs.*

**Jean-Pierre Voyer** reported at the mid-point of research being done on behalf of HRSDC to capture successful Canadian policies, programs and effective practices in encouraging SMEs to invest in employee training and skills development. Final research findings show the following:

- Despite their importance to the Canadian economy, SMEs provide fewer opportunities for employee skills development than larger businesses do.
- Investments in skills development can have a positive impact on various indicators of company performance and employee-related outcomes, such as job satisfaction or rate of work injuries.
- Costs associated with training, including the opportunity cost of releasing staff from their regular work duties, can be quite high for smaller firms.
- The lack of devoted and specialized on-site resources to plan and structure training seems to be a major hurdle for smaller firms.
- There remains some doubt about return on investment: reluctance to actively promote training may result from beliefs that such investment will not pay off in all cases and situations.

Effective practices to support SME training include:

- tax credits and other fiscal incentives directed at employers and/or employees who are engaging in apprenticeship training programs
- sectoral employment development programs led by sector councils — these initiatives seek to change employment practices within an industrial sector by providing high-quality, sector-specific training to workers (or potential workers) and services that address productivity, competitiveness and other business issues with employers. In Canada, sector councils are well-established. The councils provide opportunities for skills assessments, upgrading and certification, including the development of e-learning opportunities and human resources initiatives to assist employers with employee turnover.

Other approaches that deserve further examination include:

- strengthening the current system of certification and professional standards for individuals and organizations to upgrade skills
- ensuring a better match between those standards with skills acquired by employees
- identifying skill gaps for the employee and training the employee to fill those gaps
- developing comprehensive frameworks for skills assessments — HRSDC's Essential Skills and Workplace Literacy Initiative is a solid example. This initiative looks to prior research on the competences required in specific job profiles to develop a neutral, objective framework useful for employers, employees and training providers. The benefit of these types of frameworks is that they allow both employers and employees to establish achievable, realistic goals for planned training activities.
- enhancing formal and informal consortia and peer networking among SMEs
- training brokers who can advise on needs and training courses that are most appropriate for the business and individuals concerned.



*Bill Bumstead from the Centre For Aboriginal Human Resource Development (CAHRD) networks with participants during a break from the session.*

The research made clear that the challenges faced by very small firms are quite different from those faced by larger SMEs. This diversity of needs and capacities must be considered when developing policies and programs to support SME employee training and skills development.

This latest research provided the context for the three themes that constituted the balance of the roundtable event.

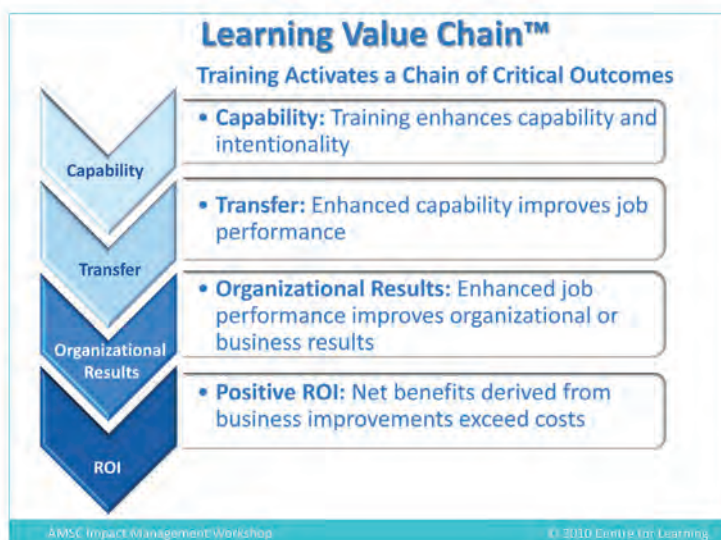
***Canada continues to be one of the top 10 globally competitive economies, but its ranking fell to tenth from ninth in 2009. Switzerland remains on top of the list, followed by Sweden, Singapore, the United States and Germany.***

## THEME 1: *Linking training to business success*

**Allan Bailey**, Director, Centre for Learning Impact spoke directly to a key concern of SMEs – the return on investment (ROI) when it comes to training. Twelve intensive ROI case studies conducted with Canadian companies reveal important factors in achieving a positive ROI:

- Align training to business metrics: identify the business need and then determine if training and what training will contribute to achieving the business need.
- Target training effectively: determine which employees need training and what training they need.
- Mitigate risk factors associated with training: provide sufficient practice time, schedule training in sync with job tasks, support transfer of learning to the job, etc.

