



Regional Consultations

Summary of Key Findings March 2005

Acknowledgements

Canadian Apprenticeship Forum - Forum canadien sur l'apprentissage (CAF-FCA) and Skills/Compétences Canada (S/CC) would like to recognize the cooperation of provincial and territorial Skills Canada and Apprenticeship offices and thank them for their support and participation during these consultations. We would also like to sincerely thank the participants for their time, contribution and suggestions to reach our common goal of positioning skilled trades as a first choice career option within Canada.

Context of this Report

This report reflects the discussions and opinions of participants "as was said" and recorded during the consultation process. These opinions are not endorsed by the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum – Forum canadien sur l'apprentissage, Skills/Compétences Canada, nor the Government of Canada. Rather, they represent the personal comments of participants and the outcomes of group discussions.

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Executive Summary

Stakeholder consultations were held in each province and territory (with the exception of Nunavut) between October 2004 and March 2005 by the National Promotion Project Team of the “Skilled Trades: A Career You Can Build On” campaign. This team consisted of the campaign’s joint partners, the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum - Forum canadien sur l’apprentissage (CAF-FCA) and Skills/Compétences Canada (S/CC), as well as the Project Manager, Beverlie Cook, and Sheila Roy of APCO Worldwide.

The objectives of these consultations were: to bring regional stakeholders together to present the pan-Canadian campaign; to identify the regional promotional programs that exist; to discuss any gaps or needs that may exist in promoting skilled trades and apprenticeship within a region; as well as to identify ways that the national campaign could collaborate with the regions to fill in some of the needs or gaps that stakeholders identified.

Each consultation consisted of a half-day to full-day session of presentations and break-out discussion groups. Over 380 stakeholders participated in these sessions across the country, with the number of attendees ranging from 12 to 56 participants per region. Participants came from a diverse range of organizations, representing business, labour, educators, equity seeking groups and various levels of government.

In reviewing the discussions of each regional report, there were several trends that surfaced. When discussion groups were asked to identify and then prioritize gaps/needs that exist in their region to promote skilled trades and apprenticeship more effectively, there were common promotional gaps or needs within three audiences:

- **Employers** were identified 85% or 11 times out of 13 consultations
- **Educators** were identified 77% or 10 times out of 13 consultations.
- **Parents** were identified 62% or 8 times out of 13 consultations.

Similarly, there were some common promotional ideas that many regions identified as effectively filling in the gaps and needs for these priority audiences, such as: developing a Champion Program; using displays, presentations and hands on activities; direct presentations to Educators/Guidance Counsellors; developing an Employer Toolkit about hiring and retaining apprentices; work-site visit programs; involving tradespeople in career counselling; employer recognition programs; increasing the exposure of various audiences to the Skills Competitions; using multi-media and pop culture to entice youth; and, reflecting the European prestige of skilled trades workers.

To conclude the consultations, participants were encouraged to work collaboratively with the National Promotion Project Team to combat the negative image of skilled trades that may exist within their region and to encourage more employers to hire apprentices.

Background

Comprehensive regional consultations were undertaken by the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum – Forum canadien sur l'apprentissage (CAF-FCA) and Skills/Compétences Canada (SCC) as part of the joint Skilled Trades Promotion Project, “Skilled Trades: A Career You Can Build On”. The objectives of these consultations were as follows:

- To present the pan-Canadian campaign “Skilled Trades: A Career You Can Build On”;
- To find out more about existing and planned programs within each region;
- To determine if there are any unmet needs and/or gaps within a region to promote skilled trades and apprenticeship;
- To identify ways that the national initiative could work in partnership with local stakeholders to fill these needs/gaps and complement regional initiatives; and
- To identify some “exemplary practices” that may exist in one region that may be of interest or need in another region.

Although there was region-specific information that resulted from these sessions, there were several national trends that surfaced across all consultations. The purpose of this report is to provide a national perspective of the discussions of participants during these consultations and to identify national trends or commonalities that exist. Region-specific reports have been completed and are available on the campaign web site, www.careersintrade.com/reports, if required.

