



Canadian Plastics Sector Council
Conseil canadien sectoriel des plastiques

PROFITABILITY IN DIVERSITY

A Report from the
Round Table Discussions with
Selected Employment Groups

Prepared by:

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July 31, 2005



FINAL DRAFT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Canadian plastics industry is growing rapidly, whereas its workforce is aging and retiring, its traditional labour pool is shrinking, and it is competing with other strong industry sectors for employees. The sector requires a strategy for recruiting and retaining entrants from non-traditional or underutilized labour markets.

The Canadian Plastics Sector Council engaged in a series of four consultation sessions with industry member representatives and with representatives of four employment groups: Aboriginals; newcomers to Canada; persons with physical disabilities; and women. The sessions were held in Calgary, Montreal, Toronto and Halifax during April and May of 2005. The format of the sessions allowed industry members and employment group participants to engage in direct, facilitated dialogue on almost any industry related issue, while ensuring that focus was maintained on an achievable 3-year vision, the roadblocks that could get in the way of the vision, strategies to surmount the roadblocks, and actions to implement the strategies.

The consultations were characterized by several positive attributes. Industry participants provided enlightening and inspirational success stories that can be used as models for communication and awareness initiatives. Employment group participants volunteered to work with the Council to disseminate information about the Council's and industry's efforts to consult and collaborate with the employment groups. The Council received praise for its leadership in initiating such consultations.

The sessions also highlighted issues that require immediate, and sustained, responses. The industry and the employment groups are generally unaware of the richness and diversity of opportunity the other has to offer. Employment group participants typically had limited perceptions of the size of the industry, the types of employment available, and the needs of the industry. The plastics industry can learn much about the attributes, needs and concerns of employment group members and organizations, and can become better positioned to compete for scarce labour resources as the baby boom generation leaves the workforce.

Actions recommended in the sessions included the need for better data about the rate of participation of these employment groups in the industry and the attributes required to become full members of the plastics industry labour force, and this validates the Council's intent to launch a Sector Survey in October/November 2005. Other recommended actions applicable to all groups included developing a strategic communications and outreach strategy, and working with other sector councils in areas of common interest, such as ensuring newcomers become sufficiently proficient in English or French to turn into productive and safe members of the industry. Specific recommendations most pertinent to particular employment groups were developed within each session.

The overriding point that has emerged from these consultations is that demographic diversity will grow in the industry, and industry members can turn this to their advantage and their profit through proactive and strategic initiatives that will encourage members of these employment groups to seek opportunities in the plastics industry. The alternative is to become less competitive in the labour market, allow other sectors to take the lead in collaborating with these groups and accommodating to their requirements, and become less competitive in the marketplace.

1. PROFITABILITY IN DIVERSITY

An era of significant demographic change can be an opportunity. More than half the plastics industry workforce will be over 50 years of age by 2010 and new workers entering the industry will necessarily come from a much more diverse employment pool than was the case 50 or even 25 years ago. This story is repeated in all sectors of the Canadian economy. In the face of such tumultuous change, plastics industry leaders will retain their competitiveness as long as they take the initiative to innovate and adapt their recruitment and retention practices and effectively welcome a diverse workforce.

A diverse workforce reflects the marketplace in which plastics manufacturers operate. Furthermore, the benefits of diversifying the plastics industry workforce can be expected to include improved staff loyalty and retention, happier and more motivated employees, and improved customer care practices.

Achieving diversity is a challenge. This report is all about building momentum for diversity in the plastics industry; and ensuring that the best people consider the plastics industry first, and that the industry hires the best people to do the job on the basis of merit - first.

Working in partnership with non-profit organizations, educators, unions, human resources practitioners, and policy makers, leaders in the plastics industry who provide coherent support to one another in industry strategic issues will successfully demonstrate the profitable business case for diversity management.

Diversity management in the plastics industry will centre on the benefits of a plastics firm having a workforce whose diversity mirrors that of the external labour force, rather than specifically on the redress of endemic discrimination. In this context, a Diversity Management Plan would describe how the CPSC would facilitate the achievement of a diverse workforce within the plastics industry.

The development of such a plan is an important early step to achieving diversity in the plastics industry's varied workplaces. Its primary purpose is to act as a high level roadmap that will raise awareness among industry employers and most importantly, support their efforts to integrate diversity management as a critical prerequisite to becoming an employer of choice for a diverse range of people.

This report is not a plan but it does offer several group specific projects and common initiatives that echo the comments and suggestions of participants of the round table discussions, to consider in the formulation of a plan for the CPSC and employers in the sector.

2. BACKGROUND

The Canadian Plastics Sector Council (CPSC, or, the Council) assists members in dealing with emerging human resource issues facing the growing plastics industry: the demographic shifts resulting from the retirement of baby-boomers, the desperate need for new entrants, and the resulting projected shortfalls in skilled workers.

The CPSC engaged *FMP/Flaman Management Partners (FMP)* in November 2004 to conduct a series of bilingual, facilitated Round Table Discussions (RTD) with plastics industry representatives and representatives of four identified employment groups:

- Aboriginal peoples;
- Persons with physical disabilities;
- Newcomers to Canada; and
- Women.

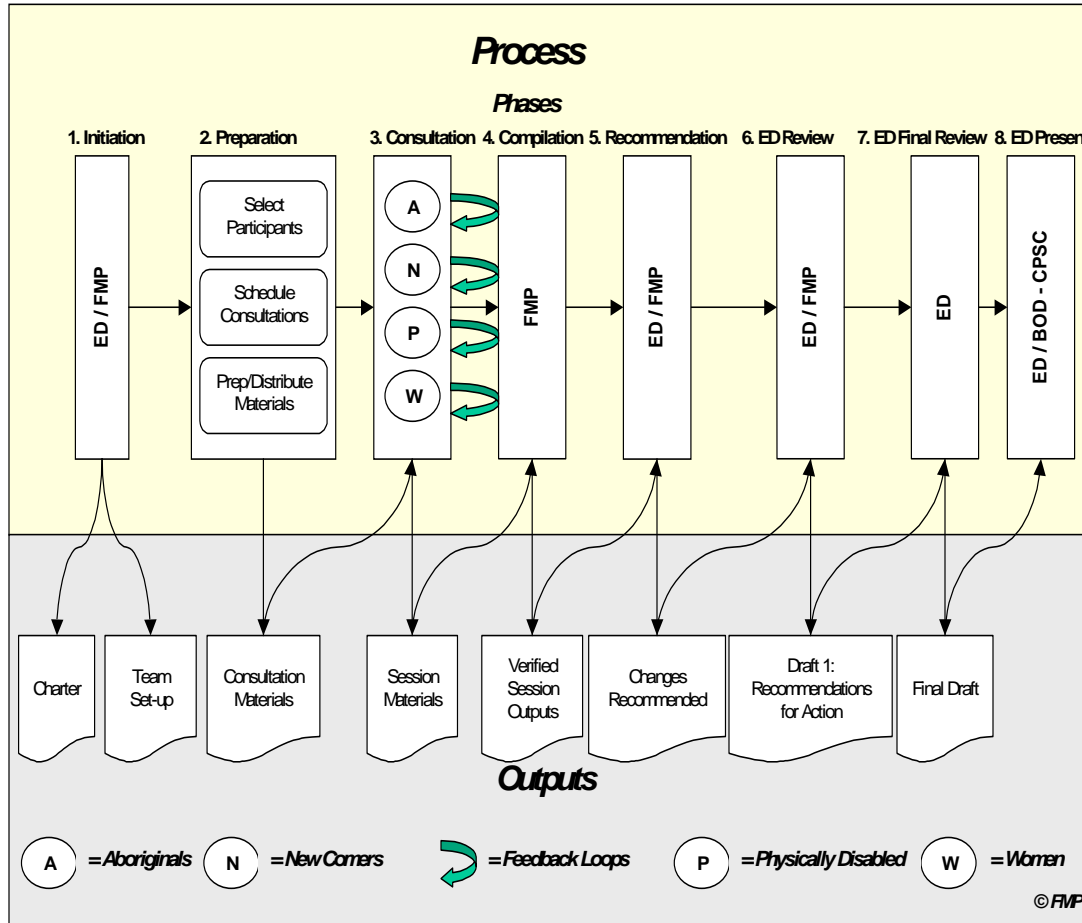
The CPSC's strategic objective of facilitating the recruitment of workers into the plastics industry was to be informed by these sessions. The Council's goal was to bridge the awareness and knowledge gap between a widely diversified and distributed plastics industry, and representatives of the identified employment groups. Individual sessions were held with each of the four identified groups, in:

- Calgary on April 24/25, 2005 (Aboriginal peoples);
- Montreal on May 8/9, 2005 (Persons with physical disabilities);
- Toronto on May 15/16, 2005 (Newcomers to Canada); and
- Halifax on May 29/30, 2005 (Women).

The Project unfolded according to the process depicted in Figure 1 below, Phases 1 through 3. Phases 4, *Compilation*, and 5, *Recommendations for Action*, reflect the development of this report and the drafting of recommendations. These recommendations will be reviewed and finalized prior to their presentation to the CPSC Board.



Figure 1: CPSC Project Process and Outputs



3. ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

3.1. RTD Objectives

FMP approached the consultations with a practical '*rational objective*' – to help CPSC identify and circumvent the roadblocks that slow and sometimes undermine members of identified employment groups from potentially choosing and then journeying on a career path to Canada's vibrant plastics industry; and with an '*experiential objective*' – to build ever-stronger 'personal connections' between plastics industry representatives and key representatives of the CPSC's identified employment groups.

In CPSC's own words, the goal was: "to bridge the gap between employers and representatives of identified employment feeder groups (women, Aboriginal people, newcomers to Canada, and people with physical disabilities), in order to raise the awareness of the plastics industry and to facilitate the recruitment of workers from these groups into the plastics industry".

Participants in the round table discussions discovered:

- A shared, practical, and achievable vision for the plastics industry, and the position to be occupied by each employment group by the year 2008 (3-year vision presented);
- A common appreciation for the constraints that impede progress towards the practical vision;
- Strategies, validated by the experience of participants, that will contribute to the elimination of anticipated constraints and roadblocks; and
- A practical set of actions to which all participants could reasonably commit themselves over the next three years (programs, projects).

3.2. RTD Session Format

Four industry representatives (employers and employees) and twelve participants from the identified employment groups, all drawn from across Canada, were invited to participate in each session.

The consultations were facilitated using the ToP¹ methodology. Before arriving at the consultation session, participants received a briefing by telephone and documentation as to the objectives of the round table discussions. Each consultation session began with a welcome from a CPSC Board or staff member. The facilitator called upon participants to introduce themselves, describe the role(s) they occupy within their organization, their background, and their expectations of the consultations.

One of the most important features of this approach is that it allowed *FMP* and the CPSC to systematically analyse the results of each session, and later, the sessions collectively. Using the ToP methodology, *FMP* is able to provide CPSC with a cross-consultation analysis describing the extent each employment group consultation resulted in similar or unique visions, roadblocks, strategies, and actions.

¹ ToP: Technology of Participation, Institute of Cultural Affairs.

3.3. RTD Session Outputs

The discussions that took place in the individual sessions are summarized in sections 4 through 7 (the appendices contain the full report on each of the sessions). Actions recommended in a specific session, or those identified in more than one session but that may best be launched for a specific employment group, are detailed in those sections.

Section 8 provides a set of Common Initiatives that can be expected to be of value to all groups.

4. RTD 1: ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

The first RTD took place in Calgary and drew industry members representing the sector's diversity, and a cross-section of experienced Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement (AHRDA) holders. Each non-industry participant had been actively involved in counselling and preparing Aboriginal peoples for employment for a number of years, and in a variety of settings. In this regard, the invaluable assistance of the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada (AHRDCC) in identifying highly qualified participants is gratefully acknowledged. Participants brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the discussions from their work with First Nations, reserve and off reserve, status and non-status, métis, urban and rural based Aboriginal peoples.

Industry representatives to the session equally shared their own valuable and compelling experiences; some of growing and operating firms in the plastics industry after having started careers in other fields; another of creating a First Nations community plastics processing plant.

Unexpectedly, several participants came to the session with the added motivation of exploring economic development opportunities. As was pointed out by one industry representative, the retirement of baby-boomers applies equally to entrepreneurs as it does to employees. As a consequence, the subject of succession was raised and the suggestion was made that Aboriginal economic development agencies might well be interested in purchasing his plastics manufacturing firm and hiring him to lead the transition of the company into Aboriginal hands. We mention this to affirm the insight and creativity that characterized the Calgary discussions, and indeed, each of the others.

4.1. Practical Vision

“In three short years, a vibrant relationship between the CPSC, AHRDCC, AHRDA’s and plastics manufacturers has produced measurable results. Board appointments to the CPSC have positioned Aboriginal people in the mainstream of the plastics industry. Representation by plastics industry leaders at Aboriginal gatherings has positioned plastics manufacturing top-of-mind among Aboriginal leaders. Aboriginal entrepreneurs, and employees have increased their share of the plastics industry and workforce. Strong marketing of opportunities in plastics strikes a chord among Aboriginal youth. Strong skill sets among Aboriginal entrepreneurs and employees are making the plastics industry more productive and competitive. The Aboriginal community is making strides!”

The practicality of this vision is based on the recognition by participants that Aboriginal representation in the plastics industry workforce is currently very limited. It was clear to all participants that for both the Aboriginal population and the plastics industry, the challenge is to break new ground. Thus, the first steps had to be well thought out and not overly ambitious.

4.2. Roadblocks

Five key roadblocks stand to contradict the achievement of the participants' practical vision. First, recognition was given to the low level of awareness and communications among Aboriginal peoples about the plastics industry in general, and the opportunities for employment in particular.

The ability of Aboriginal youth to meet the basic entry-level requirements of employment in education and training was cited as an important factor for Aboriginal leaders.

Systemically, another important barrier cited was the result of the distance of most manufacturing plants from where many Aboriginal peoples live, and the costs associated with bridging the transportation and accommodation gap.

The need for clear and strong leadership within the Aboriginal community relative to the plastics industry, and vice versa, was recognized as an important element for both short and long-term success.

Finally, participants recognized the limited resources of the CPSC relative to the distribution of Aboriginal peoples across Canada, and other CPSC responsibilities. It was appreciated that the limited number of CPSC staff would work against a rapid response to all identified issues.

4.3. Strategies

The over-arching strategy recommended by participants was to build a logical and practical network of relationships. Given the limited resources of the CPSC, this can best be achieved in a "pyramidal" approach. It was viewed as essential that strong ties be maintained between the CPSC and the AHRDCC, and beyond that the ties between the AHRDCC and ARDHA holders across Canada. In addition however, it was recognized that ARDHA's need to take the initiative and reach out to plastics manufacturing firms in their regions. The immediate goal of this relationship strategy would be to share information and develop mutual understanding and respect. The medium term goal would be to encourage the emergence of plans for long-term stability and advantages for all concerned.

A strategy of partnering with existing Aboriginal employment development programs was proposed with the goal of establishing local Aboriginal labour-force development plans. The aim would be to address threshold requirements in the short term, and increase levels of employment in the medium and long-terms. Partnering would be aimed at linking the plastics industry to the aboriginal talent pool and the creation of practical tools such as employment demand and supply lists.

Participants agreed that Aboriginal and plastics industry champions for Aboriginal employment were essential. However, such individuals need to be supported with an information resource infrastructure that includes critical baseline tools such as position audits, demographic and trends analyses, pay scales, etc. Champions would also benefit from experiential knowledge in the form of success stories and career case studies. This knowledge-based strategy reinforces the direction in which the CPSC has already made great strides as illustrated through its resources available on the Internet.

Participants tackled the question of education from the perspective of mentoring and internship programs. In a sense, internships were presented as a strategy aimed at reducing an employer's hiring risks: "Employers would know what they are getting after having an intern in place for some time." Created jointly, initially as a pilot, the goal would be to move incrementally, and to investigate and exploit existing government programs in partnership with local plastics firms.

A multi-level communications and marketing plan recognizing CPSC's small staff, but capitalizing on the AHRDA network's extensive reach across Canada, was felt to be the most effective use of limited resources. CPSC's role would be to "seed and feed" the pyramid of partnerships, leaving the local relationship work to AHRDAs and individual employers.

4.4. Actions

The advice of participants to CPSC was to work steadily in partnership, gain recognition among Aboriginal leaders, and to focus on making quality moves. The CPSC's presence at key Aboriginal gatherings in the next six months could be coordinated and endorsed by session participants, especially the AHRDCC. Creating momentum for the cause of CPSC in the Aboriginal community will be founded on respect and careful incremental planning. Since there are so few Aboriginal peoples presently in the industry, the importance of effectively crossing the threshold cannot be underestimated. Making a solid first impression is essential or Aboriginal communities and partners will look for other opportunities. These specific initiatives are recommended for the next six months.

4.4.1. CPSC Presentations to Key Aboriginal Leaders

Select, in conjunction with the AHRDCC, a number of key Aboriginal leadership gatherings at which to present the CPSC cause. Working in conjunction with plastics industry members and Aboriginal personnel to develop appropriate messages, use these events to build awareness among key influencers.

4.4.2. Webcast the Niigon Technologies Case Study

A number of constituencies need to have access to the Niigon Technologies story: prospective champions; AHRDA holders on both the economic development and employment fields; potential employees; Aboriginal teachers and guidance counsellors; and others. Obtain agreement from Niigon and work with them to develop a message that focuses on Aboriginal communities, and also can be directed at informing the plastics industry.