The research also shows that companies can expect a positive ROI if they implement the “Learning Value Chain” by ensuring that employees achieve training objectives and are successful in transferring new knowledge and skills to the job. Tools are available at <http://cstd.ca/ResearchandResources/InvestinginPeople/tabid/81/Default.aspx?PageContentID=144> to assist companies to assess employee progress on the path to achieving positive ROI.



### Discussion Questions

The following three questions guided discussion following the presentation:

- Do SMEs typically consider training key to the success of their business? If not, how could it be better linked to their success?
- Do you think the ability to measure and predict the value of training can encourage SMEs to increase training in the workplace?
- What is the best way to convince SMEs about the value of training?

### What You Told Us

#### Overarching theme

SMEs already recognize the benefits of training; they need support in accessing and implementing training without negative repercussions on their day-to-day operations.

#### Links to Business Outcomes

- Training needs to be a means to sustain and support growth
- Need well-planned strategies
- ROI would help to motivate companies to train or train more
- Use down times as training time
- Often difficult to measure success; companies will invest if the value is clear
- It is often assumed higher level training is not needed whereas entry level position training is assumed
- How do you determine who really needs training and what training is really needed?
- Training needs to be specific and tailored to each company
- Case studies to expose other SMEs to success would motivate other companies to train
- Challenge is to get the right information to the owner/decision maker and get their buy-in



*Participants are engaged by a presentation from Dr. Christina Martinez-Fernandez of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development via satellite video from Paris France.*

- Generally, SMEs don't think of training as one of the top components leading to the growth and success of their business
- Need to demonstrate how training can be connected to a growth strategy, strategic vision and/or community vision
- Testimonials to connect training to the overall health of the business
- Is the training technical? Transferable? Employers want both
- Fear that trained employees may be poached: how do we retain trained employees?
- Research, resources, financial, time and people constraints
- Determining whether the issue is a training consideration
- Need to develop internal capacity to measure training success
- Need an internal champion
- Mentorship between companies
- Link to succession planning
- SMEs focus on internal on-the-job training, not external training

## Capacity

- Cost is the main reason SMEs don't train
- SMEs more conscious of "waste" – don't want to spend money on wasteful training
- Cannot provide training opportunities because small businesses don't have enough staff to run company when employees are away at training
- Training that is co-financed between the employee and employer might be beneficial for SMEs – could have contract in place to ensure employee stays with the organization
- Opportunity to pool resources of several SMEs to provide training to many businesses

## Infrastructure

- Need access to templates
- Off-the-shelf training doesn't fit
- Access is an issue, particularly for rural and remote employers
- Importance of occupational standards/professional standards to encourage employers and staff to take part in training
- Training evaluation cannot be complex – must be implementable step by step
- Rural employers do not know about sector councils – more outreach is necessary
- New workers should have essential skills in place before they are hired
- Need to have better collaboration/dialogue and better connection between business and training institutions

## Luncheon Address

**Kevin Hnatiuk**, Executive Director of New Media Manitoba, gave a presentation on the Power of Partnerships. New Media Manitoba is a sector council formed in September 2000 to ensure the Manitoba new media industry has access to inexpensive and relevant support to address industry skill gaps and improve economic development. By partnering with the provincial and federal governments, New Media Manitoba now trains up to 840 people annually and, in 2009, established an Apple Authorized Training Centre (AATC) providing world-recognized certification programs in Apple Applications. Since December 2005, Manitoba has contributed over \$1.3 million, with leveraged funding from industry and the federal government of over \$3.2 million.