Approach & Methodology

Between October 2004 and March 2005, the National Promotion Project team visited each province and territory, with the exception of Nunavut, to consult with various stakeholders within the region. Thirteen consultations, varying in length from 4 – 7 hours, were held in the following locations:

Date	Location	# of participants
Oct. 5	Winnipeg	42
Oct. 7	Vancouver	35
Oct. 19	Regina	29
Oct. 26	Whitehorse	20
Nov. 3	Yellowknife	20
Nov. 10	Halifax	36

Nov. 16	St. John's	39
Dec. 7	Fredericton	17
Dec. 9	Charlottetown	23
Mar. 15	Thunder Bay (Northern Ontario)	19
Mar. 17	Toronto (Southern Ontario)	56
Mar. 22	Edmonton	35
Mar. 31	Montréal	12
TOTAL		383

Attendance at these consultations represented a mix of employers, labour organizations, business/trade organizations, educators, equity seeking groups, and government. The selection of potential participants was determined in cooperation with the regional Skills/Compétences Canada affiliates as well as the Apprenticeship authority, with a goal of engaging a broad base of stakeholders in the process. Potential participants were sent an invitation, and once confirmed, sent a package which consisted of the consultation's agenda, map to the location, and a template to identify existing promotional programs.

The consultations were facilitated by APCO Worldwide, with active participation of the Skilled Trades Promotion Project Manager, Beverlie Cook, representatives of the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum – Forum canadien sur l'apprentissage, and the National Skills/Compétences Canada office.

The facility was set-up to provide the opportunity for participants to have in-depth discussions about key issues raised by the facilitator. Each session began with a general presentation about the National Skilled Trades Promotion campaign and a viewing of three campaign commercials. In most sessions, an overview of the provincial and territorial skilled trades promotion campaigns and activities was provided by local Skills/Compétences Canada offices as well as local representatives of the Apprenticeship authority. Following this brief presentation, an opportunity was given to participants to identify other campaigns, initiatives or activities that focus on promoting skilled trades and apprenticeship within their region.

The remainder of the consultation was focused on engaging participants in group discussions. The first discussion was to identify the target audience and the exact gap or need that exists to promote skilled trades and apprenticeship. Once all the gaps or needs were identified, a rating process was then undertaken by participants to prioritize the three most important ones to address moving forward. Each group was then led through a process to brainstorm ideas on promotional activities that could be undertaken to address these priority gaps/needs, and once again, asked to prioritize the ideas that resonated with them the most.

The summary of the consultation discussions was then compiled and posted on the campaign web site to share with participants and stakeholders in each region. Following is a summary of the national findings to provide an overall, pan-Canadian perspective.

Key Findings

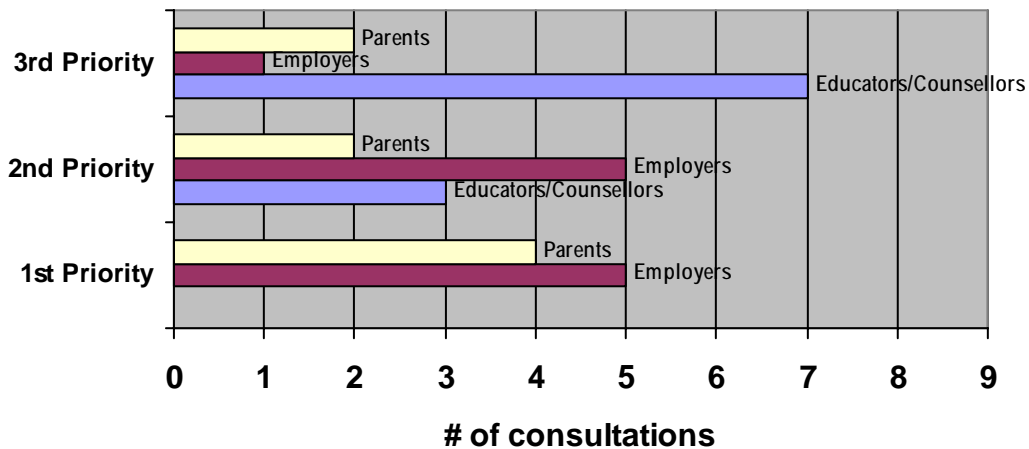
Following are the trends that were identified across the country from the consultation discussions around the gaps or needs that exist to promote skilled trades and apprenticeship within a region, as well as the common promotional ideas to address these gaps.