5. RTD 2: PERSONS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

The RTD for persons with physical disabilities was held in Montreal. The CPSC, ACIP (L'Association canadienne de l'industrie des plastiques), and Plasticompétences, the Quebec equivalent of the CPSC, provided representation for the industry at this session. Physical disabilities below the waist were to be the focus of the session, but several of the participants expressed the need to broaden the approach to encompass other disabilities, since the community of those with disabilities is not organized along such lines. Some agencies specialize in serving persons with spinal cord injuries, others assist person who are developmentally delayed or live with psychological and/or physical challenges, including hearing and sight impairment. The discussions were therefore conducted on this broader level. It was recognized that different strategies would be needed to address different types of disabilities. The CPSC will be only one player in an area that poses a number of challenges.

The diversity of physical disabilities, and the many organizations established to work with individual types of disability, poses a situation reminiscent of the Aboriginal communities. They too are not a single entity. Unlike the AHRDCC, there is no “Disabilities Sector Council” able to provide an umbrella framework to assist individual agencies to focus on their own community. The CPSC may be able to focus more effectively on what it can do if such an umbrella group were to come into existence in the disabilities community.

The discussions at the RTD also noted that persons with disabilities are “invisible” in Canadian society. The plastics industry similarly feels it is not high on the public’s radar. In both instances, this apparent lack of visibility persists although both persons with physical disabilities, and evidence of the plastic industry, can be found in most settings.

5.1. Practical Vision

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery as shown by the adoption of the “We can do it!” initiative by other sector councils across Canada. 150 positions in plastics manufacturing across Canada are targeted to be filled by people with disabilities by the time of the next sector survey, representing a major percentage increase since the CPSC, disability organizations and pioneering employers partnered to pilot the “We can do it!” initiative.

Targeting positions best suited to persons with disabilities focuses the efforts of employers (demand) and employee support organizations (supply) to implement a national training, development, and mentoring program.

The demonstration project recommended at the 2005 RTD was at the core of a National Awareness and Sensitization effort to change misconceptions about the productivity of people with disabilities in manufacturing.

As with Aboriginal groups, the practicality of this vision is based on the recognition that participation by persons with physical disabilities in the plastics industry workforce is currently very limited. It was clear to all participants that for both the population of persons with physical disabilities, and the plastics industry, the challenge (like that in the Aboriginal community) is to break new ground.

Discussions emerging from the RTD produced a set of “small step” projects to begin to address the perception of limited productivity of persons with physical disabilities.

5.2. Roadblocks

As was noted by the CPSC representative at the session, the diverse nature of the physically disabled community is a strategic roadblock faced by the Council in assisting the community to fill a larger role in the plastics industry. Participants themselves noted that people with disabilities do not all belong to one community.

Participants also noted several roadblocks of a more operational nature, among which the following were felt to be the most likely to pose challenges.

The plastics industry is very aggressive and competitive, and “*what’s in it for me*” needs to be answered in terms of the bottom line. There is a perception that hiring persons with physical disabilities is a cost, and that there is limited or no return on investment in hiring such persons.

Because the individual firm’s competitive advantage needs to be unharmed and hopefully enhanced by such employment initiatives, it follows that if top management is not fully engaged and committed, such endeavours will not be successful.

Finally, the lack of access to training and development is an important element working against employability. This lack results in a vicious cycle, and produces and maintains barriers. A poor self-image held by a person with a disability is easily reinforced through visible differences and through difficulties not faced by those who do not have such disabilities, and such poor self-esteem can carry through to affect their motivation and their potential to be successful.

5.3. Strategies

The strategies advanced in the session can be characterized by the themes of building awareness, partnering in identifying and assessing opportunities, and championing and celebrating success.

It was suggested a communication and sensibility campaign be developed for the CPSC and its members, and for service providers for the disabled community. A strategic communications plan developed in and focussing on partnership by the CPSC and organizations representing the disabled communities would produce material suitable for various forums. (Such material could emphasize the availability of financial assistance to employers for making accommodations to their workplace, and the accessibility of transportation systems for persons with disabilities. These were identified as two of the roadblocks that could be easily addressed, and this could be the way to do so.) A series of jointly sponsored seminars focusing on best practices, success stories and benefits to industry member’s bottom line would emphasize abilities rather than disabilities. If well received, this short term initiative could lead in the longer term to a jointly organized conference on Employment Equity (which could include all employment groups at these sessions) that would continue to build awareness among industry representatives, and allow groups/organizations to make presentations, to showcase, do outreach, and network.

The right fit between an employer's needs and the capabilities of an individual is of primary importance and is the core issue for hiring, rather than the limitations of the individual's disability. The development of a physical disabilities assessment (PDA) of an employer's needs, and development of a business needs analysis, recommendation and action plan was identified as a strategic requirement, before proceeding with hiring of persons with physical disabilities. Understanding attitudinal barriers within a company and producing an action plan that can address required changes would be a part of such a strategy.

Finding and developing a champion (or several) to move this agenda forward was identified as a part of the overall strategic theme. From success, stories can be collected and learning can occur. Examples do exist of partnerships between employers, community agencies and training and development centres but these examples need to be documented and profiled.

5.4. Actions

The next steps recommended by all sub-groups at this session were "evolutionary rather than revolutionary" in nature. Small steps, pilot projects, and building on existing partnerships and relationships were seen as more likely to succeed than were generic or systemic initiatives.

Participants viewed with some interest the industry suggestion that a sector council for persons with physical disabilities be created. This need not become a project of the CPSC alone, but may be an agenda item the CPSC promotes in collaboration with other sector councils, as this is an issue that is or will be of concern to many industry sectors. The CPSC itself would certainly benefit from, and likely be more effective as a result of, working in collaboration with an organization dedicated to the diverse needs of that multi-faceted community, rather than engaging in separate initiatives with each component of that community. As with the Aboriginal groups, CPSC's role would be to "seed and feed" the pyramid of partnerships, leaving the local relationship work to individual associations and employers.

Specific actions recommended to the CPSC for the immediate term aim at bridging awareness with actual workplace applications, and validating the role of persons with physical disabilities in the plastics industry.

5.4.1. Identifying Employment Opportunities and Building Friendly Workplaces

One of the first steps highlighted at the RTD was the need to improve the readiness level of organizations to integrate persons with disabilities. This must necessarily be balanced by ensuring there is a fit between the employer's needs and the capabilities of an individual.

This project aims at ensuring both parts of that equation are in balance. The employer's power to provide employment must be confirmed by conducting a capacity audit to determine the types of physical capabilities required by an employer in their workplace. The audit would review current and potential procedures, constraints, safety considerations for both the person with a disability and other employees, etc. The employer's readiness to provide employment to a person with a disability of a type that can be accommodated in the firm is a separate concept.

It includes a check relative to the level of employer engagement, the degree of awareness training regarding working with people with disabilities that is or could be provided to employees, and the commitment to and extent of networking with organizations that assist people with disabilities to find employment. The capacity audit identifies what can be done; the readiness check describes the willingness to do so.

Accommodation includes encouraging employer readiness in hiring people with disabilities by supporting the person at work and ensuring that the person can remain working, as well as making the physical adjustments required to enable a person with a disability to do their work.

The objective of this project is to provide employers with tools and guidelines that will facilitate the employment of people with disabilities by:

- Identifying job opportunities for employees with disabilities;
- Identifying accommodation requirements;
- Identifying resources available to employers to make accommodations;
- Facilitating recruitment;
- Facilitating employee retention; and
- Developing a workplace policy for people with disabilities.

This “suite” of tools and guidelines could be available on the CPSC website or in hard copy at employer workshops or industry conferences.

5.4.2. Explore a Best Practices Case Study Pilot

The most difficult phase of any project is always the execution, especially if it is a trailblazer. A pilot project can be a means of exploring new approaches or methodologies in management. The benefits of a pilot project for the purposes of furthering the employment of people with disabilities include but are not necessarily restricted to:

- Approaches and results can be quickly re-designed for use in other workplaces;
- Employers have a benchmark from which to work;
- The process of development of tools, guides and documentation is re-usable;
- Results and lessons learned are documented for future reference; and
- It helps to remove doubts and apprehensions normally associated with new ventures.

A pilot project would pave the way for a broader pilot, where several projects could be conducted in major industry centres to gather more comprehensive data and validate results. These future projects would provide the CPSC with a more comprehensive industry-wide benchmark for hiring people with disabilities and ultimately reducing the apprehensions and misperceptions that may be associated with such hiring. This set of flagship ventures can be displayed and profiled for other employers within the plastics sector or outside. It is also an effective way of opening the door to other possibilities and raising the bar for other employers who wish to bring about other progressive diversity management approaches within their workplace.

As such, before selecting the pilot project(s), it is important to:

- Consider their duration, scope, deliverables, delivery methods, performance and progress indicators, and desired outcome(s);

- Develop criteria for the selection of locations, employers and positions;
- Determine the type of structured documentation (i.e. records, journals, weekly status reports, and periodic sharing of project content); and
- Define Partnerships and required supporting infrastructure.

The reports and outcomes should be coordinated by the CPSC.

6. RTD 3: NEWCOMERS TO CANADA

The third in the series of RTD drew participants from several settlement services and immigrant employment organizations, as well as individuals from organizations representing professionals with international credentials who find it difficult to be professionally recognized (Foreign Credential Recognition) in Canada. Plastics firms employing several hundred or several thousand personnel domestically or internationally were also represented.

The newcomers' employment group already comprises a significant component of the employees in the industry, particularly in Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal. In many cases, newcomers to this country are the owners of plastics firms. Nevertheless, this employment group is expected to continue to supply the majority of new entrants into the plastics industry labour market over the next several years, because of the drop in the pool of labour born in Canada.

The major challenges faced by newcomers were identified to be their competency level with the French or English language, and obtaining equivalencies for education they had obtained abroad. Other issues included capacity building (computer skills, work ethic), and from a broader perspective, the level of acculturation to diversity in the industry. Industry members indicated they were looking for the "right people", regardless of where training had taken place. The "right people" for the job concept is a critical one but does not reflect a single, uniform model of employee, given the diversity of the industry and the various traits that are required for an employee to best contribute to (for example) management, the skilled trades, and the production line.

A benefit to the CPSC of the high level of plastic sector employer participation in the hiring of newcomers to Canada is that it also opens up many opportunities for the CPSC to collect success stories and share them industry-wide.

6.1. Practical Vision

Newcomers remain key to the growth, productivity and health of the plastics industry. Information from and about the plastics sector is readily available to newcomers already in Canada and to prospective newcomers, and awareness of this sector as an employment choice is high. The CPSC, employers and employment assistance agencies work collaboratively to champion implementation of a "diversity" policy throughout the sector, promote programs to facilitate the development of English/French language skills among newcomers, and strengthen training and professional recognition (Foreign Credential Recognition) initiatives.

The gradual and ongoing building of capacity of newcomers to become part of the plastics industry labour force was effectively achieved through:

- Development by the industry and the CPSC of increased and improved information about basic requirements of and skills for industry jobs;
- The improved delivery of that information by immigrant services organizations and relevant government organizations by means of various communications channels; and
- Supporting programs geared to improving language and workforce skills.

The awareness and information campaigns also helped prospective employers and employees in the development of realistic expectations, and improved the opportunity for service organizations to inform the plastics industry of the skills available in the labour pools they represented.

6.2. Roadblocks

Newcomers to Canada often have either a limited knowledge of the English language (or French, primarily in Quebec) or have an accent that is sometimes difficult to decipher by those unused to it. Hence, securing employment is particularly difficult, whether in the completion of an application and or in an interview performance, or in a work setting.

Skills acquired in other countries can match requirements of the industry, but often there is a mismatch between the education or training held by a newcomer, and the specific skill set required by an employer. The majority of plastics industry personnel requirements are for production line operations and skill set requirements for these positions are met by people who can interact and who have a good work ethic, and can complete execution-oriented tasks consistently. Employers are often more interested in the individual's experience than in their professional credentials, but newcomers may be or feel underemployed and undervalued if they have difficulty in gaining appropriate professional recognition (Foreign Credential Recognition).

Equally important are the attitudes and expectations of employers, other employees, and the newcomers themselves. These must be realistic, and reflective of the level at which the employee is expected to work, the skills requirements, and the requirement to interact with other personnel, suppliers and customers.

6.3. Strategies

As emphasized by RTD participants, language is number one in terms of importance and, for many, number one in terms of difficulty. There is a requirement for awareness on the part of the employer (e.g. to understand and interpret applications submitted by a newcomer to Canada, and to realistically identify the level of language capability required to perform the job safely and productively), and orientation on the part of the applicant (e.g. to understand and participate effectively in the employment process and in the work place). Hence it is critical that employers be well informed of the language training services available in their vicinity to assist in the employment of newcomers to Canada and that newcomers have access to and make use of such services.

Similarly, the extent of gaps between the qualifications and skill sets offered by newcomers to Canada and the requirements of the jobs they seek to occupy in the plastics sector must be identified, as must be the potential responses to those gaps. The services of agencies that specialize in the employment and integration of newcomers to Canada will assist in closing these gaps. In addition to English or French language training, services required include but are not limited to: orientation to Canadian employment practices; career guidance and management; employer cultural awareness and diversity training; settlement services; employment systems review; and Foreign Credentials Recognition.

Interventions that promote a shift in attitude, or introduce diversity-oriented hiring practices must be well anchored in practical facts. Employers must provide returns to investors as well as seek to provide other employees with support in becoming acculturated to the newcomer's capacity; potential employees must understand their skill sets must match the requirements of the job they seek. Employers and employees must be able to accurately assess what is required, and what can reasonably be expected and offered.

Finally, the information that can assist both sides in implementing the preceding strategies, needs to be made accessible to or (at least initially) be provided directly to the party or parties that can act upon it. The CPSC has developed comprehensive industry standards, but the participants were not aware of their existence. Employment and newcomer assistance agencies were largely unfamiliar with basic aspects of the plastics industry. Newcomers need to be sufficiently aware of the industry and its requirements to know what to ask and to whom.

6.4. Actions

The participants agreed that effective exchange of what is required by industry members, and what newcomers can offer, is key to developing the potential of newcomers to best benefit both parties.

Several actions can be initiated in the short and long terms to better disseminate existing information, and to determine what the industry requires. For example, the CPSC is planning to examine the issue of Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) as part of the Sector Study Project that is to be launched this fall. The CPSC plans to collect information from employers about FCR and whether it is considered a problem by plastics firms. The Sector Study will provide information required by all employment groups, and is further discussed in Section 8, Common Initiatives. Actions that can focus on newcomers, in a short-term manner, include the following.

6.4.1. Building Language Awareness

The main objective of this project is to produce a directory of services by major agencies concerned with orientating newcomers to Canada, particularly with respect to Canadian employment practices, and in making them known to supportive employers in their search for qualified candidates.

This directory of services could be attached to the *CPSC* website and could serve as an excellent guide and resource for employers who wish to actively recruit newcomers to Canada. Organizations that provide settlement services to newcomers to Canada and integration assistance to their employers could also find this a useful compendium of information.

6.4.2. Developing Web Linkages

Much information of relevance to newcomers or prospective newcomers is already available on web sites maintained by Immigration Canada, the provinces, educational institutions, professional bodies (e.g. the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers, etc.), immigrant associations and many others, and more is continually being added. Much of this information is likely to be relevant to newcomers who may have interest in becoming part of the Canadian plastics industry but they may be unaware of the availability of the information, or whether it is important with respect to their specific situation. A set of linkages, connecting through the CPSC site via a “Newcomers to Canada” link, could be developed to provide a single window to many sources providing information regarding certification, training opportunities, language requirements, federal and provincial responsibilities, etc. The short-term project would result in a clearinghouse for information sources currently identified. The longer-term project may become a multi-sector initiative, or could remain focussed on the plastics industry.

7. RTD 4: WOMEN

The final RTD, in Halifax, was focused on women. Industry was well represented at this session, both by representatives of firms and a representative of the Canadian Plastics Industry Association. Participants from outside the industry included:

- Senior government officials from provincial level governments;
- Officers of native women’s associations;
- Women in scientific or academic settings;
- Members of agencies assisting women to find employment in non-traditional settings, or assisting immigrant women to develop skills required in Canada.

Industry representatives at all sessions had shared valuable experiences of working in the plastics industry but the accounts provided by individuals in the women’s session were truly motivating and inspirational. For example, an industry representative indicated, “As the son and husband of strong willed women, and the father of two young girls, I learned a great deal at this session of the inherent challenges facing women in traditionally male-oriented work places”.

The RTD for women offered several options focusing mostly on building leadership commitment, policy instruments, welcoming workplaces with healthy life/work balance programs, and career awareness amongst girls throughout the period preceding post secondary education. The RTD also provided an opportunity for native women’s issues to be recognized within the broader issues relative to women and employment.

Much of the discussion in the session explicitly or implicitly centred on the theme of demonstrating to women of all ages, whether they are in the workplace or in universities or in schools, that technical and non-traditional areas of employment like the plastics industry are attractive, challenging, and accepting of women. Examples of leadership challenges offered, accepted, and excelled at, and others of support networks and partnerships illustrate what does occur when fears and boundaries are challenged in a positive manner.

7.1. The CPSC was encouraged to engage in the collection of information and distribution to employers and employment group organizations. The participants were grateful for the opportunity to learn more about the plastics sector industry and volunteered to mention CPSC in speaking engagements (e.g. to cite examples in plastics when describing potential workplaces for women). The circle of influence has expanded...