Kevin outlined the STEPS which underlie all good partnerships:

- S – Strong Desire**
- T – Trust**
- E – Equality**
- P – Participation**
- S – Show Up**

True collaborations develop and nurture an interdependent mindset.

Kevin summarized his presentation with the assertion that New Media Manitoba would not be where it is today without the partnerships that have fostered its ability to provide training and other support services to grow and develop this industry sector.



*Barry Miller, Alliance of Manitoba Sector Councils scribes the roundtable discussion on supports required for SMEs and skills development.*

***The main business constraints identified by SMEs are the shortage of labour both skilled and unskilled (56%) and management skills and time constraints (40%).***

***- Canadian Federation of Independent Business***

## **THEME 2: Supports required to help SMEs increase training and skills development**

**Linda Brown**, Project Manager, Canadian Automotive Repair and Service (CARS) Network provided an overview of how CARS moved from classroom-delivered training to online training and the impact of this change on skills development in the sector.

**Chris Kinghorn**, District Sales Manager, NAPA Auto Parts complemented Linda's presentation with scenarios describing how independent operators in the auto parts business are integrating training into their busy schedules.

### **CARS Process for Developing Training Programs**

- An advisory committee of industry stakeholders is convened every six months to advise CARS on the training needed by the industry.
- SMEs and curriculum developers work together to develop the curriculum.
- Stakeholders review and provide feedback.
- Fifty (50) new courses are developed annually, 80 per cent of which are technical and 20 per cent focused on soft skills.

### **Impact of CARS Online Training**

- In 2006, 7,000 employees representing 1,061 SMEs participated in training.
- By 2010, this number had grown to 39,000 employees representing 5,000+ SMEs.
- Each employee took 1.5 courses.
- Feedback from participants included high-quality training, well-priced and increased access.

### **Employee Development Feature**

- CARS developed a needs assessment for 34 occupations against which employees can measure their performance to determine personal strengths and weaknesses.
- The occupational standards for the industry have been broken down into tasks, sub-tasks, and the knowledge and skills required for each.
- A question bank of 400 questions for each of the 34 occupational standards has been developed.
- A mix of 100 easy, intermediate and difficult questions is selected at random to produce the test of knowledge and skills.
- Employees submit the test results and receive a detailed description of strengths and weaknesses. Each employee is provided a list of recommended courses in order of priority and need, including both CARS courses and corporation courses (ex: NAPA courses).
- This needs assessment allows shop owners to maximize their investment in CARS training.

### **Tracking Training**

Employers register their employees on the CARS Learning Management System. Business owners are able to look at what training their employees have completed, their grade and other information. They are also able to generate reports from the system.

Owners can link the results to incentive programs (ex: reward based on the number of courses successfully completed), productivity trends, performance evaluation process (ex: to qualify for a raise, employee must take "X" number of courses).



*Presenter and roundtable participant, Chris Kinghorn from NAPA Auto Parts listens to Allan Bailey, Centre for Learning Impact during the presentation on return on investment (ROI) in skills development and training.*

**Chris Kinghorn** outlined his experience in working with independent shop owners in implementing training.

- Shop owners are typically good technicians and many still have the technician “frame of mind”; once they subscribe to the training, they feel they have done their job. There needs to be a “training culture” where everyone participates in training, including the owner who likely needs to develop marketing/financial management/people management and other business management skills.
- Owner/manager needs to lead and be a champion of training.
- A training policy and plan (courses, methods, time lines, attendance) need to be developed.
- Employees must be viewed as assets and owners need to invest in them.
- There is always down time in every organization; make this time productive by using it as training time.
- Employers can award an Elite Status Designation for training certification; similar to any other profession, employees should be required to participate in annual professional development to retain their certification.

- There needs to be a hook (ex: providing access to information they don’t have but need; ex: how to write a business plan)
- Owners need to look at training through a business lens.
- Push-pull strategies are needed: push = mandatory requirements and pull = incentives.
- The best role for government is to offer incentives for both employers and employees to provide access to training (ex: not every shop has high-speed Internet access; computer in the staff room).

