

## An apprenticeship strategy needs to hit all the bases

By: Sandra Dueck, Policy Analyst, Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce

"82% of Ontario businesses who hired in the last year experienced one challenge – usually finding someone with the proper qualifications."

The above statistic is from two surveys by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and is found in "Vote Prosperity: The 2018 Election Platform of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce" which was released last October.

What it tells us is that there is a skills mismatch across the economic spectrum. One of the areas where this mismatch is most prevalent is in the apprenticeship realm. The Peterborough Chamber of Commerce has identified the apprenticeship system as a key driver to the success of urban/rural areas such as ours. However, the system as it is currently creates barriers for employers, apprentices, and would-be apprentices. In 2016, we authored a policy resolution asking the provincial government for the following:

1. Implement a three year pilot project that would allow small and medium-sized employers in rural communities and small urban centers across Ontario to apply for an apprenticeship ratio increase.
2. Compile and assess the data from the pilot project to inform future ratio review discussions.



The Chamber became connected locally to this issue through discussions around apprenticeships with member Fleming College and the Kawartha Trades and Technology Centre, and member businesses in this space. We also sit on a committee led by the three area school boards delivering the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program. The result of this work and Chamber advocacy led to an invitation by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development for us to participate in group discussions around developing a multi-year Ontario Apprenticeship Strategy.

In February of this year that strategy was released. At the outset our commentary about regional priorities and apprenticeship ratios is featured in this strategy which is based on five pillars:

1. Promote Apprenticeship
2. Support and Retain Apprentices
3. Engage and Support Employers and Sponsors
4. Increase the participation of underrepresented groups
5. Update the apprenticeship system through digital enhancement

Under each of the pillars short and long term initiatives are identified.

We see references to the Chamber recommendations above in the short- and long-term initiatives under Pillar 3 Engage and Support Employers and Sponsors where there is discussion about employer consortiums (which were given the green light in the Fall Economic Statement) and regional strategies.

The Ontario Apprenticeship Strategy also commits to a modernized apprenticeship system that is transparent and accountable for outcomes. To that end, the report states that four broad measures to monitor progress will be used initially:

1. The percentage of apprentices completing their training and receiving certification
2. The number of apprentices from underrepresented groups completing training and receiving certification
3. The percentage of apprentices transitioning directly from high school and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program
4. The average age of entry for apprentices

There is also a commitment to working with sector partners to

create a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework.

All of this is good work and we were proud to be part of the strategy to move the apprenticeship system forward.

Federally, the 2018 budget included the creation of the Apprentice Incentive Grant for Women offering yearly \$3000 in grants to women pursuing training in Red Seal trades.

However, this strategy is not quite a homerun. There is an area that is not mentioned once in the report and that is the impact of apprenticeship ratios on 33 trades and how those ratios can hinder employer capacity and the apprentice's ability to find a sponsor, particularly in rural areas. Ultimately, supporting apprentices and employers through various programs and the tax incentives mentioned in the strategy is a good step forward, but if a business cannot afford to hire additional journeymen to bring on additional apprentices or we reach the point where the number of journeymen is lower than the number of apprentices seeking placements because of the ratio restrictions then barriers will only continue to exist.

More: [peterboroughchamber.ca/blog](http://peterboroughchamber.ca/blog)

## Event Calendar

**TUESDAY**  
March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
(Chamber & DBIA Members only)

**Bill 148 Information Session with the Ministry of Labour**

Peterborough Library  
5:00pm - 7:00pm

**Details:** Learn about the changes & role of the ESA officer. As well as what businesses can expect from interactions such as inspections and investigations with the Ministry.

**Cost:** Free  
**Note:** Pre-registration required

**WEDNESDAY**  
March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018  
(Chamber & WBN Members only)

**5 Secrets to Social Media Success**

Chamber Boardroom  
175 George Street North  
12:00pm - 1:00pm

**Speaker:** Sofie Andreou, Sofie Andreou & Associates

**Cost:** Free (Bring your lunch)  
**Note:** Pre-registration required

**TUESDAY**  
March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018

**The Venue PTBO**  
286 George Street N  
11:45am - 1:00pm

**Speakers:**

- Cam Taylor, Outdoorsmart & Venture North
- Sana Virji & Ribat Chowdhury, Ribitt
- Lynn Teatro, Teatro

**Details:** Hear from these business leaders and then find out who they believe is next level!

**Sponsor:** The Law Studio  
**Cost:** Free  
**Note:** Pre-registration required

**TUESDAY**  
March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**Peterborough Golf & Country Club**  
1030 Armour Road  
7:30am-9:30am

**Details:** City & County Planning Directors will be speaking about the future of the region.

**Cost:** \$20/Member  
\$30/Non-Member  
**Note:** Pre-registration required

**SMALL Business Access LUNCH IN Peterborough**

MARCH 23 FREE TO 2018 ATTEND

Learn about the new Small Business Access portal and more!

In Partnership with Ontario Chamber of Commerce

For EVENT DETAILS visit [peterboroughchamber.ca](http://peterboroughchamber.ca)

## There's a lot to learn about Bill 148

With the bill coming into effect on January 1, 2018 there are significant changes that employers need to be aware of around:

- Personal Emergency Leave
- Statutory Holiday Pay
- Vacation Time
- Equal pay for equal work
- Minimum wage increase

In 2019 more pieces will be coming into effect around scheduling and on-call work.

In partnership with Peterborough DBIA, the Chamber is hosting a Ministry of Labour representative to talk about the changes and what business can expect.

Join us on Tuesday, March 20th at the Peterborough Library from 5-7pm.



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Our members do it all!

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**Celebrations & Congratulations**

- **360 Wellness Clinic** is now offering 360 Lunctime Yoga
- **Cogeco Connexion** was named 2018 Company of the Year by Women in Communications and Technology
- **Rocky Ridge Drinking Water Limited** was recognized by Random Acts of Green for their dedication to energy saving practices

**Local Hardware Store Ladies' Night a Hit**

Congrats Chemong Home Hardware Building Centre for selling out for their Ladies' Night at their store on February 28th. The evening offered a number of project workshops.

**Featured Member Discount Program: Save on gas**

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SAVE up to 3.5 cents per litre of gas. The ESSO business card program is open to all Chamber members and Chamber member employees.

**Esso Imperial Oil**

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Chamber members, send your Member Milestones to [reception@peterboroughchamber.ca](mailto:reception@peterboroughchamber.ca) or call 705-748-9771 x0.

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