7.2. Practical Vision

Active partnerships among industry associations, employers, and a diversity of government, labour, education, community and women's organizations succeed in opening the door for women to a career in plastics and "morphing" through Plexiglas ceilings in a pro-active plastics manufacturing sector!

There was recognition by participants that the plastics industry has not been a focus for women in the workforce or in educational institutions. Some of this is due to the lack of awareness about the industry and its opportunities, its diversity and its potential attractiveness to women, while some of it is due to the systemic issue of attracting women to sectors that are or are perceived to be scientific and technical or trades-oriented. The partnerships must work from hard facts and develop models that can be readily explained and demonstrated in schools, workplace assistance centres, seminars and other venues.

7.3. Roadblocks

First, it was recognized that women do not see themselves employed in trades and technology in general. Women drop out of or do not enrol in post secondary programs that are heavily oriented towards science and math, which are seen as being male dominated subject areas. Issues exist around mentoring, and around educational institutions supporting young girls in these programs.

Second, there is a low level of awareness about the plastics industry among women of all ages. Information on the industry is required and has to include where to get training, where the jobs are, and what the industry accomplishes. The curriculum in classrooms is not seen to be relevant to the needs in the workplace, and teachers and educators do not relate learning to careers. The image of the plastics industry to women is not positive in general.

Partnership development is needed to promote understanding by the industry, as well as of the industry. More venues like the round table sessions are needed to inform the industry of employment needs of various communities. Such initiatives require commitment and resources not readily available to agencies in the employment groups. Industry, educational institutions, unions and government agencies all are responsible for building partnerships, and ensuring they are valued and made important on an on-going basis.

Finally, the industry workplace is not seen as being friendly to or ready for women in that managers, leaders and employees are not ready for the integration of women, causing a negative experience for new entrants. Seemingly simple issues such as locks on doors to women's bathrooms are concerns. Women often are primarily responsible for childcare and elder care, issues calling for flexibility that may not be well addressed outside of union environments. Seniority issues also may be factors that work against women's ability to make plastics their career choice.

7.4. Strategies

Industry leadership and ownership of diversity management programs are considered essential to the recruitment and advancement of women in the workplace. Building leadership commitment towards gender equity is considered the cornerstone to improving women's employment in the workplace and was the subject of several interventions suggested at the RTD aimed at developing and profiling a steadfast leadership capacity. Corporate buy-in is critical for: providing gender training for supervisors, managers and employees; promoting best practices for work/life balance; promotion of policy, and gender friendly workplaces; and developing the business case for women in the industry.

Participants in this session (as in the case of Aboriginals) would also have liked to address issues in education from the perspective of mentoring and internship programs. Key to ensuring sustainability of women's advancement and diversification in the workplace is the lobbying of educational institutions and government to promote/integrate the relevance of classroom learning to workplace skills. These efforts will include delivery in schools of presentations about the industry, taking students to work in workplaces within the plastics industry, and showing parents future employment opportunities so they can better assume the role of career advisors.

7.5. Actions

The actions recommended in this session often reflected the requirements not only of the women's group, but also of the other employment groups. Such actions applicable to other groups included the gathering of data and conduct of labour surveys, and these are further discussed in section 8, Common Initiatives. The two actions suggested for the next six months are also applicable to other groups, but originated in this session and can be piloted as women's initiatives to fully develop the concepts before expanding them across all the employment groups.

7.5.1. Welcoming Workplace Program

The main objective of this project is to provide support tools and incentives that will encourage industry employers to articulate and execute a vision that moves an employer from rhetoric to reality. The development of a workplace policy that addresses gender equity is an effective and attractive method of demonstrating leadership commitment to diversity management and is evidence of a progressive workplace and of compliance with anti-discriminatory legislation.

To kick-start this process, it is proposed that a generic gender equity policy be developed and posted on the CPSC website. It is also proposed that a complementary "welcoming workplace program" be developed in recognition of employers who have succeeded in establishing a gender equitable workplace. This program will involve:

- The development of selection criteria that will help identify plastics sector employers practicing gender equity in the workplace;
- The identification and assignment of roles and responsibilities to ensure the program is administered appropriately; and
- The issuance of a CPSC "Welcoming Workplace Certificate" to those employers that meet or exceed the criteria.

7.5.2. Building a Vision

This initiative requires partnerships with educators in order to be successful, and to ensure continuity and effective integration within the school curriculum.

The CPSC has already spearheaded an “Easy Entry” project in partnership with the Toronto District School Board. Representatives of the CPSC will make presentations to teachers and distribute the CPSC career kit. Students who pass the evaluation that will accompany the career kit will have a certificate issued by their school. If a student with this certificate obtains employment in the plastics industry, he/she will be eligible for an in-training certificate.

This project will not only allow for easier entry to the industry but it will also promote employee retention. It is also an incentive for students (male and female) to obtain their high school graduation. This project still requires some development work. Once complete and if successful, it may be extended to other school boards or serve as a pilot that can be enhanced and further tested with other employment groups.

8. COMMON INITIATIVES

Several recurrent themes emerged from all four round table discussions, leading to the identification of several projects that would reply to the requirements of some or all employment groups. These themes were:

- The need for baseline demographic data demonstrating the level of representation of each of the four groups in the industry;
- The lack of awareness of the industry of members of the identified employment groups, and vice-versa;
- The need for an engaged leadership cadre to drive the agenda and take ownership of industry diversity management goals; and
- The need to build capacity among sector councils to leverage resources and further the diversity management agenda across the Canadian workforce.

8.1. Baseline Industry Data and Workforce Profile

The need to have accurate data about employment group representation in the industry, industry skills and abilities requirements, and various other data that would assist both the industry and the employment groups to better fit each other was echoed by all groups. This is a requirement area that has already been identified by the CPSC, and the Council will begin a Sector Survey in October/November, 2005. The Survey will take up to two years to complete, and while it will be a critical aspect of implementing a long term industry strategy, other projects (like the ones described in previous sections) can and must be put in place to continue the momentum begun by these sessions.

The workforce profile envisaged would provide a baseline of current workforce demographics and list a number of areas where action might be taken to address the critical human resource issues of retention, recruitment and skills development that impact the representation of employment groups.

A workforce profile should draw upon primary data sources, some of which may already be available (i.e. Statistics Canada, Industry Canada, Canadian Plastics Industry Association (CPIA), CPSC Sector Studies), and be updated every three to five years.

The development of a profile will help identify objectives, determine and legitimize the need for and type of intervention, specify performance indicators, and allow measurement of progress against those indicators. The profile will provide the CPSC with a strategic basis for setting future directions and priorities and creating strategic methods for addressing present and anticipated workforce issues affecting the identified employment groups. Firms within the industry will be able to use the demographic data to benchmark performance and organizational objectives. In short, a workforce profile will provide CPSC and sector members with tools to identify and address changes over time.

Information and data required to produce a accurate workforce profile must cover all small and medium enterprises as well as large organizations, including multi-national companies within the Canadian plastics industry. Responses should be centrally tabulated for analysis and planning purposes. An accurate description of each identified employment group will be critical to the integrity of the information collected. The information would ideally be collected via a web-based survey at a time of year that is likely to produce the highest possible response rate. Survey results should be posted on the CPSC website.

8.2. Building Awareness

The reports on each of the individual sessions resulted in a recommended action that is geared at providing workplace relevant information about the plastics industry to that specific group. Those actions are fairly circumscribed, but the general call from the sessions was for a more complete strategy of improving the dialogue between the plastics industry and the various groups.

Building awareness will assist the diversity management effort if strategies providing a frame of reference for teaching or encouraging changes in practices, approaches and values relative to the delivery of human resources management are presented. A gradual accumulation of information over time can promote the contextual and perceptual shifts in mindset that bring about new practices and expectations relative to employment of individuals from all groups.

The CPSC can continue to bridge the awareness gap between the industry and organizations that represent identified employment groups by nurturing relationships made at the RTD. Participants of the round table discussions offered to work with the CPSC on awareness building projects of mutual interest and concern. It is further proposed that an “Advisory Network” of participants from the Round Table Discussions be regularly accessed to provide advice, feedback and guidance on issues pertaining to the four identified employment groups.

A Diversity Management Sub-Committee of the Council’s Board, whose members are senior business leaders from the plastics industry, could be created to acknowledge the commitment to diversity management, and be dedicated to the continued introduction and enhancement of initiatives to promote equal access to employment within the Canadian plastics industry.

Its goals would be to engage deliberately and strategically in issues affecting the employment of members from the four identified employment groups, and oversee the development and design of proactive approaches to diversity management. A more complete set of key communication messages and activities could be developed by the committee with the assistance of the Advisory Network, perhaps using some of the group specific actions recommended in earlier sections as initial projects in an overall outreach and communications strategy.

The CPSC Board would be responsible for identifying and appointing members to the Sub-Committee. This committee should have appropriate representation from across Canada and set its terms of reference for Board approval. The CPSC Board would set reporting requirements. It is anticipated that most communication exchanges and follow up work conducted by members of the Sub-Committee would be done “in place” (i.e. by email, telephone and fax).

8.3. Build Inter-Council Partnerships

The established approach of framing broad issues from a sector centric perspective, and single-handedly introducing solutions, may sometimes limit the ability to make a more engaging and sustained impact. Members from all four RTD proposed initiatives that could gain leverage from cross-sector collaboration. Inter-council work was recommended where:

- Inter-council initiatives have worked particularly well in the past;
- Projects require significant resources;
- Common interests and long terms relationships are involved;
- Commitment to change is required from more than one sector in order to have successful outcomes; and
- A pooling of intellectual knowledge, capacities and competencies will help to achieve complementary goals.

Achieving success in raising awareness of diversity management among employers is a long-term engagement that requires continuity, resources, sustainability and imagination. Working separately, different sectors develop activities in isolation, sometimes duplicating effort and competing with each other for scarce resources, when integrated approaches would be more successful.

The Alliance of Sector Councils may be a good forum in which CPSC Board members and the Executive Director may seed ideas such as:

- Creation of a new Council for Persons with Disabilities; and
- Providing input to language training programs for newcomers to Canada.

Collaborative partnerships with other sector councils may provide new opportunities for doing diversity management better.

The first steps in developing appropriate partnerships are the exploration of the possibilities of partnerships, and the development of fundamental principles, a shared vision, and the objectives of a specific partnership. The level of formality and the terms of reference required should also be discussed with potential partners.

9. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

9.1. Group Specific Actions

9.1.1. *Aboriginal Peoples*

CPSC Presentations to Key Aboriginal Leaders

Select, in conjunction with the AHRDCC, a number of key Aboriginal leadership gatherings at which to present the CPSC cause. Working in conjunction with plastics industry members and Aboriginal personnel to develop appropriate messages, use these events to build awareness among those of key influence.

Webcast the Niigon Technologies Case Study

Work with Niigon Technologies to develop a message about success that can be disseminated to prospective champions, AHRDA holders, potential employees, Aboriginal teachers and guidance counsellors, and others in the Aboriginal community, and to members of the plastics industry.

9.1.2. *Persons with Physical Disabilities*

Identifying Employment Opportunities and Building Friendly Workplaces

Improve the readiness level of organizations to integrate persons with disabilities while ensuring there is a fit between the employer's needs and the capabilities of an individual. Collaborate with a willing firm in a pilot of the concept. Conduct a capacity audit to determine the types of physical capabilities required by an employer in their workplace. Separately, conduct a readiness check of the willingness of the firm to provide employment to a person with a disability of a type that can be accommodated in the firm. Develop a "suite" of tools and guidelines and make them available on the CPSC website or in hard copy at employer workshops or industry conferences.

Explore a Best Practices Case Study Pilot

Collaborate with a willing and appropriate firm on a pilot project to showcase and explore best practices, approaches and management methodologies, for furthering the employment of people with disabilities. A later broader pilot, with several projects conducted in major industry centres, could gather more comprehensive data and validate results. These future projects would provide the CPSC with a more comprehensive industry-wide benchmark for hiring people with disabilities and ultimately reducing the apprehensions and misperceptions that may be associated with such hiring. These results could be applicable to other employment groups as well.

9.1.3. *Newcomers*

Building Language Awareness

Produce a directory of services by major agencies concerned with orientating newcomers to Canada, particularly the services with respect to Canadian employment practices and in the way they make them known to supportive employers in their search for qualified candidates. Attach this directory to the CPSC website to serve as a guide and resource for employers who wish to actively recruit newcomers to Canada, and to organizations that provide settlement services to newcomers to Canada and integration assistance to their employers.

Developing Web Linkages

Develop a set of linkages, connecting through the CPSC site via a “Newcomers to Canada” link, to provide a single window to the many sources providing information regarding certification, training opportunities, language requirements, federal and provincial responsibilities, etc. The short-term project would result in a clearinghouse for information sources currently identified. The longer-term project may become a multi-sector initiative, or could remain focussed on the plastics industry.

9.1.4. Women

Welcoming Workplace Program

Provide support tools and incentives that will encourage industry employers to articulate and execute a workplace policy that addresses gender equity. This will serve as an effective and attractive method of demonstrating leadership commitment to diversity management and providing evidence of a progressive workplace, and of compliance with anti-discriminatory legislation. Kick-start this process by developing a generic gender equity policy and posting it on the CPSC website. Develop a complementary “welcoming workplace program” in recognition of employers who have succeeded in establishing a gender equitable workplace.

Building a Vision

Create a vision of inclusion of women (and other employment groups) in the workplace. Work in partnerships with educators to ensure continuity and effective integration within the school curriculum. Build on the “Easy Entry” project with the Toronto District School Board. Once complete and if successful, it may be extended to other school boards or serve as a pilot that can be enhanced and further tested with other employment groups.

9.2. Common Initiatives

9.2.1. Baseline Industry Data and Workforce Profile

Develop accurate data about employment group representation in the industry, industry skills and abilities requirements, and various other data that would assist both the industry and the employment groups to better fit each other. Ensure that the Sector Survey (to start in October/November, 2005) captures a sufficient breadth of data to permit action to be taken to address the critical human resource issues of retention, recruitment and skills development that impact the representation of employment groups. Continue with other projects to maintain the momentum begun in these sessions. The workforce profile envisaged should be updated every three to five years.

9.2.2. Building Awareness

The general call from the sessions was for a more complete strategy of improving the dialogue between the plastics industry and the various employment groups. The CPSC can continue to bridge the awareness gap between the industry and organizations that represent identified employment groups by nurturing relationships made at the RTD. Accept the challenge of participants of the round table discussions who offered to work with the CPSC on awareness building projects of mutual interest and concern. Create an “Advisory Network” of participants from the Round Table Discussions to provide advice, feedback and guidance on issues pertaining to the four identified employment groups.

Establish a Diversity Management Sub-Committee of the Council's Board, to acknowledge the commitment to diversity management, and dedicate efforts to the continued introduction and enhancement of initiatives to promote equal access to employment within the Canadian plastics industry. Include in its charter a directive to develop an overall outreach and communications strategy.

9.2.3. Build Inter-Council Partnerships

Achieving success in raising awareness of diversity management among employers is a long-term engagement that requires continuity, resources, sustainability and imagination. Inter-council work was recommended where:

- Inter-council initiatives have worked particularly well in the past;
- Projects require significant resources;
- Common interests and long terms relationships are involved;
- Commitment to change is required from more than one sector in order to have successful outcomes; and
- A pooling of intellectual knowledge, capacities and competencies will help to achieve complementary goals.

The Alliance of Sector Councils may be a good forum in which CPSC Board members and the Executive Director may seed ideas that can result in common value, such as:

- Creating a new *Council for Persons with Disabilities*; and
- Providing input to language training programs for newcomers to Canada.

10. CONCLUSION

This report is a tribute to six days of round table discussions across Canada with a total of more than 50 representatives of the plastics industry and participants from various organizations associated with the selected employment groups. These individuals, through their contributions of thought and time, demonstrated their belief in the profitability, and the concept, of implementing diversity management principles. Their comments, and explanations from those discussions, have been synthesized into the actions recommended in the previous sections.

The next step for the CPSC to enable the continuation of the work achieved thus far is to select from this report the projects and recommendations that best align with its vision, and begin developing an industry diversity management plan. In making these selections, it is absolutely critical that the CPSC make every effort to nurture the relationships established with participants of the RTD. Further, it is equally critical the Board of the CPSC commit to developing a long-term diversity management plan, to allow for a well thought out and ordered sequence of activities that progressively builds momentum and engagement from one year to the next.



Appendix A: Aboriginal Peoples RTD Report

**Aboriginal Workshop
Day one**

April 24, 2005

Introduction (7:15 pm)

- Introduction of Charles Brimley and Board member
- Showing of “The Graduate” clip
- Introduction of industry manufacturers at workshop – how did they choose plastics as a career; how did they get to where they are?
- Overview of plastic firm manufacturing plant: Westbridge Containers
- Explanation from manufacturers at workshop of what they produced and how
- “What is the first thing you touched made of plastic this morning?” Everything!

Step one:

Between 1967 and 2020, choose three to five events that demonstrated a milestone in the aboriginal/plastic history or that *will* demonstrate a milestone if that can be known at this time.