## Discussion Questions

The following three questions guided discussion following the presentation:

- What information, assistance or services can best encourage SMEs to increase their training level?
- How could online learning work for SMEs? What supports do SMEs need to make online learning available and workable?
- What supports can most effectively encourage SMEs to provide essential skills training? Pre-employment? On-site company-specific? Occupation-specific? Sector-wide?

## What You Told Us

### Buy-in from Owner/Manager

- Need information and assistance to establish a culture of learning – a learning path for the organization
- Needs assessment for occupations within the industry: what are the high demand occupations and training needs of those occupations?
- Needs assessment tools should involve employees and managers to provide two perspectives
- Create the business case model
- Need for owners/managers to understand what training is and what it can do for the company
- “Push-pull”: make training “sought after” (exclusive, highest standard, recognized)

- Celebrate success
- Communicate the liabilities of not training (ex: workplace safety and health campaign)
- New apprenticeship-related incentives provide a good model for encouraging employer participation
- Needs assessments need to be done; assistance for companies to self-assess their training needs
- Promotional material should highlight the link to profitability/increase in revenues
- Essential skills specific to each industry need to be identified
- Clearly define job qualifications and develop occupational standards – this will be the foundation for needs assessment
- We need baseline data; metrics of business to measure effectiveness of training
- Need to develop performance measurements
- Referrals by companies on training in which they have participated, what they did with the training and what impacts it had on their companies
- Essential skills should be pre-employment training
- Training must be relevant and needed by the company
- Training needs and delivery mechanisms differ depending on size of company: micro/small/medium/large

## Access

- Increased understanding/assistance on how to navigate existing service and supports
- Stronger facilitation role of organizations such as sector councils, chambers of commerce, etc., to plan and get access to training
- More online video/audio to facilitate responses to the various learning styles
- Incentives/subsidized course development
- Use technology to create greater access to training
- Reduce the red tape to access government support for training

- Have a one-stop shop that is sector specific
- Subsidize training costs (low to no cost)
- Need access to computers (ex: in staff room) and high-speed Internet access
- Sector councils should be behind online training
- Cost sharing of online training could make it more affordable (sector council + federal government + companies)

## New Approaches

- Target training at the willing and unable
- Collaborate on training initiatives for SMEs
- Blended learning opportunities are the most appropriate approach
- Ways to foster company collaboration
- Business-to-business networks
- Networking, associations, information sharing, best practices
- New strategies to train youth, immigrants, Aboriginal populations who may have different values, expectations and engagement approaches
- Peer-style delivery through sector networks can be a very useful training delivery method
- Online training useful for upgrading, ongoing training, knowledge training and peer-to-peer networking
- Employees could be given increased holiday time for training done outside work hours to minimize work disruption



*Sandy Trudel, Economic Development Brandon discussing the roundtable questions with Dr. Robin Millar from the Centre of Education and Work.*

## THEME 3: *What practices will enhance workplace learning in SMEs?*

**Sandi Howell**, Provincial Coordinator, Essential Skills & Prior Learning Assessment, moderated a panel of five people drawn from and representative of the roundtable participants. Panellist remarks included:

- Both incentives and work environment are important factors in motivating employees to participate in training.
- There isn't nearly enough recognition of how people learn on the job and how on-the-job learning could be built into certification and recognition of learning.
- There needs to be leadership from the grassroots with recognition that government has a role to play.
- Sector councils in Manitoba are leading the country, but are not well known in the small communities.
- A lot of resources are available, but business owners aren't aware of them.
- Canada's GDP is largely supported by SMEs – this seems to be overlooked.