Priority Need or Gaps that Exist

As discussed in the methodology, an exercise was undertaken by participants to identify and then prioritize the gaps or needs that exist within their region. Overall, the gaps/needs that were consistently identified by participants as being one of the top three priorities within a majority of the thirteen provinces/territories were **educators, employers, and parents** as indicated below:

1. Employers (85% or 11 times out of 13 consultations)
2. Educators (77% or 10 times out of 13 consultations)
3. Parents (62% or 8 times out of 13 consultations)

Below is a chart to indicate how these gaps/needs were prioritized.



The following observations were identified:

- **Employers** were the most common gap/need chosen in eleven out of thirteen consultations, with the exceptions being New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. It was considered the first priority audience that a promotional gap existed in over one-third of all consultations; and over one-third also chose this gap as

their 2nd priority. Participants mentioned that there was a clear lack of awareness of apprenticeship training and the benefits of hiring apprentices among this audience.

- Although never chosen as the first priority, gaps within the **Educators** audience were identified in almost three-quarters of all consultations as either the 2nd or 3rd priority. The consultations that did not identify educators as one of their priority gaps were Québec, Northern Ontario, and Alberta. Participants identified that there was a lack of awareness of skilled trades careers and a need for educators/guidance counsellors to provide all career options to youth, not just those that encourage university education. They also recognized that as gatekeepers of career information to youth, educators/counsellors seemed reluctant to pass on skilled trades information due to their own biases or lack of knowledge of skilled trades careers.
- Gaps among the **Parent** audience were identified within the top 3 priorities in eight out of thirteen consultations, with the exception of Yukon, NWT, Saskatchewan, Southern Ontario and Québec. Lack of awareness of skilled trades career options and the need to overcome the negative perceptions that they currently possess towards their child entering a skilled trades career were identified by participants as two key issues. Also, there was a gap in the ability to reach parents effectively with messages about skilled trade careers.

Other audiences that were identified by participants from more than one consultation across the country as being part of top three priority gaps/needs were:

- **Youth** - Lack awareness of skilled trades career options and need to overcome the negative perceptions that they currently possess towards entering a skilled trades career. Interestingly, participants in many consultations recognized the existence of information, but stated that it was either not resonating with youth or it was not being shared with them;
- **Government/Politicians** were identified only within Nova Scotia (1st priority gap) and Saskatchewan (2nd priority gap). Participants stated that there was a general lack of support and leadership in making the general public aware of the value of qualified tradespeople.

It is interesting to note that there were other gaps/needs that were consistently identified throughout a significant number of consultations that were not chosen by participants to be part of the top three priority gaps/needs. They were:

- **General Population/Consumers** – participants within many consultations indicated that they felt there was a gap among consumers and general population around the contribution that tradespeople make to society; furthermore, there was a gap in the value and understanding of the value of hiring certified tradespeople.
- **Women** – participants within many consultations identified the need to create an awareness of skilled trades professions to women and the need to

overcome the stereotypes that exist around skilled trades workers. Identifying more opportunities and ways to involve women within traditional trades was also mentioned as a gap.