Results of historical accounts:

- Pre 50’s – Petrochemical and plastics feedstock facilities built in west resulting from availability of natural gas feedstock – it started with the exploitation of natural gas
- 1971 – job opportunity at Shell Canada
- 1972 – officially involved with Native Employment. BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan first to get involved (with Mike Cardinal). Was created without the feds – only provincial \$’s used as seed money. Employment counselling and relocation program (into urban areas – promoted home ownership) started in Alberta shortly thereafter under this initiative and continued until 1986
- 1982 – “Native” was changed to “Aboriginal” in the Canadian constitution. Aboriginal people included Indian, Metis and Inuit
- 1975 – tried career in plastics and did not like it because of shift work – quit as it was interfering with my school
- 1974 – went to Ryerson to learn about polymer science (re-education)
- 1960’s – my dad worked in synthetic rubber (Polysar), retired in 1991
- 1979 – Manager of Canada Employment Centre – lots of \$ pouring into aboriginal communities for employment. Was able to make changes to policy re: aboriginal communities
- 1972 – worked at Esso refinery for 10 years. Was the guy who shut it down after 26 yrs of over (?).
- 1980’s – BC chiefs met with Band Canada Employment Commission and told them that their program service and staff were not appropriate, and did not understand their culture; hence a new relationship had to be formed. BC had a shadow allocation for First Nations buildings. 198 native communities; 52 dialects; many dynamics. One treaty (8); Northeast Creek treaty; 5 groups at level 5 of treaty process. BC was not considered in the treaty development initiative. All of BC is designated as first nation territory. Many treaties are broken
- 1980’s – packaging in plastics is growing exponentially

- 1985 – Bill C-31: Aboriginal women marrying non-aboriginal men lost their rights. This was reversed with Bill C-31. All were given status. This included their children but not their grandchildren. Status does not get lost and gained by way of marriage. UN had been involved and they directed Canada to make this change
- 1986 – relationship began in BC re: aboriginal program development through what is now known as Aboriginal HR Development. BC incorporated a process specific to the needs of the aboriginal community. In BC it was called Aboriginal Fund Development. Program consultants were hired – Aboriginal management boards were created. Left banking to work as a program consultant working directly with decision-making bodies
- 1980's – established several plastics secondary industries
- 1986 – lured away from Shell to join Consumer's Glass where ketchup bottles were being made. They were asked to make plastic ketchup bottles. The bottle had 6 different layers with a space in between 2 layers to prevent ketchup from going rancid. Technology was created in Japan. Outside layer of virgin material, adhesive layer; functional layer, layer of glue, layer of regrind, inside layer of virgin
- 1989 – hired as union rep; serviced three different companies. Use to be many aboriginal employees working at one of the plants – but no longer today
- 1990-1995 – plastics industry has outgrown all other industries at two times their growth rate– replacing glass and metal. Approaching 3 times growth rate in 2003
- Agency started as non-profit organization. It is a local Delivery mechanism agency. Service given to clients across Canada as they come to Toronto. It is a real challenge in Toronto – the adjustment is greater
- 1990 – finished school; awareness that there is employment in the plastics industry is important
- 1995 – those who reside in urban centre face high unemployment – they don't have an identity in the city – in this melting pot, they feeling lost
- 1994 – CED. I participated in an economic development program. HRDC – employment training has been working in isolation of each other. Collaboration is non-existent. There is a need to develop partnerships that take place on reserves, i.e. in a rural setting. We need to create opportunities to make job on reserves
- 1992 – Organization was formed as association to address HR development on and off reserve and status on and off reserve. Process was developed to better serve the needs of the aboriginal communities
- 1995 – Metis people do not have equal access to government programs. Metis specific program developed and delivered for first time in Ontario
- Metis: not on a registry; community acceptance; fur trade; self identifying; lineage to Red River settlement. (French men were here 9 months before the Metis – establishment of the settlement in Alberta was different)
- 1995 – HRDC hiring people for high tech – worked in aboriginal community – completely different group
- 1993 – Pathways run by government – they monitored files; handled the money

- 1995/96 – Regional bilateral agreements signed with the treaty groups. 3-year agreement with HRDC. Money received directly from HRDC to run employment and training programs on the reserve. Metis people were also agreement holders. In Calgary both treaty and Metis people contribute money to create programs. Less direct service delivery and more self-government to grass roots groups to deliver. Results must be reported to government regularly
- 1996 – impetus by federal government to solve workforce problems by bringing stakeholders together. HRDC is promoting through sector councils, and engaging stakeholders to solve issues re: workforce and workplace
- 1998 – AHRDA program included more money – some specifically for youth and childcare funding. Enabled adults to attend training and employment. AHRDA 2 is just coming on stream. Persons with disabilities are also eligible for funding; urban dollars were also included. AHRDA 2 will focus in recruitment and retention
- 1998 – Plastics (?) sector council was established. Increase aboriginal representation in Canadian workforce. What is the business case? Went to corporations to present – We are the bridge and link between AHRDA and corporations. Three national managers in Canada – all involved in building tools to enable hiring, retaining and advancing aboriginal people. Looking for developing products for clients. Councils are small organizations with huge mandates
- 2000 – Trying to help aboriginal people to reduce social services system and unemployment insurance are targets and priorities
- 1960's – aboriginals were self-sustaining communities. Social assistance created a dependency that is currently very problematic. Programs today are trying to eliminate this dependency
- Economic development is next round of discussions with feds. I.e. bring employment to our communities
- 1998 – supply and demand. Signing of AHRDA brought on the realization that employment and training was all about supply and demand. New opportunities had to be developed from partnerships. Impact on local economy by AHRDA includes infusion of qualified workers and by creating opportunities (e.g. businesses on reserves). HRDC was told that their vision was too small – and needs revamping. In BC in some areas, there was no relationship between industry and first nation community. This needed to be a priority
- 2000 – ISO 9000 and registration (6 months to do it)
- 2001 – Moved to new facility
- 2000 – Joys of ownership. Gave up all his finances to buy business; my association with government relates to tax. Important to understand each other's world
- 2002 – began working with AHRDA – apprenticeship coordinator – working with council today
- 2003 – worked with Charlie to discuss issues
- 2001 – started injection moulding with first nation
- 2002 – first conference with aboriginal groups, employers, labour to discuss what is wrong with unions. Had another one in 2004 to promote aboriginal employment

- 2005 – CA Minority Supplier Council. Unfair competition in Canada. Larger Corporations and multi-national corporations put mandate on supplier base – must have minority content to supply. None in Canada. 6% of sales must be minority. Must ship goods to US and back to Canada to sell in US. Now we have an agreement that keeps business in Canada. Important to meet this criteria when it comes time to secure a business
- 2005 – CPSC is five years old. Even split between employer and employee representatives, plus other stakeholders (government, associations). Looking at HR development targeting plastics.
- 2005 – on average, 20,000 employment opportunities per year coast to coast. In 2003 160,000 people were employed by the plastics industry
- 2004 – 3,700 firms across Canada. First occupational standards for this industry published
- 2003/04 – began looking at alternative industries in the interior, to expand. A manufacturing firm in St. George was reviewed, and we met with all the Chiefs in bands/councils (they make decisions re: investing/partnering in business) One of the presenters was from the plastic industry. There was much interest in doing business partnerships with different types of industries. The plastics industry is very interesting to aboriginal communities.

Summary:

- Be careful to distinguish and acknowledge differences between needs of aboriginal communities in rural and urban areas. (“at home; away from home”)
- Progression of management of aboriginal human resources development is being delegated to aboriginal grass roots/councils. As aboriginal HRD managers “you” are very young. You are getting very good at what you are doing just at a time when you are needed the most by the CPSC.
- By 2008 there is a need for the establishment of strong understanding by CPSC/industry of aboriginal needs/systems/differences, and a good understanding of CPSC by the aboriginal communities.
- Plastic corporations - need to understand the dynamics of the aboriginal community that they intend to engage with, and need to know who the key players are. Contract local friendship centre to get involved. Know the organizations in the aboriginal community.
- While we do have distinct challenges as aboriginals, we are very much one at the community level.
- We don’t need another 3 years to understand the aboriginal people. We are the most poked people in the world. We need jobs... you tell us how we are going to go about training our youth or making the necessary business investment.
- Talk to Chief and elders to understand problems/challenges. Know how to approach them.
- This is a long-term relationship. Everything is not all going to happen in one year.
- Since 1998 I learned a lot about organizing resistance. I learned about culture/structure within the tribe/grass roots involvement. There are more, similar links between aboriginal people and trade unions.

Day 2

Recap: 8:30 AM

HEADLINES (in 2008, with respect to plastics sector and aboriginals)

Vision: Question to participants: In 2008, what will the CPSC, Aboriginal HR organizations and the Plastics industry employers have in place?

Scenario: You are the Editor of a Newsletter and you want to present a plastic industry and aboriginal employment/workforce feature. What is in place today? What is the lead story?

Lead stories offered:

- Aboriginal Community heads up the CPSC
- Aboriginal workers account for high percentage of plastics Canadian Workforce. A sector study will be conducted (the third) to determine the current number of aboriginal workers in the sector/industry. What we would hope to see are positive changes. At this time it is lower than 1%. The CPSC will be able to deliver a number this year and show an increase in 2008
- Entrepreneur of the year in 2008 is a plastic manufacturer
- Hope for economic future of aboriginal communities across the country
- Highly skilled and motivated workforce. Workforce is trained by combination of public and private sector. Employees are respected for their contribution. All are part of the profit sharing program and all are getting rich!
- Commitment is shown through the investment in the long-term education – scholarship program
- Plastics industry will gain visibility – interest to work in industry will increase. The number of aboriginal youth prepared to take on jobs will increase
- Plastics industry boasts representative workforce. If will and resources are there, it can be done. It can be achieved
- XYZ First Nation leads the way in plastics industry. We need to lead the way – the next stage is to do it. Create sustainability in our community. Create employment for youth. Get it infused in community
- Get more coop programs that show them different avenues as careers. Include the plastics industry. Build awareness through hands-on involvement to change perspective
- Plastics moulding plant fully automated. To be competitive globally, the more automation the better it is. This will create higher value, higher paying jobs for people. People will be happier to do something that is not repetitive all the time. Routine jobs should be replaced with something that is more meaningful
- Aboriginal Youth Plastics Sector Council in BC. Involvement by students to promote the industry. It is critical that we educate youth about the opportunities in plastic so that they can prepare their career goals around the industry. (Charles comment: “Career Passions” – we already have started to make presentation to aboriginal youth. E.g. recruitment and retention of aboriginal employees; Alberta - careers in next generation program)

- Aboriginal people on the Board of the CPSC to open up opportunities in the future. (Charles: currently have a board vacancy)
- Plastics industry signs multilateral agreement between provincial/municipal/federal labour employers. Projects from this agreement can encourage the employment of aboriginals and be more effective
- Positive results of Plastics Aboriginal Workforce (PAWS) Pilot project created with aboriginal organizations
- Aboriginal organizations in New Zealand to present at summit. We have arrived in the plastic industry....
- Industry has a big advantage to offer careers to people – it is clean, safe, healthy (no fumes, no dirty water, no gases) and is environmentally benign. It is a clean industry. This makes it attractive to people – including aboriginals
- Employer flexibility – sometimes aboriginals have a hard time conforming to rules and regulations at work... need more flexibility to recruit and retain aboriginals. Non-reserve employers must pay taxes. Interview processes needs to be more flexible to get hired. Physical space should be more welcoming. Be careful of tokenism. Retention issues must be addressed. Racism comments need to be eliminated. Need cultural awareness training for existing employees. (Charles: research report on retaining employees will be presented at town hall meeting – Westbridge is considered best and they have low turnover). (In BC, recruitment and retention is approached in three parts: recruitment, retention, cultural awareness/training of the employer organization for the aboriginals, so that they can better deal with discrimination because it will never go away.)
- Aboriginal managers working within the industry increases
- Partnerships in Place – Process in place to work together
- Plastics industry jobs brought back from China.... The more automation in business, the more we can recapture jobs lost to China. They now have the equivalent of \$200.00/month jobs and a virtually unlimited source of people in China. As their pay increases, the price advantage will close, and work will return to Canada
- Investment in plastic
- BC women start co-op in plastics
- Better skill matching achieved with jobs in plastic industry. Awareness needs to be increased
- New program launched by council encourages involvement by employers in recruitment and retention studies; these can function as “learning modules” for employers
- Job fair well attended by plastics industry. Aboriginal workforce is well represented
- Strong relationship between plastics industry and aboriginal community, with partnerships to work together on issues
- Aboriginal youth see opportunities in plastics
- Moulding company praises aboriginal website. Puts job postings up on website and aboriginals respond
- Youth feeling confident about jobs in plastics industry. Investing in education for job opportunities in plastics would be great accomplishment
- Joint ventures... to spur employment in plastics for aboriginal people
- I followed my dream – a career in the plastics industry. Build from internal passions

- CPSC and HRSDC collaborate on career awareness strategy
- New plastics council training program launched at Aboriginal Technical Institute. Opportunities to have specific technical skills developed
- Aboriginal educators attend more in-depth one-day symposium to understand who are the players – make a larger networking/information sharing event to build the strategy
- Aboriginal Incubator – joint ventures – as a group/nation/district/region. If strategic project is launched, it can become a successful regional model. Small and medium enterprises are the focus. Spin off effect – motivated employees will go out on own and create other enterprises
- Highest percentage of high school graduates achieved by aboriginal youth. More effort required and made to retain students in school until graduation. Students need to understand that it is worth it for them to stay and finish school
- Training programs for aboriginals out of school
- Plastic industry training now standardized – develop various skill requirements for various jobs to spearhead training programs
- Aboriginal employment highest in plastics industry
- 65,000 aboriginal employed in plastics industry
- First nations in BC leading in plastics industry
- Structural changes – BCAPSC is subsidiary of BCARDS
- Exciting careers in plastics industry
- Plastics industry demonstrates respect for aboriginal industry
- New plastics firm planned for aboriginal community
- Easy Access – we know who all the players are
- Partnerships with aboriginal training programs
- Self-employment moulding machines – First nations owned business in moulding
- Secure financial support – on the job training
- Acute skilled labour shortage. Awareness needs to be in place that skills are in short supply. (e.g. plumbers)
- Aboriginal people happy to work in plastics (e.g. cultural awareness)
- Industry expands
- Networks for change

Main Themes (focus on outcome)

Recommendations (Michael):

- Communication, awareness and marketing
- Training and education
- Employment (recruitment, retention and advancement)
- Partnership and Joint Ventures (employer engagement)
- Economic Development
- Career awareness
- Governance
- Ultimate Outcomes

Decisions:

1. Efficacy of plastics industry maximized to retain market share
2. Vibrant plastics sector council and AHRDAs working effectively together
3. Industry shows strong results
4. Employer engagement created
5. Strong marketing in place
6. Economic sustainability created
7. Strong skills development in place

Vision Statement (as written by Gerard)

- *In three short years a vibrant relationship between the COSC, AHRDA's and Plastics Manufacturers has produced measurable results. Board appointments have positioned aboriginal people in the plastics mainstream and market places have placed plastics top-of-mind among aboriginal leaders.*
- *Aboriginal entrepreneurs, and employees, have raised their share of the plastics industry and workforce.*
- *Strong marketing of opportunities in plastics strikes a chord among aboriginal youth.*
- *Strong skill sets among aboriginal entrepreneurs and employees are making the plastics industry more productive and competitive. (The aboriginal community is making strides.)*

Roadblocks

Make a list of 5 roadblocks individually that appear from this vision. Pare it down to 3 in a team.

Results

- Need awareness of job profiles. The realities of the workplace are difficult to convey via job profiles. Expectations from potential candidates are often misplaced due to lack of knowledge on jobs. (Charles: interviews with employees may be a solution with minimal marketing – stick to “a day in the life of”.)
- Communication/information exchange – this has not happened to the degree it should. People are not aware of the plastics industry and how dynamic it is. Education and awareness is dearly needed.
- Transportation to work location (no vehicle or licence). Systemic problems regarding transportation limits employment opportunities.
- Have to get buy in from community agency to spend money where most impact will be had for plastics industry with respect to aboriginals and employment.
- Education barriers: qualifications does not match aboriginal skills base (typically Grade 10 only).
- No aboriginal leadership within the CPSC. Having no champion is a big problem.
- Environmental impacts of plastic to society. How is plastic impacting the environment? How is it impacting our society? What are the recycling opportunities? Aboriginals require awareness of the issue so that they understand the full extent of the impact to the environment. Environmental impact is a stigma for this industry.
- Communication is at the core of everything – letting communities and youth know what training is required to apply for management and research positions is critical.

- Basic skills and work ethics can lead to employment. Training can be obtained on the job. Youth need to be trainable. Aboriginal community must provide their youth with these basic skills.
- Knowledge of job vacancies may be difficult to capture at any one time.
- Employees require soft skills (interpersonal skills, management skills, ...) too.
- There is much competition with other industry and sectors for skilled workers, and there is also competition by some industries (service industry) for young workers with few skills. Communication needs to occur so that people know about the plastics industry. Aboriginal youth is the only growing workforce in Canada.
- Resources to connect with 100+ AHRDA'S are not readily available.
- Unions have difficulty putting in Employment Equity language in Contract Agreements.

Summary

- Lack of communication and awareness
- Lack of ability to meet the basic requirements of youth education and training
- Location challenges: Transportation and logistics
- Championing the community: Leadership
- CPSC: large mandate, small staff

Strategies

Process: Working in groups, produce three strategies that will reduce barriers.