- Most people get their first job in a SME; SMEs provide the training ground and stepping stone for many employees who then move on to bigger companies. This contribution needs to be recognized and supported.
- Employers concerned about poaching of their trained employees need to look at the big picture – research shows that turnover decreases with training and that if people are happy and like where they work, they will stay.
- There is a need for all to invest in training – employers, employees and government – all have a role to play.
- The KISA model is intriguing – knowledge is built by the workers doing the work.
- Ecosystem thinking is important – investing in training is investing in your future, whether a company or an employee.
- Owner/manager has to lead – has to be the champion.
- Most companies have down time – make this productive time through training.
- Establishing a training culture – employers need business training plans to link training with organizational needs.
- If employees are assets we need to invest in them just as we would any other asset.



*Sector Council representatives showcase programs and services throughout the event and networking mixer.*

### Discussion Questions

Three questions guided the plenary discussion:

- In what you've heard today, what practices do you feel have the most potential to enhance workplace training for SMEs?
- What is the most appropriate role for business, labour, education, government and not-for-profit to increase skills development in SMEs?
- What are the top three recommendations you would make to the Minister's Advisory Council on Workforce Development to increase skills development in SMEs?

## **What You Told Us**

- Work with certifying/licensing bodies to get company-based training recognized
- Develop more apprenticeship programs (ex: aviation pilots)
- Improve information flow to companies about Industry Workforce Development programs and provincial incentives
- Program to assist companies to transition from a small to a medium enterprise
- More cooperation between government departments – some projects stop dead because another will not approve/allow for it
- Retention programs SMEs can buy into: pension plans, etc., for long-term employees
- Assistance to move to e-learning
- Training institutions move to modularized training format to allow for Recognition of Prior Learning, gap training and adaptable training delivery times
- Provide incentives (tax credits) for supervisor/manager training
- Companies need simple, relevant and specific training
- Need to build knowledge from people doing the work – not government
- Motivating companies to get involved – what happens when training happens – for learners, for organizations – how do we get the impact
- One size does not fit all: 25 employees vs. 250 employees
- First jobs are in SMEs; therefore, how then is government helping to ensure their success? (i.e., training resources/tax credits)
- Employers are requesting “assistance” for training
- Companies should have an “assessment” done to determine their training needs
- Knowledge of the sector councils/associations is lacking in smaller communities
- There is a role for government in all this
- Today there were no complaints about government

***A CD Howe report released recently shows that every 1% increase in literacy skills boosts productivity by 2.5%, leading to a 1.5% permanent increase in GDP.***

- Manitoba is leading in sector council/association concepts within Canada
- “If you build it, they may not come”
- Just because a training course is online does not mean it’s “good”
- Companies need “good” online training courses
- KISA would be great online
- Incentives are needed to get SMEs involved in training
- Challenge is convincing them to train their employees
- What happens when you build it and they do come?
- Companies need to focus on the business impact of training
- Companies need to maximize their “bang for a buck” or ROI
- Employees need to be responsible for their own professional development
- Employee engagement for training
- A balance between employers, employees and government needs to happen with regards to training
- Push–pull training culture
- Continue to develop the Apprenticeship Program
- Would like to see the engagement of the sector councils/associations in this area

- A challenge has been identified that when an apprenticeship is complete, employees continue to need training in different areas
- Women business owners tend to have 25 employees or less
- One size does not fit all
- More of a focus in the area of “on-the-job” training (decrease training costs)
- Challenge is to change the belief that “if I train – they will leave”

## Next Steps

This report was developed as a means of sharing with participants and stakeholders the information gathered at the February 2011 Canada-Manitoba Roundtable on SMEs and Skills Development.

The report and various presentations shared with roundtable participants are available on the **Alliance of Manitoba Sector Councils** (AMSC) website.

The ideas and findings from the event will provide the MACWD members information that, upon consideration, they may wish to present as advice and recommendations to the Minister. The report itself will assist in informing future policy and planning decisions with respect to skills development and training, and will provide a platform for continued success within sector council programming.

The report will also be shared with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) – LEEDS Programme, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), Social Research and Demonstration Corporation and various Manitoba government departments that share an interest in the outcomes of the event.

## How SMEs use outside advice

- **Community Networkers:** *work with professionals, trade associations and chambers of commerce.*
- **Confidence Seekers:** *value advice mostly from highly trusted authorities and government*
- **Skeptics:** *not reassured by advice; only confident in formally qualified advisors; happy not to seek advice at all.*
- **Go-It-Aloners:** *take almost no advice; don't go out of their way to find outside counsel.*

# Acknowledgements

Skills training and development is, and will continue to be a shared effort. As evidenced by this roundtable, we know we have interest and commitment from all. We look forward to future partnerships and collaborations in working together to develop Manitoba's workforce today and into the future.

Thank you to our partners who together, through a shared vision, supported the success of this event.

This roundtable would not have generated such significant findings and ideas were it not for the participants who gave generously of their time, and more importantly, their voices. Thank you to the business, education, labour and government leaders for your participation, candid remarks and important feedback.

The event would not have been possible without the support of:

- our funding partners: HRSDC, Manitoba Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade and the Alliance of Manitoba Sector Councils
- the researchers from OECD, Social Research Demonstration Corporation and the Centre for Learning Impact
- our partners and link to businesses: the Alliance of Manitoba Sector Councils and the 17 industry sector councils
- the presenters who shared their expertise and experiences: Allan Bailey, Director, Centre for Learning Impact; Kevin Hnatiuk, Executive Director, New Media Manitoba Sector Council; Linda Brown, Project Manager, Canadian Automotive Repair and Service (CARS) Network; and Chris Kinghorn, NAPA Auto Parts

- the panellists, who through the expert facilitation of Sandi Howell, Provincial Coordinator, Essential Skills and Recognition of Prior Learning, were able to summarize and close the day's discussion in a most effective way
- The University College of the North for support in providing access to our northern Manitoba locations in Thompson and The Pas

Last but not least, thank you to the event planning committee members who provided their time and expertise in planning and organizing this extraordinary event.



*Alison Elliott, Industry Workforce Development, ETT shares her thoughts on SME skills development with François Lamontagne, HRSDC.*

# Appendices

## APPENDIX A:

### Minister's Advisory Council on Workforce Development Roundtable Agenda

#### CANADA-MANITOBA ROUNDTABLE ON SMEs AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

February 10, 2011, 8:15 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Caboto Centre, 1055 Wilkes Ave., Winnipeg

#### ROUNDTABLE AGENDA

- 08:15 Registration – muffins, coffee, tea, juice served
- 08:50 **Welcome from Minister's Advisory Council on Workforce Development (MACWD)**  
**John Schubert, Chair**  
The Pas and Thompson participants join the Roundtable via videoconference
- 09:00 **Canada-Manitoba Opening Remarks**  
**John Atherton, Director General, Active Employment Measures, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada**  
**Paul Holden, A/Sr. Executive Director, Labour Market Skills Division, Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade**
- 09:20 **Setting the Scene - International Perspectives and Comparisons**  
  
**Dr Cristina Martinez-Fernandez, LEED Programme, OECD**  
(Via videoconference from Paris, France)  
*Presentation on Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development research project: Leveraging Training and Skills Development in SMEs*  
  
**Jean-Pierre Voyer, President**  
*Social Research and Demonstration Corporation*  
*Presentation on research into successful policies, programs and practices that have been effective in encouraging small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to undertake training and skills development among their employees.*
- 10:15 Coffee Break
- 10:30 **Developing a Culture of Learning: The Return on Investment**  
**Allan Bailey, Director, Centre for Learning Impact**
  - Investing in learning can yield highly attractive returns to organizations
  - How can we be assured of getting a positive ROI from training?
  - Why do we fail to achieve a positive ROI on training?
  - Canadian case studies reveal answers to these questions
  - What can we do with what the research is telling us?
- 11:15 **Roundtable Discussion/Recommendations**  
**Discussion Questions**
  - Do SMEs typically consider training key to the success of their business? If not, how could it be better linked to their success?
  - Do you think the ability to measure and predict the value of training can encourage SMEs to increase training in the workplace?
  - What is the best way to convince SMEs about the value of training?