Group 1 (Bonnie) Strategies

- Develop programs that recognize best practice models such as Internship programs. Employers would know what they are getting after having an intern in place for some time. Subsidies would follow the intern. The program would be created jointly, with the CPSC perhaps leading by establishing a pilot project. Implementation would not involve all communities in Canada. Location of communities would be selected based on closest proximity to plastic manufacturers, e.g. some in BC, Alberta. Funding would be a requirement to be considered. A Summer Career Placement is already in place at HRDC – this program could/would be an extension.
- Link industry with aboriginal talent pool. This is an umbrella strategy to build more awareness on both supply and demand lists. What kind of tools/mechanisms can bridge the gap, and how can industry and AHRDAs discuss collaboration and partnerships? Try to get firms involved in aboriginal employment network, which is linked to all AHRDAs and student centres in universities and colleges.
- Extend outreach to include aboriginal communities. Promote face-to-face connection in major regions in Canada. Teams of people are available and trained to make connections (e.g. career fair presentations, meetings with communities). These teams could extend their services to aboriginal communities. At the same time, collection of information, data and issues can occur for use in program/policies consideration. Feedback could be used to make efforts more effective. The week of June 21 is Aboriginal Week.

Group 2 (Tom) Strategies

- Public Awareness Campaign tailored to aboriginal people (i.e. use existing mechanisms via network). This will need to occur in parallel with the development of an introductory piece that needs to be communicated. This is the first step to awareness.
- Leadership, mentoring and development. Recruit aboriginal leaders or industry people to promote industry and its opportunities to communities across Canada. It is incumbent on successful people to mentor others in their community. Community needs more successful people to ensure a good crop of effective mentors.
- Partnering with existing aboriginal programs. Many of the aboriginal training programs already exist. CPSC would need to partner with organizations that deliver entry level training programs so that they can in turn represent the industry and provide meaningful training to aboriginal youth.

Group 3 (Michael) Strategies

- Gather information formally to strengthen the communication base. Research needed includes audits, trends analysis, demographics, impact of automation, growth, etc. Youth can and will be encouraged to stay in school, but hard data is required to establish credibility. Information links and data base development will be important. Ability to communicate skill requirement is needed so that candidates can be motivated and be prepared. In BC, 37% of aboriginal youth who start grade 9 graduate via a “leaving school certificate” (which is meaningless as it is not a grade 12 equivalent) rather than through senior matriculation.
- Build a road map for partnership development. Build relationships and partnerships between employers, sector councils and AHRDAs for information sharing and mutual understanding, where plans can emerge for long-term sustainability and advantages for all concerned. Determine how to create partnerships, and what steps are required.
- Champion the opportunity for aboriginal people on behalf of industry. Spread out the literature; advocate on your behalf. Development of partnerships has to occur in order to expand budgets and capacity. If someone asks, “What should I do if I am looking for an employee?”, the contacts developed through partnerships can be used to assist in answering that question.

What might be some of the first steps?

- Selection of CPSC Board member
- Expo Plast June, 2005, Montreal (occurs every 3 years)
- BC ARDHA conference, October, 2005, Vancouver
- Write articles for newsletter for aboriginal newsletter and websites about this session.
- Directory of firms in my area – by phone/name

Summary

- Concern: how do we continue the momentum after this meeting?



Appendix B: Persons with Physical Disabilities RTD Report

**People with Physical Disabilities Workshop
Day one**

May 8, 2005

Introduction (7:15 pm)

Overview of Plastic firm manufacturing plant

Q: What is the first thing you touched made of plastic this morning? A: Everything.

Q: What would be left on your back if we removed all fabric made from plastic. A: Not much

First hour spent on history of plastic industry and related stories.

Step one:

Between 1967 and 2020, choose three to five events that demonstrated a milestone in the physical disabilities/plastic history or that will demonstrate a milestone if such is known at this time (relating to you personally or to your organization).

Results of historical account:

- 1982 – Constitution enacted, integrated human rights and employability. There are three essential aspects of employment services of Quebec Paraplegic Association. Integration with counselling organizations helps employees with integration - one counsellor's sole preoccupation is human rights, while 4 people in the employability section are working to help paraplegics with employment. (Mme. Taing?)
- 1982 - Ressources pour personne sourdes – new service for employing and integrating persons with physical limitations and deafness. “L,Étape” led this new service. The `La Borage` organization was created by people that were hard of hearing, and makes reference to a small community whereas there were many deaf persons. (Denis Lamontagne? Sonia Arsenault?)
- 1995 - Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work. (They always worked with federal government representatives to design policy. Much of their effort over many years was devoted to fighting government policies.) In a new initiative (STP), the federal government approached CCRW asking why people with disability were not being hired with real jobs. Two questions were asked by CCRW: 1) Would you hire people with disabilities?, and, 2) If so, would you participate in a program to help employment of disabled people? The STP program was very successful. (Norma Ricker)
- 1999 - employment program was launched. Workplace Essential Skills Program - WESP has (today) produced many jobs in banking, communication, and in call centres, with a high retention rate. (78% - 83%). The program was recognized by Conference Board of Canada, and is considered a best practice project by the federal government.
- 2000 - WESP responsible for 10% of employment of disabled under EE Act.
- 2004-05 - more employees have been released than hired. (WESP)
- *Inclusion by design* conference in Montreal to discuss employment of disabled was attended by international representatives and was a breakthrough in generating discussions about employment of disabled people. (?? - Attribution unknown)

- 1989 - National Institute of Mental Retardation. A university professor was seconded to NIMR to look at how people with mental disabilities have been treated in Canada. Developmentally delayed citizens have needs that should be recognized. (??)
- 1950 - Across the country, there began a grass roots movement of parents whose kids were not allowed into normal schools. This normalization and integration movement started with families, and gradually grew into a national organization. It not only addresses developmentally challenged people but also all people with disabilities. (??)
- 1950 - Return of WW2 soldiers with disabilities. These soldiers, treated as veterans with honour and respect, started a new movement. It was unrelated to other people with disabilities, but there was a germ of an idea even then that looked at the right of citizens to be treated fairly. (??)
- 1985 - Publication of book called `Normalization` by Wolfenburger, that laid down the principles of equal treatment of disabled people in society. (??)
- 1965 - BC Centre for Ability in Vancouver was established by concerned parents (whose children had?) neurological impediments (e.g. epilepsy).
- 2000 – The BC Centre now has a series of health professionals to assist people with impediments (occupational therapist, speech therapist, social workers), and has more than 100 employees.
- 2001 - Greater Vancouver Business Leadership Network. The business community has to be engaged to address issues emerging from employment of disabled people. It is not only a matter to be addressed by potential employees in the disabled community. By supporting leaders in this area, much action has taken place. The Network is a business led venture that supports other businesses in hiring from the untapped pool of people with disabilities. The services that the program offers are “Champions”, which acts as a centralized depot for businesses to have access to hiring people with disabilities. 36 major corporations are involved (e.g. Starbucks, Home Depot and financial institutions). We hold 2 to 3 big events (with important speakers) a year. This is part of a marketing effort, and it hears testimonies from people with disabilities. [The speaker is] a corporate trainer on disability awareness. Education is still #1 on the agenda, and is high on the “to do” list. (Larry Koopman)
- 1945 – Canadian Paraplegic Association (CPA) was founded. (Susan Howatt)
- 1982 - CPA Ontario started to provide employment services (funding by HRDC and Ministry of Health). Services include pre-employment (counselling?) and job development. During the past five years, it has placed strong focus on employer’s ads and their needs. Services have grown to include sensitivity awareness training, technology assessments, and placing people with disabilities in paid work. 325 disabled people are served, with 75 – 85 jobs per year being filled by members of the community. 1992 – Daryl Murphy (spinal cord injury) who was a member of CPA Ontario, lobbied to federal officials to get funding for SSLU, in order to live independently in the community, and not be in a nursing home. (Susan Howatt)
- 1957 - CPA BC was founded. It helps people with a spinal cord injury have more of an independent life in the community. Services were originally focused on basic necessities of life available in the community.

- 1986 - Employment Outreach program was founded, and works on employment for people with disabilities. It focuses more on post integration – adding more participation would require an active role in employment at community level. 2003 - another employment program for people with disabilities was founded with funding by the BC government. This is a fee for service program (from government; not disabled). Clients progress through stages of making them more employable, and only if they are successful in their efforts does CPA BC get paid for their work. The program puts the emphasis on success rather than just effort. It is not good enough to ‘try’ – success is what counts. There is a wide array of services offered, e.g. disability support (equipment); training and education access to get skills to access particular jobs, etc. (Paul Brown)
- 2002 - Strategic Employment Solutions founded. This was an evolutionary process – it started as collaboration between Jobs Vision Success Toronto and the March of Dimes, and has now it has grown into 13 different referring agencies. It is a business advisory council made up of employers providing advice on employment of people with a disability (20 corporations are represented). It deals only with placement, i.e. finding employment for disabled people. It strictly focuses on employment. Since its inception, it has moved from having 4 staff to 11. 123 persons were placed in first year of operation (2003); 208 in 2004. 260 employees were retained in all. (David Holman)
- 1989 - Sylvain Brunet (Produits de plastiques Age Inc.) in HR management, in 7th year of practice; he is familiar with many occupations and management (i.e. Boards or owners). (Sylvain Brunet)
- 2001 - joined Centre de Travail Adapter for people with mental disability. It is a company that employs people with disability: it has a printing and cleaning division. Centre de travail Adapter – there are 24 in Quebec – offer employment for people who have a physical/mental limitation. It is partially funded by the provincial government. (??)
- 2005 - joined Plastics industry (?), and make small plastic objects e.g. hangers, and have 28 machines. The plastic industry is highly affected by globalization. Value added items are being requested more and more by clients. Work is getting more complex and therefore the job is not as accessible for people with a disability. Value added does not mean higher profit.
- There are more robotic machines in the workplace and therefore fewer employees are required. Jobs today are multi skilled and more highly specialized. The production time is reduced. (??)
- Conseillère en readaptation - doit évaluer les tâches pour s’assurer que la personne avec un handicap peut avoir un succès. L’intégration est la clé du succès. Si on ne fait pas tous ce qui est possible pour s’assurer de l’intégration les chances d’échec sont hautes. He has a program that starts next week where two individuals will be considered for work in his workplace. (??)
- L’entreprise doit avoir des champions et une maturité et dans une industrie où c’est favorable. (e.g. complexity of work) Understanding the state of the plastic industry is important before considering integrating people with physical or mental limitations. (??)

Day 2

Recap: 8:30

Vision: Question to participants: In 2008, what will the CPSC, Physical Disabilities Organizations and the Plastics industry employers have in place?

Scenario: You are the Editor of a Newsletter and you want to present a plastic industry and persons with physical disabilities employment/workforce feature. What is in place today (i.e. in 2008)? What is the lead story?

Lead stories:

- Un défi pour l'industrie – le recyclage
- Prochaine années, gros défi, les personnes handicapées travaillent dans le recyclage; the opening in the industry is in the recycling end of the product development cycle
- Changement majeur dans l'industrie des plastiques
- Tellement de changement dans l'industrie a cause de la globalisation; postes crée sur mesure pour les gens handicapés; as per Brunet's points on globalization, the work is increasingly complex; industry is recognizing the need to tailor positions for people with disabilities; specialization is critical
 - Creation d'une entreprise
 - By product of previous initiative; employers put in place program of welcoming; to create jobs tailored for people with disabilities; training and development programs with a view to training people in a targeted way
 - Detruire les mythes
 - vis a vis le secteur; fausse croyances, mythes et realities; making the sector more attractive
 - Normes de productivities
- Openness to create positions that are less tied to productivity. Profit oriented firms may not feel that handicapped people will not contribute, when in fact they can contribute to quality and performance
- Disability groups applaud CPSC for diversifying the plastics industry workforce
 - Endorsement of CPSC for their work in opening the doors
 - This helps diversity groups
 - Other sector councils follow CPSC's lead in opening the doors of plastics industry to people with disabilities
 - Disability groups and Sector council are successful together
 - Partnership between the two are working together to positive outcome for both groups
 - CPSC partners with disabilities groups to set up community partnership between employers and disability orgs to develop and enhance skills training programs on the job
- CPSC wins award for implementing corporate awareness and training
 - Leadership is needed to address the awareness gap
 - With out employer awareness, nothing can be changed

- CPSC develops national development mentoring program
 - Mentoring individuals who have been successful and linking them with people who have an interest in the area
 - This can take different forms
 - Administered by the CPSC (although here there is a question of feasibility)
 - CPA ON has assisted firms to be accommodating and to support diversity, and training HR people in firms on how to address accommodation issues. It has mentored the HR people, and developed specialized communication aimed at HR people in plastics firms
 - CPSC would develop program, others may implement it – implementation strategy to be discussed, but the progenitor of the program is CPSC
- Mentoring program
 - CPSC innove dans les programs de formation
 - Training technique to focus on jobs that are well suited to people with disabilities
 - Bring back the production systems, to establish pilot projects that validate the match of people with disabilities with certain jobs
 - create workplace friendly environment
- CPSC's efforts surpass their objective to create new jobs
 - Means setting a measurable objective across Canada as the guide line
 - Lead to 150 new jobs in 2008
 - This is the objective – it is realistic and achievable
 - Could do a quick survey; capture real figures on which to build a strategy. This is always a challenge for surveyors who don't get solid responses because respondents may feel that there will be repercussions

Main Themes (focus on outcome)

- Sensitization – awareness
- Training and job targeting – identifying jobs that can be done by people with disabilities, then training programs, then mentoring
- Initiatives: creating pilot projects for people with disabilities; employer building plant to accommodate people with disabilities; integration initiative
- Leadership awards – reward and recognition.

Vision Statement (as written by Gerard)

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery as shown by the adoption of the “We can do it!” initiative by other sectoral councils across Canada. In 2008, 150 positions in plastics manufacturing across Canada have been filled by people with disabilities, representing a major % increase since the CPSC disability organization and pioneering employers partnered to pilot the “We can do it!” initiative.

Targeting CPSC's positions best suited to persons with disabilities focuses the efforts of employers (demand) and employee (supply) support organizations to implement a national training, development, and mentoring program.

XYZ recycling plastics “inc” demonstration project at the core of a National Awareness and Sensitization effort to change misconceptions about the productivity people with disabilities in manufacturing.

Roadblocks

Process: Individually, make a list of 5 roadblocks that appear from this vision. Pare it down to 3 in a team.

General Comments:

Challenges of overcoming employers' misperceptions of employing people with disabilities are a major issue. 25% of people/clients have mental challenges. Care needs to be given to special cases of disabilities before placing individuals in the workforce. (Robert Gall)

Did not explain to group the fact that discussions (according to the CPSC client) were to focus on people with physical disabilities ONLY– and not ALL disabilities (e.g. blindness). (Facilitator)

The approach taken at the workshop and its results did not segregate disabilities. The report will reflect this as a more holistic method of proceeding with workshop deliberations (value-added results).

Results:

Most difficult roadblocks to address:

- Perception that there is a cost and no/limited return on investment (ROI) in hiring disabled people. There is a barrier in people's mind that it is not worthwhile (on a financial basis) to hire disabled people.
- Access to training and development is an important element to employability. The lack thereof produces a vicious cycle – and produces barriers.
- Competition within plastics industry makes it important to develop a collaborative approach, and a top down buy in. It is a very aggressive sector – “*what is in it for me*” needs to be answered in terms of bottom line. ROI is at heart of any endeavour. Competitive advantage needs to be unharmed (and hopefully enhanced) by these employment initiatives.
- If the top management is not engaged, endeavours will not be successful.

Easiest roadblocks to address:

- Accommodation cost (of hiring a person who is disabled) is easiest to explain, i.e. regarding expectation of who will foot the bill for making the workplace appropriate for the disabled employee. It is tangible, and there are also many financial incentives available to the employer for addressing the need to accommodate a person with a disability.
- Transportation cost is straightforward to address because there are systems in place to help out disabled people. Services are available and accessibility is possible.
- Lack of partnerships between employers, community agencies and training and development centres. There are examples but these need to be documented, piloted, communicated and profiled. There is something out there to build from. Experiences and models are established and accessible – these should be explored/expanded. Comments and analogies: Exercise is difficult because challenges are great... Marriages are made in heaven but built on earth... .

The most inspiring roadblock (i.e. easiest to feel passionate about):

- Messages from government need to be aligned with this vision. (People with disabilities are not lesser beings in our society and the government needs to walk the talk in dispelling these perceptions.)
- Misperceptions of employers of people with disability – disabled people don't all belong to one family. There is a lack of appreciation/awareness of this point.
- There is a lack of leadership character – moral and ethical leadership should lead this change. If this is important to our society, then the leaders should make this so. It is making things right (equal rights) as opposed to doing the right thing (for profit).
- Limited visibility of disabled people in the workplace.
- Self-esteem of people with disability affects their motivation and affects their potential to be successful. Employee needs must be addressed as much as employer needs, to ensure employment of disabled people.
- We don't think of accessing the pool of disabled people – newcomers to Canada are more likely to be accessed as a potential pool first. Accessibility in the community as a whole might be an explanation for this. The city's ability to be disability-friendly may have a lot to do with the disabled person's ability to be employed. The fear of failing from the employee side is real and prevents disabled people from venturing. Rejection is feared.
- Challenge: where are the plastic industry employers on this, and are systems in place to address access for disabled people?
- Big new programs – perception of employees already in the workplace is that disabled people in the workplace will be adversely affecting their work.
- Cannot limit programs to physical disabilities because you are losing out on many other possibilities for resources.
 - Client bases of organizations attending this session dictates that the concept of "disability" needs to expand to be more than just physical disabilities. Potential partnerships with these organizations would need to recognize their mandate and the need to expand target group definition. It is a common for employers to limit themselves to physical.
- Bottom line: it is important to know the skills set first as core focus. The right fit is of primary importance and is core, and is not so much the limitations of the disability. Employer strategies need to be adjusted accordingly.
- Negative perception by members of the plastics industry. Industry members need to understand that employing people with a disability is not a negative step. They are an untapped pool of resources whose capabilities need to be framed in a positive light.
- Limited access to proper funding support, e.g. skills training, accommodation, child-care needs. Financial disincentive (cost to work versus wage from work) is an issue for people with disabilities. Many contract jobs don't offer benefits and this is a key and serious systemic issue for disabled people.