- 11:55 Each table reports one item from their discussion
- 12:00 **Lunch & Luncheon Address – The Power of Partnerships**  
**Kevin Hnatiuk, Executive Director, New Media Manitoba Sector Council**
- 13:00 **Addressing Barriers to Skills Training**  
**Linda Brown, Project Manager, Canadian Automotive Repair and Service (CARS) Network**  
**Chris Kinghorn, District Sales Manager, NAPA Auto Parts**
- How do we overcome the cost of training, lost production time, disruption to business activities, fear of poaching trained staff, reluctance of people to give up their time for training?
  - Is technology the answer?
  - What can we learn from those who have taken the online learning path?
  - Are there other solutions?
- 13:45 **Roundtable Discussion/Recommendations**  
**Discussion Questions**
- What information, assistance or services can best encourage SMEs to increase their training level?
  - How could online learning work for SMEs? What supports do SMEs need to make online learning available and workable?
  - What supports can most effectively encourage SMEs to provide Essential Skills training? Pre-employment? On-site company-specific? Occupation-specific? Sector-wide?
- 14:25 Each table reports one key item from their discussion
- 14:30 Coffee Break
- 14:45 **Panel and Plenary Session**  
Moderator: **Sandi Howell, Provincial Coordinator, Essential Skills and Recognition of Prior Learning**
- Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade, Minister's Advisory Council on Workforce Development and Sector Council Representatives join the Plenary
- Discussion Questions**
- In what you've heard today, what practices do you feel have the most potential to enhance workplace training for SMEs?
  - What is the most appropriate role for business, labour, education, government, not-for-profit to increase skills development in SMEs?
  - What are your top 3 recommendations you would make to the Minister's Advisory Council on Workforce Development to increase skills development in SMEs?
- 15:45 **Closing remarks – Minister's Advisory Council on Workforce Development**  
**John Schubert, Chair**
- 16:00 **Networking Mingler**
- Refresh yourself after a long day of hard work
  - Continue the discussion with the Minister, the MACWD, co-participants and presenters
  - Visit the Sector Council displays and learn about programs and services for SMEs

## APPENDIX B :

### Minister's Advisory Council on Workforce Development Members

The members of the Advisory Council on Workforce Development are:

- Ron Koslowsky, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters – Manitoba Division
- David Martin, Manitoba Building and Construction Trades Council
- Wayne Skrypnik, United Steel Workers
- Dale Neal, Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union
- John Schubert, McCaine Electric
- MaryAnn Mihychuk, Corporate Relations Services
- Bruce Clarke, StandardAero (Retired)
- Lisa Meeches, Eagle Vision Inc.