Strategies

- Create a communication and sensibility campaign for the CPSC and members, and for service providers for the disabled community. There is a need to develop a communication plan in partnership with CPSC and service providers to present to various forums. The strategic communication plan would be a positive one focusing on partnership between the CPSC and organizations representing the disabled communities.
- Organize a CPSC conference on Employment Equity (all groups) to build awareness among industry representatives. Invite EE groups/organizations to make presentations, to showcase, do outreach, and network. Hold two conferences where partnerships can be formed by both CPSC, and by EE organizations. By holding this jointly with other EE groups, the emphasis would be on ability as opposed to disability.
- Pilot a project that demonstrates do-ability by hiring certain EE employees and following their progress. CPSC would partner with the employer pool and employee pool to pilot opportunities. CPSC would become a recruiter (match-maker) to encourage integration of employee groups with industry.
- Celebrate success stories – profile achievements and build momentum for more milestones.
- Foster partnerships between corporations, (e.g. business advisory council). Conduct physical disability assessments (PDA's) for employer and develop a business profile needs analysis, recommendation and action plan. This can be done as pilot to increase employment of disabled people. There needs to be an analysis of the industry's needs before proceeding with hiring of disabled.
- Find/develop champion(s) to move this agenda forward. From success, stories can be collected and learning can occur. Targeting certain leaders will encourage followers.
- Understand attitudinal barriers and produce action plan that can address required changes. An HR policy is needed to frame employment of disabled employees within the organizations. Systems need to be in place for management and HR to be successful with the hiring and retention of disabled people.

Questions

What might be some of the first steps as a way forward – i.e. within the next 12 months?

How much influence does the CPSC have on the industry? Depends on the project.

Next steps Strategy no. 1

- Generate a consultative report with recommendations. Feedback should be sought from various groups before submitting to Board.
- Do a small pilot in Canada in each of the larger 4 regions that is motivated to take action steps as per recommendations from the report.
- Try to implement PDA within a company, and then do an observation/analysis to implement action within that company. Take first steps that are small – but do it right. From that, disabled employees can be hired that fit the environment.
- Companies participating in the pilot commit to hiring 2 – 4 individuals with disabilities. Promulgate a disability awareness program to employees within the organization before integrating the disabled persons.

Next steps Strategy no. 2

- Do a promotional campaign toward employers and potential employees through EE organizations.
- Meet with employer to evaluate employer needs (PDA).
- Establish partnerships to produce an action plan for hiring disabled individuals. Follow the credo of “small steps – small pilots”.
- The principles of the campaigns must align with the principles of any unions in the organization, and they should be seen as an ally to this process. Develop labour/management partnerships with organizations that target hiring of disabled individuals. In Quebec, 40% of employees are unionized. Promoting non-standardization to address employment of persons whom are disabled needs to be discussed with labour to get buy-in. Implicate unions, especially in the awareness and integration training.

Next steps Strategy no. 3

- Take the information from this session and identify key people in the industry and in small and medium enterprises, and use this type of information to dispel myths and explore what is achievable. This would be a de facto education process for employers in the industry, and would be non-threatening, address their fears and be enlightening so that a potential way forward can be formulated without discomfort. It therefore needs to be employer driven. Building networks and personal relationships between stakeholders must be part of the first step.
- Develop a national pilot project across the country to engage community partners with the CPSC to create excitement within other sector councils. Find federal/provincial funding partners. There is a need to focus on emphasizing disability awareness to employers, and understanding the jobs of employers, so that there is a good match of employee and jobs.
- Lead and encourage other councils to address similar issues to engage a wider group of potential employers. Pool resources and increase inter-council awareness to increase effectiveness. Conducting a survey could be one way of measuring interest among other councils, and identifying a potential way forward, attitude and feasibility of next steps.



Appendix C: Newcomers RTD Report

**Newcomers to Canada Workshop
Day one**

May 15, 2005

Introduction (7:15 pm)

Step one:

Between 1967 and 2020, choose two events that demonstrated a milestone in the newcomer/plastic history or that will demonstrate a milestone if such is known at this time (relating to you personally or to your organization).

Historical account provided by:

- 10 participants, including 1 industry representative
- Identification of plastics as a priority industry, 2nd only to auto industry, ~\$40 B annually (Charles)
- Par-Pak experience. 450 employees, 4 plants in Brampton, 1 in UK, 2 in US
 - Entrepreneur recognizes new people have to take over the helm of the company to take it to the next level, and be a world-wide player
 - Question is how to get skill talent pool they need

Q: What do you want to get out of today/tomorrow?

- Establish supply-demand connections.
- How can we help make this industry an option for internationally trained chemists, engineers, and other newcomers to Canada?
- What are employers willing to invest to allow for these opportunities, including training?
- Closer working partnerships with agencies.
- How can we (as “supply” organizations) help employers, with respect to language or other issues?
- Determine diversity of this industry.
- How can we bring employers on board, as marketing/hiring agencies?
- What is the reason for focusing on new Canadians?
- Is there a plan already in place to market to new Canadians?

Introductions

Michael Lam, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. – 12 locations, 6 delivering employment services. Organization has been in place for 30 years. Michael has been in place for 12 years.

Shelley Das – National Visibility Minority Council – replacing Kate Blair, but representing NVMC. Minorities include native born as well as externally born. Are we looking at only new Canadians or also at those who have been here since 1980s? Sat with 19 sector councils last fall (which ones?) to discuss some of these issues. Found that all sector councils are having the same problem about accessing visible minorities. Here today to help make that link between sector councils and minority groups.

Caroline Poole, Mosaic – 30 years. Does marketing and works with employers to get the minorities together with employers.

Gurmeet Bambrah, Council to Access to Professional Engineering - 900 members have professional certificates, from 64 countries. 55% not employed, 29% employed but not in engineering, 16% employed in engineering but only 2% in meaningful positions. Here looking for opportunities in plastics: 2 points of interest – wants to bridge differences in work place culture; also looking for ways that highly skilled people (>12 years background) can provide some mentorship to take organizations to next level. Main issue is cultural/language disconnects.

Anaheet Sethna, Par-Pak. Looking for right people, regardless of where training has taken place. Has an OPS and a PET line, both vertically integrated, with sheet extrusion included. Mostly Chinese and Indian workers are being recruited, because both countries have these kinds of skills, talents and training. Looking for PET people, also millwrights – typically found that Eastern European countries provide the best skills, i.e. a journeyman who has been in the field for 4 years (these walk on water and spit out loonies). Typically these people tend to work in the plastics industry/enterprise for a while and then go to the auto industry.

Terri Hylton – Jobs, Vision, Success Toronto - providing access to internationally trained professionals. 620 clients per year, mostly engineers. Most positions they seek require a licence, and JVS is trying to get quick access for these people. The plastics industry may be an option.

Godwin Eni, Vancouver Multicultural Society, is a retired academic with 3 years in non-profit organizations, and has been a VP of several councils in BC. VMS is oldest non-profit in BC. Many more new Canadians making requests in last 3 years to have VMS direct them to opportunities. Has been looking at ways of identifying impediments. What are the various areas that can benefit from plastic sectors? What are the ways to build linkages to new Canadians?

Channah Cohen, Woodgreen Community Services – settlement councillor – agency has been around since 1928. Channah is working with an adult employment team as well as those who are newcomers. This group represents lots of engineers too. Hoping to find out about diversity in plastics sector. Hoping to find really good things that can help link up to employers. Also looking for ways to link up and help women.

Mohja Alia – Halifax. Has been working with MISA as an employment counsellor for the last 8 years. MISA was established in 1980. Had no clue about plastics industry, and was amazed about what was there. Wants a way of getting and keeping good communication with employers, and those who can help get professionals and trades people into the labour force.

Mamadou Diop, CAMO – 2 sector committees in Quebec. Works with the handicapped and newcomers. Works with the province, and is responsible for developing a strategy on integration, retention and Most activities come from partnering with employers, organizations like CPSC, and government, and works on ways of integrating newcomers and disabled into various work sectors. Approach to integration is to involve employee and employer to ensure that both are aware of issues, to ensure proper fit. Is aware there are a lot of opportunities in plastics industry, and is looking for ways to fit in.

Fred Marcon, HR, Atlantic Packaging. Atlantic Packaging has 13 manufacturing plants employing 2000 people. Fred is an immigrant. Wonders how we can communicate with people with great skills but not necessarily knowledgeable of plastics.

Quick history of the industry

Process: Relate one event for each organization, which is of relevance to today/tomorrow.

New participants at this point were:

- Richard Irvine – Sealed Air Corp (bubble wrap), Director of personnel development
- Colleen Fleming – CareerEdge CEO President. Mandate is to find growth, now that pilot programs have been successful
- Aurelia Tokaci, Settlement and Immigration Services Organization – working with employers

1990 – influx of people from Hong Kong. From 2000 on, lots of people came from China, and we started to have a lot of problems with getting jobs for these immigrants. Hong Kong and Chinese immigrants had different English capabilities, which caused problems for agencies (Michael Lam)

1995 – 2005 20,000 job vacancies in plastics industry each year in those years. Has outgrown every other industry by 3 times in those years. CPSC formed in 2000. (Charles Brimley). \$40 B industry in 2004. Packaging = 40%, auto = 20%, 16% = construction, etc

1977 – Human Rights code in place. Now we have an avenue to fight against barriers visible minorities might face. 1988 brought the latest review of multiculturalism act. 1991 - Canadian Labour Refugee Board. (Shelley Das)

2003 – 70% of population aided were maintenance people. A new internship program has been developed for all types of occupations, and has an 80% retention rate. It has now been given to employers to administer. (Mamadou Diop)

2002 – added another language centre location (English language training). 2003/4 – occupational fact sheets for foreign trained professionals, developed with feds and province money. (Caroline Poole)

2003 – NS new immigration policy. 2005 – New Beginnings program for newcomers in Canada. Some rural clients cannot access services, so have gone online, with help from various college sites etc. (Modja Alia)

1985-2004 – Largest wave of professionals to Canada. 15 fold increase of IT professionals, 10 fold increase in engineers, 4 fold increase in managers. 2004 – started an online survey of engineers. 2005 – holding 6 roundtables to review opportunities for engineers, this is to end in 2006. (Gurmeet Bambrah)

1945 – Grenofski family started Atlantic Packaging. (Fred Marcon)

2000 – growing interface between immigrants and corporate organizations (Kraft, Canadian Tire, Deloitte, etc). There has been some success in finding jobs for newcomers. 2002 – growth of a multicultural client base, from many countries. (Channah Cohen)

A Pakistani person started Par-Pak. She speaks 3 languages plus English. Self made employer. Looks for right talent/skills, regardless of whether they are internal or external. 2004 - Price of gas really affected price of product (for resin) to make sheets for extrusion. Also “blue box” program lobbying by CPIA allowed cost to be downloaded to purchaser. (Amreeth Sethna)

1998 – Multiculturalism act allowed all Canadians to practice their own culture and to participate in the economy. (Godwin Eni)

2003 - Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) has been re-branded to be inclusive of others. Have been able to develop partnerships for ethno specific communities. 2005 – JVS won a number of federal bids, and have been able to service many other communities. (Terri Hylton)

2003 - Pilot programs to date of 225 paid internships for 12 months. Deal with people in manufacturing and non-regulated fields. 85% have found work in the field they were in, and 65% in their host firm. Looking at participating in sector council environment. Looking to work with more small and medium enterprises (SME). (Barbara Nowers – CareerBridge/CareerEdge)

Baby boomers – 1945 – 1965 in, 1995 – 2015 out. By 2011 the labour rate growth is going to be totally fed by immigration.

HEADLINES (in 2008, with respect to the plastics sector and newcomers)

Vision: Question to participants: In 2008, what will the CPSC, Newcomers to Canada Organizations and the Plastics industry employers have in place?

Scenario: You are the Editor of a Newsletter and you want to present a plastic industry and newcomers employment/workforce feature. What is in place today (in 2008)? What is the lead story?

- 1 Canadian Plastics Sector announces innovations in use of alternative energy production processes (G)
- 2 Canadian Plastics Sector excels in OTJ training for newcomers (F)
- 3 First batch of plastic sector trained graduates from Humber College (F)
- 4 CPSC and non-profit organizations achieve 100% employment placement (Charles pointed out that the agencies have to do the employment, CPSC acts as catalyst) (E)
- 5 New Canadians find employment through CPSC and non-profit collaboration
- 6 CPSC and nonprofits partner with employers (i.e. work together to facilitate change)
7. CPSC champions implementation of diversity policy on sector wide basis. (In CPSC, diversity policy is implemented to promote immigrants to higher career achievements; firms would be encouraged to add diversity program – this could be an integrated approach, both from the employer side and from the supplier side. Hiring, retention, ethno cultural diversity,...)
8. CPSC award for highest newcomer employment rate goes to Company X (because diversity is so critical, award will act as a catalyst to get sector moving)
9. Plastics sector has most underemployed professional work force (even if diversity is achieved, professionals will go to where the jobs are, not necessarily to the professional jobs). “Alternate employment programs” come out with underemployed support workers rather than being professional workers. This is antithesis to the desired end. (Some argument here – go where the jobs are, or, go where you want to work – issue is not underemployment for plastics industry, but underpayment is.) Immigration plays a role here.
10. Plastics industry info online has record # of hits from newcomer clients. (Have to create this for newcomers)
11. Newcomers to Canada flood positions in plastics industry. (Plenty of info available from plastic sector, inside and outside Canada, so there is awareness of this sector as an employment choice)
12. Newcomers key to maintaining plastic growth and productivity (This is a reality now in some firms. This will certainly be the key to health in the future in the industry) (E)
13. CPSC semi-annual job fair focussing on diversity a huge success with employers.

**Newcomers to Canada Workshop
Day 2**

May 16, 2005

Main Themes (focus on outcomes)

HEADLINE CLUSTERING (**bolded** items were given most emphasis by group)

- A. Awards (**Public Relations?** Recognition? Incentives?)
- B. Diversity (Diversity management through policy development, job fair, strategic HR management?, builds onto idea among management that this is just part of the continuum, CEO buy-in, acculturation of diversity into the industry, education as well as awareness. **Awareness and Education**)
- C. **Awareness Campaign** (Information Dissemination)
- D. Partnering (Partnership? Employer engagement? Multi-stakeholder engagement? **3Ps?**)
- E. Breakthroughs (Employment outcomes? Success? Metrics? Better alignment of jobs? Successful skills connections?)
- F. CPSC programs for entry into plastic sectors (Charles: lots on new public post-secondary training for plastics industry, at working level. Question: any projections as to what skill sets will be needed in 2008? Not really, 3rd survey is ready to go out to industry this year, but will not be specific to a firm or occupation – more macro in review. May be able to say by 2008 that shortages are better understood. Strategic training is needed – i.e. training does not have to be formal training but can be targeted or OTJ training by employers as well as by colleges.)
Q: What is the investment in training? What is the level of strategic investment in training? Capacity building? Capacity of talent pool versus skills required? Gap analysis?
Q: How much training do firms do? – A: Lots. Seldom able to get people with specific skills from colleges, the firms have to do specific training.
Q: How much of the work force is operational, how much is value-added? A: 10% is value added. Also, the line work force, which is about 60% of work force, has to be English speaking, computer literate, with high school training. Work force has to be able to interact, have a **good work ethic**, etc – these are important to getting a consistent, execution-oriented task done. Not a lot of creativity is required on the production line – the other 30% of the work force does need a bit of creativity, and these have to be computer literate, and can have technical/creative skills that come from universities or community college. Community colleges cannot satisfy the need for line people. Areas of leadership may have some challenges in the future – there may be some problems in these areas with some newcomers. Newcomers need to have their education equivalents assessed and provided on a document for the employer. Expectations on both sides have to be managed – employer has to provide benefit to investors, employee has to understand that their skill set must match requirement.

G. Innovations (Roadblock re perception of industry being a bad environmental choice? CPIA is really responsible for that area, rather than CPSC. **Career information?** Public information issue?)

CLUSTERS

Setting Practical Measurable Objectives/Employment Outcomes

Headlines 4, 9, 11, 12

Capacity Building to a new level ((Employees, Employers, Candidates) Strategic training)

Headlines 2, 3

3Ps – Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement

Headlines 5, 6

Awareness and Education/Public Relations Campaign for Employers, Employees, Candidates

Headlines 7, 13 (Diversity Management); Headlines 1, 8, 10 (Public Relations Campaign)

Roadblocks

Process: Make a list of 5 roadblocks individually that appear from this vision. Pair it down to 3 in a team.

General Comments:

(Charles B) This is only one initiative of the CPSC. There is also the career awareness initiative and a recognition program/certification program. Also a labour market research program on issues plaguing the industry – example, retention and turnover issue, which is a problem for many SME but which is NOT a problem for others – CPSC is looking at those that are being successful. Also developing standards for industry. This initiative is looking more at the mature market (i.e. career changers).

Godwin likes the fact that CPSC is looking at firms that are doing best practices, and are truly reacting to the issues brought to the table by the workforce. The CPSC diskette is informative about the plastics sector.

Terri – what are the salary ranges? Industry reps respond that it is from entry level, to almost 6 figures for specific skills. Industry notes it depends on what is being made by the firm. Example, plastic bags has a low return, so you have returns from \$9 for line work to \$40 for supervisors/managers. Average may be \$20/hour.

Another issue may be heat in injection moulding firms; smaller firms may pay less, larger firms may tend to pay more.

Definition: Flexographic printing press – prints on plastics bags.

Quality control people can be line people who have moved up from the line, or it can be ISO level type of inspectors who are engineering trained (community college or university), and who can recommend adjustments to machines.

Results

Easiest roadblocks to associate with:

- 1) Competition: Global economy – China taking raw materials driving prices up, then bringing product here; Canadian \$, competitiveness, cost of housing all impact job market. Jobs are lost offshore, bringing pressures on the supply market. There is very little that the industry can do about it, as it is mostly an externality. There is also competition for the same pool of talent from other sectors, and from other major developed country in the world. (Possible issue: simple products may be going offshore, complex products may be able to a competitive business.)
- 2) General awareness, 2-way. There is a problem where serving agencies have very little knowledge of industry, and vice versa.
- 3) Attitudes and expectations, employees and employers. I.e. employee comes here with expectations; similarly employer needs to look at his attitude. Both have to keep with their existing activities until we come up with a strategy.
- 4) Language skills issue: those who come with relevant language skills get hired; otherwise no. Has to be French in Quebec.
- 5) Work environment, perception of industry, access to industry info, employer/employee relationship positive: It is easier for an employee to do well if they see their work as a positive thing. Also, employers have a perception of newcomer employees, and so there is work to do there for the employer to be accepting to ensure that good synergism is there, and that employees see the industry as being a positive one.
- 6) Gap with respect to work information relevancy. Information gap at accreditation bodies may mean they evaluate your education background, but may not take into account your work history and may not accredit you. Also, resumes may indicate newcomers have a degree, and 10 years experience, but the employer wants more info on the 10 years since it is often more important. Often employment counsellors, who do not know how to work with services that work first hand with newcomers, may dismiss any experience that is not Canadian.
- 7) Language – must be able to work in one of the official languages. Also, there is confusion between classroom learning and experiential language. Accents are also an issue. Need to also note that a \$9 employee should not be expected to understand everything that a manager would understand.

8) Matching the job opportunity to the talent. If cream of the crop newcomer comes to Canada, and then they work below their capacity, that talent will leave the country or they will not be as productive as they could be.

Other roadblocks

9) Need for essential skills. There are some fundamental skills that people need.

10) Lack of essential resources, e.g. computers, transportation. Example around Toronto, public sector does not provide transportation for people who work shift work, lack of computer means you can't go on Monster.com.

11) HR planning resources. In small companies, don't have enough resources to do effective planning to forecast the resources they need. Maybe there could be an organization that could help SME (less than 200 people) to do this kind of work. Charles – may be able to launch a virtual HR department, in the next couple of months on the CPSC site. Could include links to CIC, etc.

12) Lack of industry focused training for newcomers. Some training is available in the market, but it is mainstream. Very little training for people coming into plastics (language training, short term training, ...).

13) Confusing English skills as a bona fida skill with adequate communication skills. What are we asking of the newcomers – is it good enough to be functional/safe, or does the employer want something more? Very difficult to identify common tools

14) Employer expectations with respect to skills. Need to clearly communicate what employers expect of an employee.

15) Newcomers are underrepresented in skilled trades. Tradesmen from Europe no longer coming in, Certification of Qualification no longer being shown as often as before.

16) Stakeholder responsibility. Who is responsible for certifying? Who is responsible for making labour market info available? Who is responsible for ... ? There are many different areas of responsibility, and the question is who should be responsible for those areas?

17) Appreciation of importance of safety issues. Not all cultures have the same level of awareness and concept of importance of safety.

18) No reward system for employer training. Should be a program to reward it.

19) Policies – immigration credentials

20) FCR (Foreign Competency Recognition) – not just formally, but also work history in the job in terms of job functions.

- 21) Partnerships are mutually beneficial. Employer/immigrant, government, sector, organizations should combine.
- 22) Information availability and analysis. (Strategic or tactical?) Targeted tactical approach or comprehensive macro approach?
- 23) Matching immigration criteria to employers needs.
- 24) Ability to realize potential is 2-way. Must be seen from employees' view as well as from employers' side to realize employees potential.
- 25) Collaboration or sharing of info within industry. Wants to see more info on policies from other re compensation data
- 26) Access to employment industry information. This is not downloaded to community level.
- 27) Brain drain viz a viz capitalization of the info of talents. Employers are not capitalizing on the loss of other countries/sectors brains.
- 28) Different cultures (perspective)

Clustering Roadblocks (by number) under Root Causes

Access to Information/Training Resources. 10, 11, 12 Important on part of all parties involved (employers, employees, newcomers). Often there is no problem with computers because counsellors do have info about computers and do disseminate it, and newcomers do tend to have good computer info. There also is info about where industry is, and counsellors do have that info. There may have to be some will among employers to get together for "the common good", to get collaboration in the industry.

No general strategy at a practical level. 1, 25 No generalized competition strategy for Canada, and, as a newcomer it would be nice to pick up all this info/concern about the plastics industry. I.e. a how-to document (1-pager) to ask these questions. (Charles: see the little pamphlet)

No comprehensive industry standards have been communicated. 2, 5, 21, 16, 17, 26, 28 (although as Charles says, it has been developed, as of January) There is little general awareness in the public. Work environment – there is limited understanding of health concerns. Partnerships – nothing known of plan. Stakeholder responsibility is not articulated. No generalized approach in industry for info sharing. Template needed for industry to deal with different cultures. Collaboration is required.

Being afraid of change. 3, 9, 14, 24, 27 Attitudes and expectations modification implies change of behaviour, and need to go through change. Behavioural change, lack of ability to understand, and being afraid of change is the root cause of all this.

Lack of common understanding of language skills required 4, 7, 13 Lack of understanding on both sides (newcomers as well as others). It is not so much a problem of having good English ability as having an industry specific vocabulary.

No incentive to hire immigrants. 18 Especially when you have someone next door who has no “deficiencies”

Not matching information to job competencies. 6, 20, 22, 23, 15, 19, 8 Gap exists where left hand doesn’t know what right hand is doing.

Questions that a newcomer has: What experience do I need? What language requirements do I need? Where are the jobs? What qualifications do I need? How do I go about getting it? What are the wages? What are the promotion opportunities? What do other people think about the job? What do I do if I do not have job satisfaction?

Strategies

So, Capacity has to be built. Partnerships have to be built. The roadblocks stand in our way. What might be some of the first steps as a way forward – i.e. within the next 12 months? How much influence does the CPSC have on the industry? Depends on the project.

Next steps Strategy no. 1

1. Survey Industry - around employment and products
2. Invest in skills training – by targeting existing immigrants and new Canadians. Allocate budget for this.
3. Access – link with settlement agencies through promotional activities/materials or online portal. An external to Canada and internal portal would be useful. Obtain info from Immigration Canada re newcomers coming into Canada. Clients can then be referred to agencies working with newcomers through websites etc.
4. Outcome – employment. Agencies would know what is being looked for, and employers would know what is available, and employees would know what is needed.

Next steps Strategy no. 2

5. Have to work with immigration Canada to ensure that the portal “coming to Canada” is a one stop centre have actually started to work with Immigration Canada in that way. Has to be able to overcome barriers.
6. Include specific targeted questions to industry stakeholders on these kinds of barriers to newcomers.
7. Establish reciprocal links to websites (agencies, CIC, employers, ...). May be able to link to umbrella agency rather than all individual websites. CIC may already have this. Also, CPSC could have a button on their website that says “Newcomers”. I.e. there has to be reciprocal type of links to keep it a one shop stopping.

Next steps Strategy no. 3

8. Communication strategy with a circular flow of information, to all stakeholders.
9. Stakeholders would be: federal government, unions, provincial governments, educational institutions, media, immigrant organizations, industry, and immigrants. Sector council is in the centre of all these stakeholders, and links are made to all stakeholders. Info passed here to ensure that all stakeholders' responsibilities are identified for each of these stakeholders.
10. Assessment strategy for the plastics industry – there is none at the moment, so can provide a web link to places that do have this info, or provide assistance on how to write resume with keywords for the plastics industry. Work related experience would be expanded out to show skills. Note also that the newcomer comes to Canada, but in fact they come to a province, and each province has a very different set of guidelines. Federal government does not provide sufficient info about what a person has to do in order to get his or her own certification in Canada/the province.
11. Education, work experience, transferable skills, language functional abilities – say how fluent they are, and make sure they have proper care in putting the resume together.

Next steps Strategy no. 4

12. Outreach strategy – looking for core competencies and transferable skills.
13. Communications strategy
14. Change frame of reference. The root cause is the fear of change. As you begin to change, you look at the common denominators rather than the differences. If someone has been able to give you good services, look at their core capabilities and accentuate the possibilities of commonality. Has to be a strategy to align immigrant expectations with employer expectations.

Commonalities

Survey industry (1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10) (Establish web links to all groups and ensure that it is complete)

Outreach strategy is to change the frame of reference (12, 14)

Communication strategy (3, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13)

Comments

Michael Lam – push the provincial orgs to help talented pool get into the work force

Mamadou – We need to expand our thinking to not only newcomers, but to all visible minorities in Canada.

Shelley – hope that can meet before 2008 to continue dialogue

Mohja – good to have the employers at the table

Richard – knows there is going to be demographic crunch. Glad to see the CPSC is working on this now rather than when the problem hits.

Godwin – don't lose the momentum, and keep in touch

Caroline – looking forward to continued communication with CPSC and with other in the room to ensure employment

Terri – looking forward to working with employers, and expanding horizons

Bambreh – not sure that all her expectations were met, and that many of her community are essentially overqualified, but 10% of her people may have some benefit from her presence here

Amreeth – glad to find there are resources around, like the CPSC and all of his initiatives on his website

Aurelia – opportunities are out there, and there is work for all of us to realize the opportunities.



Appendix D: Women's RTD Report

**Women's Workshop
Day one**

May 29 and 30, 2005

Introduction (7:15 pm)

Issues:

- Cost of resin has increased due to the price of gas
- Low skill/low cost labour going overseas
- R&D pressures to innovate to stay competitive
- Exchange rate – lower US dollar producing less income in Canadian dollars
- Finding competent staff to work in growing company
- Invisible sector
- Work in plastic is intimidating to women – lack the confidence to tackle large machinery

Step one:

Between 1967 and 2020, choose two events that demonstrated a milestone in the women's area/plastic history, or that will demonstrate a milestone if such is known at this time.

Results of historical account:

- 2002 – developed re-entry program towards employment in Annapolis Valley in non-traditional areas for women. The Digital Divide report was written. Doreen has been in the WEEconomic Society, CED network for 10 years. (Doreen Parsons)
- 2005 - built partnership with Hypatia on a provincial basis, and worked with colleges to develop a larger scale project.
- 1991 – pre-cursor to Alberta Women's Science Network sponsored job shadowing experience and conference for grade 8 girls to encourage them to take math, engineering, science careers (e.g. oil patch). 1993 – further development of provincial program ran in 9 different areas in Alberta. It is still running in northern areas. It developed into the Alberta Women's Science Network in 1993 (parents, teachers and volunteers are members). (Joyce Luethy)
- 1996 – FNHRDCQ founded as a *Development Commission of Quebec* organization to manage agreements between PQ and Assembly of First Nations. The organization has responsibility for delivering AHRDAs strategy. Employment programs are developed for Indians living off reserve, and other programs are developed for on reserve people (e.g., go back to school, entry level job, etc.). Clients are poorly educated, and typically don't have a high school diploma – 60% are women, and 45% are between 15 and 29. Provision of training programs is the focus of services. University programs are partners for training. 2003 - training program developed for aboriginal women in Quebec. Off reserve day care for aboriginal women is created. 15 women graduated and all have a job. Developing partnerships is key to making things different. (Francine Bucknell)
- 1981 – DIFQ from Quebec City was founded. It is promoted by Spanish women who help immigrant women settle in Quebec City. 2004 - provincial government cut funding to the organization and we are searching for other partnership with government. The Program "Speak Your Language" promoted pairing up with other women to learn to speak French, and has been successful. (Attribution unknown??)

- 1996 – career management in BC. Grass roots consortium requested demographic information to help career development in the community. This group connects with people who are no longer in the educational system but are looking to enter the workforce. (Career Management Association of BC – Teresa Augustine)
- 2004 – participated in national strategy to provide information at the right time to assist the career making decision. Phase 1 is mapping out who will be involved in the career development committee. Phase 2 involves testing a new on-line tool, to be available in fall, 2005. (??)
- 1919 – Year that Canadian Federation of University Women was founded. Women were isolated at that time if they were educated. CFUW afforded a social and education component so that women could be encouraged to continue higher education and forge careers for themselves. There are clubs across Canada. In clubs we vote on resolutions (6-7 per year) drawn up by the individual clubs and if they are forwarded at the annual meeting, they are presented to relevant bureaucracy units in the government of Canada. The government is approaching CFUW for policy formulation and consultation. 1929 – women are recognized as persons, and this gave a boost to our organization. (Ann McCormack)
- 1974 - Native Women’s Association of Canada, Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia has 13 territorial organizations. 1995 – Bill C-31 is the foundation to association. Through it, status was regained if lost by marriage or enlistment in the army. The NWAC NS concentrates on women and youth, and does a lot of work developing partnerships. (Valerie Whynot? Cherylyn Billy?)
- 1999 - ARDHA strategy undertaken. There are 79 across Canada. This association focuses only on women, and provides access to resources, education, and eliminating discrimination. 13 regional offices provide employment and training services. There are ARDHAs in each province. They provide services to off-reserve women, and 17,000 native women are represented. The Association is looking for partnership to supplement funding and help women. (??)
- 1973 – Royal Commission on Women. Government started to pay attention to government policies affecting women in Canada. There is a lot of pressure to have another one in Canada. (??)
- 2005 - Working in the BC Ministry of Community Aboriginal and Women's Services. Short-term political objectives are my world. Focus: to get women in high paid non-traditional jobs. (Kaye Melliship)
- NS Advisory Council on the Status of Women – Matrimonial Property Rights. Accessing matrimonial property for women after marriage. No equitable division of property before the legislation. (Maureen O’Connell)
- Oil and Gas administration re: plastic association (??)
- 2004 – worked on project involving composite plastics in Lunenburg to encourage women to gain employment. (??)
- Native Council of Nova Scotia. Aboriginal Training (ARDHA no. 1, of 2 in Nova Scotia) off reserve. There are 3 offices across the province, in Truro, Sydney and Liverpool. The NCNS was recognized by the federal government as one of the first aboriginal organizations in Canada. 2005 - 13 programs are offered by NCNS (employment, language, fishing, oil and gas, environment, etc.). (Valerie Whynot)

- 1999 – Hypatia Association created to promote the full participation of women in science, technology and trade in NS. The organization identifies systemic issues via research. It is not in business to “fix women”. Their core issue is systemic discrimination. 2004 - initiated a new project called “New Traditions” which works with employers to identify the cultural and environmental issues that act as barriers to women in advancement/employment. 2005 - Data on employment of women in NS in trade and technology shows that if the current rate of employment is continued, we would achieve employment equity in 2050. Data shows .5% were hired in technology related areas, whereas 4.6% were hired in trades. Previous rates were 1.1% in 1991 and 4.6% in 2001. The rate of employment growth is very slow. (Nan Armour)
- 1630 – company (Copal?) was started. Made armour and swords at that time. (Susan Boone/Karen MacPherson?). 1999 – joined company the year it opened in St John NB. (??). 1994 – year started with company as assistant to the president (??). 2000 – 5 men ran the company, and all retired at once. ?? was promoted but was scared at the challenge. Both Susan Boone and Karen MacPherson were promoted.
- 1967 - *The Graduate* is released. “The future is plastics.” (??)
- 2000 - Canadian Plastics Association was founded, originally in the Metro Toronto area. Now, as CPIA, all employers across Canada are represented and there are offices across the country. (Duncan Cross)

Summary:

Many stories were exchanged about women in the plastics sector. They were very moving and very inspirational.

Day 2

Recap: 8:30

Vision: Question to participants: In 2008, what will the CPSC, women’s group HR organizations, and the Plastics industry employers have in place? (Process: done individually, then in groups)

Scenario: You are the Editor of a Newsletter and you want to present a plastic industry and women’s employment/workforce feature. What is in place today (in 2008)? What is the lead story?

Lead stories:

Main Themes (focus on outcome)

- *Plastics go to high school in community.* There is a need to raise awareness of the industry. There are two main audiences: those seeking a career when in school; and, those seeking a career when in the workforce. The communication must be targeted at the age group.
- *Plastic employers take leadership role in engaging women for industry.* For success to occur, leadership must come from the industry. This concept needs buy-in from the plastics industry, and authentic leadership for recruitment of women. A group of employers that are committed or seen as champions in the industry must lead in the recruitment of women.