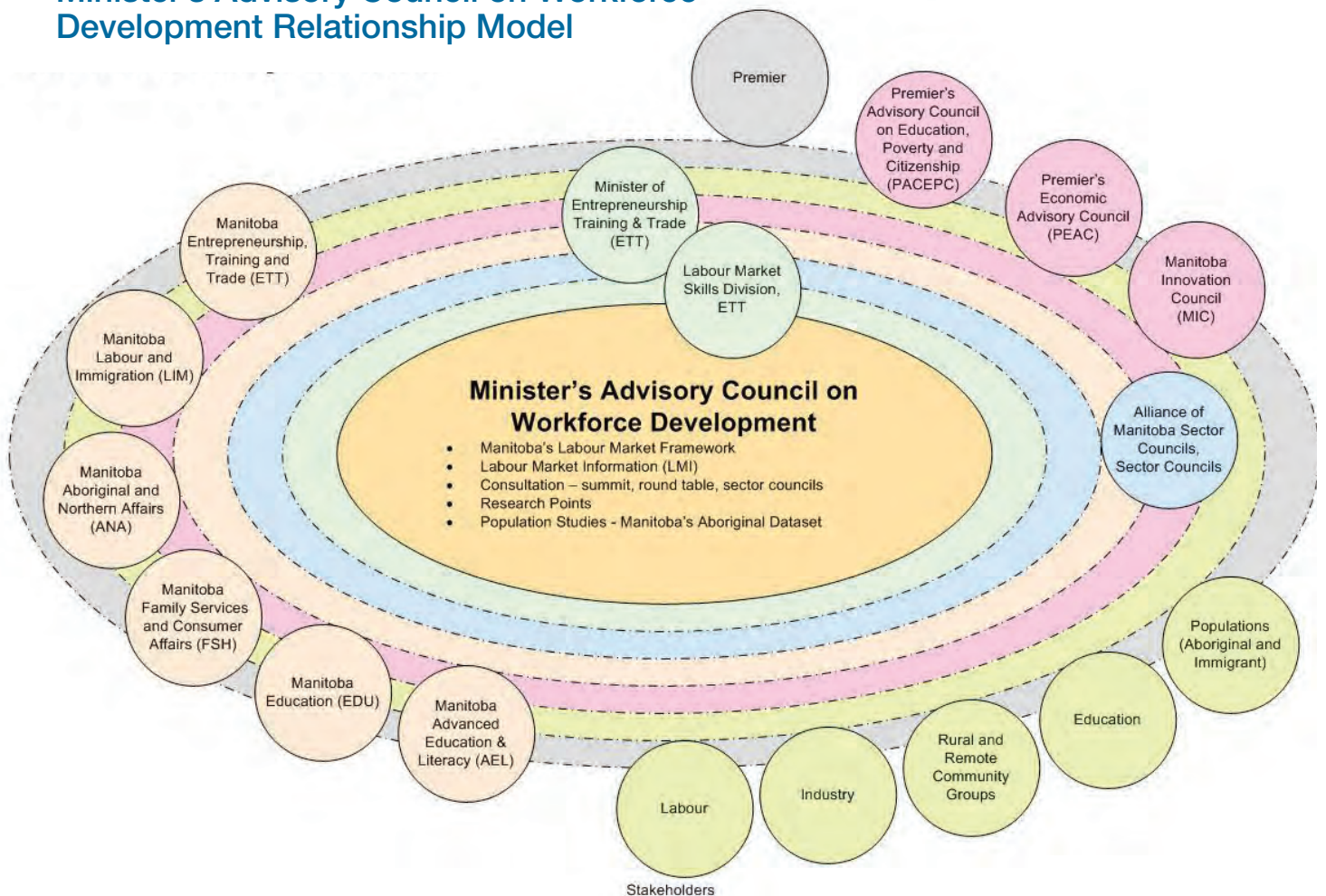
- Alan Copeland, Assiniboine Community College
- Helen Halliday, Delta Winnipeg

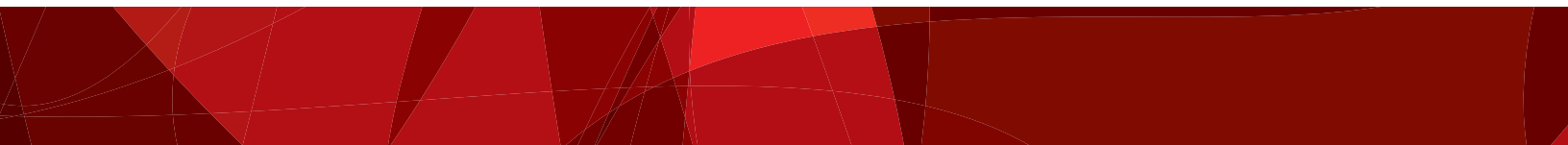
The Council is also represented by the following Deputy Ministers:

- Hugh Eliasson - Manitoba Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade
- Heather Reichert - Manitoba Advanced Education and Literacy
- Gerald Farthing - Manitoba Education
- Jeff Parr - Manitoba Labour and Immigration
- Grant Doak - Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs
- Harvey Bostrom - Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs

## APPENDIX C:

### Minister's Advisory Council on Workforce Development Relationship Model







**Manitoba** 