- *Vision Leadership.* Create vision and leadership in the industry, focusing on women. The Vision will have leadership (by women?) as its dominant focus.
- *Partnerships established to create recruitment strategy to engage women.* Community organizations, employers from industry, and academic institutions must all be partners engaged in the recruitment of women for the industry, to ensure the strategy succeeds.
- *Gender equity policy is in place in the Plastics industry.* The industry embraces partnership; champions the employment of women to aim for full participation; and promotes recruitment and retention.
- *Higher profile for plastics* is required to educate the public as to who we are and what we do, and must be specially focused on women to inform them of the industry.
- *Websites redesigned for plastics industry have women fully profiled/visible on website.* CPSC/CPIA Careers in Plastics website, Emploie Quebec, ... all are dismal in profiling women in plastics.
- *Awareness, information and recruitment.* Everyone knows about the plastics industry, particularly those in high school and in the community – with the focus on women’s awareness – because of how it is presented.
- More work has to be done within an industry with HR challenges, and there are many challenges in the future. HR will be helping employers in the industry promote changes that will concentrate on hiring selected groups.
- *Girls aware of future in plastics industry.* Career information is provided on youth apprenticeship. Girls become aware of industry, maybe starting in high school. There is increased interest at a younger age of work in the plastic industry. This is encouraged by visiting a manufacturing company and getting involved with apprenticeship programs to explore the possibility of a career.
- *Plastic champions identified.* This is all part of putting an image in front of an audience. Bring Champions forward and let them tell their story. This is much more motivating than reading a pamphlet. People get more engaged when they can relate it to an individual. Champions within the industry have to promote gender equity, and to carry the message outside.
- *Better work/life balance. An accommodation strategy for women is available.* This will address one of the reasons why women have difficulty pursuing careers. There are too many opportunities for them to leave a career; policies are needed to make it possible for women to pursue a career.
- *Gender equity policy in place in plastic industry.* Policy needs to be implemented properly, with training and applications for recruitment and retention.
- *Plastics will be investing in partnerships re: solutions.* An integrating delivery strategy will be available and will bring sector council information to end users. Intermediaries (teachers, HR professionals) will be brought in to to build awareness among them.
- *My mother is a Plastic Engineer.* Work is required on achieving successful culture changes. Several examples are required of the industry where women, placed in management and technical positions, tell of their work in being accommodated via culture awareness.

Story Headlines Clusters:

- **Plastics Employers Champion Women.** Who: leadership, champions in gender equity. How: Vision, Gender equity policy and training within plastics industry.
- **Plastics are a *future* for Women – the future is not just about *graduating*.** Women finding careers in Plastic Industry. Plastics Industry is employer of choice for women. Life in Plastics – It’s fantastic for women. Higher profile for plastics among women. Redesign website, improve recruitment and retention awareness, make girls aware of plastics. High school students should be the focus of plastics industry.
- **Breaking the Plexiglas Ceiling.** Plastics Industry is Family Friendly. Plastics Industry is employer of change for Women, and is working on successful culture changes, HR, and work/life balance
- **Partnership Links Attract Women to Plastic Industry.** Industry accessing underrepresented labour pools. Partnerships aimed at gender recruitment. Partnerships with established networks in plastics to increase representation of women. Partners promote Plastics. National Integrated Delivery Strategy. (Teresa) *Don’t use **target** and women in same sentence – it perpetuates the theme of violence towards women.*

Vision Statement (as written by Gerard with assistance from a few women...)

*“Active partnerships among industry associations, employers, and a diversity of government, labour, education, community and women’s organizations succeed in **opening** the door for women to a career in plastics and **morphing** through Plexiglas ceilings in a **pro-active** plastics manufacturing sector!”*

Roadblocks

Process: Working in groups, make a list of 5 roadblocks that appear from this vision.

Results

- Workforce is not ready for women – managers, leaders and employees are not ready for the integration, causing a negative experience for new entrants.
- Funding may be limited – extra funding is required to address issues/recommendations. Lack of resources to groups working with women (government provides limited funding) means projects must be framed and driven through the system in an appeal for resources.
- The mental model drives everything else in an organization. It must be authentic in what it wants to accomplish. Stereotypes and attitudes are not now appealing to women. This significantly impacts the partnerships in moving forward. There must be a shared mental model of what needs to be done.
- Knowledge of women’s issues – industry does not understand issue regarding women in the workforce, what is required to make the employer more woman-friendly, and what needs to change in the workplace to accommodate women (e.g. put lock on washroom to keep men out).

- Developing and co-ordinating the partnership, and specifically defining who would be engaged in the partnership. The people who are engaged must be able to make decisions and they are and will be in diverse positions within the industry. The logistics of co-coordinating partnership are significant, requiring a lot of attention and expertise. It is important that the role be given value and made important to build trust and to move it forward on an ongoing basis.
- Access to information – information on industry needs to be given full coverage. It has to include where to get training, where the jobs are, and what the industry accomplishes. This communication needs to be sustained, and the key to doing so is to focus on what is practical.
- Accessibility of all groups to shared vision. Have more discussions like the round table discussions. This is how to make sure that employers are made aware of all community groups and their issues in employment.
- Images of trades and technology: Women do not see themselves in trades and technology. The image is not positive for women.
- Girls don't see themselves in the industry, and there is a negative perception (among girls?) of the industry. These two issues need to be addressed.
- Enabling and supporting the partnerships requires funding and resources. Industry should also come to table to financially support endeavours.
- Union culture promotes seniority, flexibility, and a collective approach. Women need equity and it must be made possible for businesses to introduce initiatives that will promote this. Seniority sometimes works against women's ability to make plastics their career choice.
- Educators must become busy in the distribution of information. They do not see how classroom education relates to workplace preparation. Students are not made aware of the industry or its significance to them. Educators do not relate learning to careers to curriculum. Educators do not use material from [Sector Councils] to teach students. The purpose of learning needs to better match opportunities in workplace.
- The learning environment in a college tends to include information on programs that are male dominated – this is not always the best learning environment for women. Sensitivity needs to be built in at college level to make learning friendlier for women.
- Employers and women have busy and full workloads. Employers are busy and often don't take the time to implement strategy that would support women in the workplace and issues (largely) relevant to women are not a high enough priority to deal with (e.g. childcare and eldercare are roadblocks for women).
- Women are dropping out of or not enrolling in male dominated occupations. 50% of women are enrolled in science and math in high school but are not attending post secondary science and math courses (less than 10% in college). Issues exist around mentoring, and around educational institutions supporting young girls in these programs.
- Women's value: Women are not valuing themselves enough and seeing that they are worth more. Assertiveness is important. They need to recognize they are worth better positions and equal employment. It is a roadblock for some women. There may be an issue of self-esteem.
- Regional differences. Developing the partnerships successfully requires co-ordination to address differences in regions.

Themes: (Clustering of concerns expressed above)

1. **Making Effective Partnerships:** Coordinating regional differences, developing and coordinating the partnership, ensuring accessibility of all groups to shared visions, busy and full workloads of employers and of women, enabling the partnership, funding
2. **The orthodoxy of standardization:** union culture versus individual flexibility, and issues of loss of seniority – however, they (unions?) have goals and purpose common to other groups and they should be within *partnerships*. This applies not only to unions but to other groups.
3. **Resistance to Change:** Knowledge of women’s issues, images of trades and technologies; industry that isn’t ready for a new workforce; women’s self image and of image of industry; women’s value; gender role stereotypes, and attitudes and expectations
4. **Overwhelmed/Challenged Education System:** Educators busy distributing information but they do not know how class room instruction applies; learning environment no conducive to girls/women; Insufficient access to inadequate information; women dropping out of and not becoming involved in post secondary programs in science, trades and technology

Strategies

Group A

- Get leadership buy in.
- Data has to be gathered and research needs to occur to lead to corporate and government funding. We need hard numbers to build a case to ensure policy/strategy works. We have to determine how many people are on stream – there is a lot of research out there that needs to be compiled without bias to ensure corporate buy in to get major change.
- In order to move things forward we need to build a model. Doing so where the need is biggest may be the best strategy. The two largest provinces might want to take the lead, once industry has bought into the idea. Industry is seen as leading the participation and in obtaining funding, without the CPSC taking so much the leadership role.
- Develop a recruitment strategy dealing with educators, parents, women’s organizations, and unions to build activities. This implies parents being involved in career selection for their children. Partnerships would design this strategy and build awareness among women.
- Create a welcoming workplace, suitable in terms of amenities and atmosphere. Women should not feel intimidated by machinery. (This strategy is relevant to all four groups consulted, and there could be one strategy covering all four groups.)
- Action – we need to make some steps to move ahead. We need to focus in on specific, small next steps with CPSC as lead player.

Group B

- Get buy in from leaders by taking diversity to bottom line. Market women into the industry.
- Inform all of the plastics industry on how to make it better for women in the workplace.
- Develop a national job bank for the CPSC website and establish links with government websites, somewhat like Monster.com
- Foster school visits to companies in the industry, and get young people early during their school years to be interested in plastics career, i.e. by visiting the industries, make the unknown, known.
- Conduct a labour study of women in the plastics industry to identify areas for improvement. What are the greatest challenges for women to join the workforce? Use the study as a tool to build awareness about what is conducive to women and employment in their workplace. Inform the industry on how to make it better for women in the workplace.

Group C

- Industry needs to put out a positive image of itself.
- Lobby educational institutions and government to promote/integrate the relevance of classroom learning to workplace skills, and to utilize current tools and strategies in the workplace, e.g. in grade 10, take industry to the school, take kids to work, provide mentorship and training on the job, showcase parents as career practitioners, highlight prior learning and recognition. Have teachers go “AWOL”, and leave the classroom and go to the industry. Pilot internship programs in high school.
- Corporate buy-in is critical for: providing gender training for supervisors, managers and employees; promoting best practices for work/life balance, promotion of policy, and female friendly workplaces; and developing the business case for women in the industry. Move from Rhetoric to Reality.
- Sector Councils (all) are financially supporting partnerships to get information on women in industry and disseminate it to where women are working. Stakeholders are often non-profit organizations that need dollars to support women in plastics sector endeavours.
- Open all of this to all women – be sensitive to their needs too.

Summary from Gerard: Welcoming Workplace

- Understand the workplace (get data). Develop a business case from factual information.
- Task force – “welcoming workplace” program – gives certificate to certify workplace is friendly to employment groups. Create a niche that builds leadership buy in.
- This campaign will promote a positive approach for women and plastics.
- Specific activities/programs can follow on from there. Strategy does not have to be carried out sequentially.

Last comments: What might be some of the first steps? (largely unattributed comments)

CPSC needs to follow up with contacts made this weekend. Continue this work to bring on more partners. We have/need more conventions in partnership area, but we have no \$'s. We can ensure that the right people are at the table and work hard in advancing the agenda. We can also focus on young girls in the workplace and in education/apprenticeship programs. Job creators and career developers need to know about the plastics industry. Plastics is a good example to use to get message out that there are careers available - it does not take much money to fund an initiative but we don't have \$'s and we rely on other government bodies to sustain progress.

Plastics will answer some of the needs of aboriginal people. Women can be given priority and can explore possibilities with the plastics industry regarding partnership. We will share this information with co-workers from other native organizations involved in educational programs, to build strategies.

Session built awareness amongst participating employers about issues relative to women, and how much work is needed to know about our employment practices and how we can make them friendlier to women. It is a real challenge to make things happen but it is the task of the CPSC to follow through and ensure progress.

Creating a welcoming workplace can build a partnership. What can be created from this can be very responsive to employers needs.

Get reacquainted with NOVA to start job-shadowing program. We should expose grade 8 girls to the plastics sector as an awareness-building program. We will get in touch with HR departments and take action now. We see lots of possibilities for working with companies in Calgary.

The passion from the group is contagious.

Promote science and technology in schools. We would like to influence career counsellors in schools to build awareness and spread the word about careers in the plastics industry.

Provincial scale – the strategy has been influenced by this experience, and we need to broaden the partnership. Industry provides much of the training required to work in the industry. From the national perspective, the group should be aware that the work done in NS is groundbreaking. We have lots of data/research and have produced significant reports that may be of interest to CPSC. **(Doreen)**

As employers build awareness within the community about what we do and what we are about, I as a woman should be able to remove stereotypes and I will take an active role in this.

Being part of the industry, we have an opportunity in our community to work with schools and build awareness. It is a bit of a problem because it disrupts our daily schedule – but we have done that in the past and we can do more of that.

25% of the industry is in Quebec province. We are looking forward to partner with CPSC and regional industry in Quebec. We will spread the news to other non-profits.

The session provided an opportunity for native women's issues to be recognized within the broader issues relative to women and employment. Strategies can be borrowed to consider in our mandate. Partnerships can promote "poster women" and show how to profile/showcase them as a means of bringing the industry and women to the forefront. Spreading the news through hearing stories of real people is more useful than stories in magazines.

Process used in session of working from issues to strategy is effective. “Workplaces that work” concept poses 20 questions that can help determine whether it is in fact a “welcoming workplace”. BC is open to partnerships. Would like to help all sectors in Canada. Strategy is transferable to all sectors.

We are engaged in collecting information and distributing it to the community. We now are aware of sector councils, especially the CPSC. We will mention CPSC in speaking engagements (e.g. plastic examples) as we know you better and can send broader messages. **The circle of influence has expanded.**

Will continue to work in company to make it more women friendly.

Small size of group makes it more engaging. There has been lots of opportunity for conversation. Potential for partnership was also made available in past 2 days. There has been the opportunity to share experiences that we have had with other women, and research and reports with the CPSC – it is not necessary to reinvent the wheel on all of this. There is other work that has been done. In addition to the quantitative measurement in industry, it is important to listen to women and their experiences. Women have a different experience than men – it is important to understand women.



Appendix E: Lists of Participants

Participants at Aboriginal Peoples' RTD, Calgary, April 24/24, 2005

Ruby Dreger, Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training
Tom Ghostkeeper, Metis Settlements General Council
Trina Maher, Aboriginal Human Resources Development Council of Canada
David Turner, Designated CAP Rep in AB, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples
Bonny Cann, Metis Nation of Ontario
Mr. Bruce Borstmayer, Qualicase Ltd.
Mrs. Sherry Birkby, Westbridge PET Containers
Mr. Steven Mason, Niigon Technologies Ltd
Linda Domak, Treaty 7 EDC
Jerry Woods, Interprovincial Association on Native Employment
Lynn Johnston, Native Council of Nova Scotia, Aboriginal training and development
Karen Hunt, Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment & Training Association
Michael Sadler, 1st Nations Employment Centre
Don MacNeil, CPSC Board Member
Charles Brimley, CPSC

Participants at Persons with Physical Disabilities RTD, Montreal, May 8/9, 2005

Larry Koopman, Greater Vancouver Business Leadership Network
Norma Ricker, Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work
Paul Brown, Coordinator, Employment Outreach
Dr. Robert Gall, Champions Career Centre
David Holman, March of Dimes, Strategic Employment Solutions Program
Susan Howatt, Canadian Paraplegic Association - Ontario
Denis Lamontagne, SEMO - L'Étape
Sonia Arsenault, SEMO - L'Étape
Sylvain Brunet, Produits de plastiques Age Inc.
Cristina Marques, ACIP - L'Association canadienne de l'industrie des plastiques
Claude Sequin, CAMO
Mme Taing, Association des paraplegiques du Quebec
Marcelle Chamberland, CPSC

Participants at Newcomers' RTD, Toronto, May 15/16, 2005

Ms. Gurmeet Bambrah, Council for Access to Prof. Eng.
Dr. Godwin Eni, The Vancouver Multicultural Society
Caroline Poole, MOSAIC
Terri Hylton, General Manager, Newcomer Services, JVS Toronto
Channah Cohen, Woodgreen Community Services
Michael Lam, S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
Fred Marcon, Atlantic Packaging Products Ltd.
Anaheet F. Sethna, Par-Pak Ltd.
Richard (Dick) Irvine, Sealed Air Cryovac (Canada) Inc.
Mamadou Diop, CAMO - personnes Immigrantes
Barb Nowers, Career Edge Organization
Colleen Fleming, Career Edge Organization
Aurelia Tokaci, Settlement and Integration Services Organization
Shelley Das, National Visible Minority Council on Labour Force Development
Mohja Alia, MISA
Charles Brimley, CPSC

Participants at Women's RTD, Halifax, May 29/30, 2005

Jing Chen, Centre international des femmes, Québec
Valerie Whynot, Native Council of NS Aboriginal Training and Develop.
Susan Conley, HR Manager, Uponor Wirsbo
Torfi Gudmundsson, General Manager, Saeplast Canada Ltd.
Tom Rudolph, Associate Director of HR, Farnell Packaging Ltd.
Susan Boone, Manager of Manufacturing, Copal International Ltd.
Karen MacPherson, Manager of Corporate Services, Copal International Ltd.
Nan Armour, Hypatia Group
Ann V. MacCormack, Canadian Federation of University Women
Kaye Melliship, Ministry of Community Aboriginal and Women's Services, Govt of BC
Doreen Parsons, WEE Society, Women's CED Network
Maureen O'Connell, NS Advisory Council on the Status of Women
Cherylyn Billy, Native Women's Association of Canada
Duncan Cross, CPIA
Joyce Luethy, Alberta Women's Science Network
Teresa Augustine, National Integrated Delivery Strategy, Career Management Association of BC,
Career Info Partnership Network
Francine Buckell, Commission de développement des ressources humaines des premières nations du Québec
Marcelle Chamberland, CPSC