- **Youth whom are undecided** (17-30) – participants within many consultations identified a gap in educating undecided youth who may be in secondary school, the workforce or in university, about the options that exist in skilled trades careers. Many consultations mentioned that there is a gap in providing opportunities to these youth who would like to make a career change into the trades and the services not readily available to help these youth explore these options.
- **Journeypersons** – many consultations identified a need/gap that exists among journeypersons to act as ambassadors for their trade and to be proud of their profession. There was also a gap in more journeypersons actively taking on the role of training apprentices.
- **Aboriginal Persons** – many consultations identified a gap within Aboriginal people and the lack of skilled trades information that is targeted to this audience. Participants mentioned the need to effectively reach them with promotional material and skilled trades messages that are relevant and sensitive to cultural needs.
- **At-Risk Youth** – several consultations identified that a gap exists in effectively steering at-risk youth into the skilled trades to help them identify their strengths in certain trades and professions, and expose them to skilled trades career options.
- **Media** – several consultations identified that media was an important gap that exists. Participants mentioned that this audience needs to be educated on the truths behind skilled trades careers and corrected in their negative expressions and impressions that they portray within their media coverage.
- **Visible Minorities**– several consultations, particularly in the larger urban centres, identified the need to be more culturally sensitive to visible minority populations and the need to be more targeted in communication efforts towards this audience.
- **Professional Associations/Unions** – organizations that represent members within the skilled trades industry were identified within several consultations as needing to play a larger role in communicating the importance of apprenticeship training, building pride among their members, and acting as ambassadors for their trade within the community.

Ideas to Address the Priority Gaps/Needs

Participants were led through a process to brainstorm various promotional ideas for each of the priority gaps or needs that were identified. Out of the multitude of ideas

that were identified to address the need or gap within each of the priority areas, participants were asked to identify three ideas that they saw as being the best and most effective ones to focus on moving forward.

Of the ideas that were most often selected by participants, there were several trends of promotional ideas/activities that participants preferred. These trends are outlined below:

- **Developing a Champion Program** - in almost all consultations, participants identified the need to select skilled trades champions to communicate their success through profiles, testimonials, or presentations to various audiences such as youth, parents, educators, employers, equity seeking groups and government. Participants also mentioned that Champions in each of the audiences (i.e. youth, parents, employers, educators, women, Aboriginal people, visible minority population, and people with disabilities) should be identified to positively promote skilled trades careers and apprenticeship among their peers.
- **Displays/Presentations/Hands-on Activities** – in almost all consultations, participants identified the value of providing youth, educators, and parents the opportunity to see skilled trades people at work and let them physically touch the tools and try their skill at various tasks. Participants stated that it would help them to understand the trade and the complexity of it, helping to disseminate the negative images that exist. In-school presentations, displays at career fairs, trade fairs, or home shows, and hands-on opportunities through skilled trades camps or community projects were ideas that were identified.
- **Presentations and Information Provided to Educators/Guidance Counsellors** – to address the gap of a lack of awareness of skilled trades careers among educators, over half of the consultations resulted in the selection of the idea to have champions or informed spokespeople to present skilled trades information directly to educators and guidance counsellors. These presentations would be at conferences, PD days, or in-service opportunities when there were large numbers of educators and/or counsellors together as a captive audience.
- **Employer Toolkits** – over half of the consultations identified the usefulness of developing an employer toolkit that would outline for employers the return-on-investment of apprentices, the benefits of hiring and training apprentices, how to become involved as a trainer and/or partner, and who to contact for more information. It was also suggested that case studies, profiles, and testimonials of successful businesses be highlighted in the communication material to make the kit more business-to-business oriented. This toolkit needs to be personalized by partnering with local partners to ensure that information that is relevant to the region is contained within the toolkit.
- **Secondary–School Training Initiatives** – over half of the consultations identified the need for the curriculum in secondary schools to provide

- opportunities for youth to explore skilled trades careers in their daily curriculum. Examples of similar programs were the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP), and Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) in Alberta, and Application Work and Learning program (AWAL) in BC and Nova Scotia. Many participants also identified ways that the core curriculum could integrate scientific and mathematical problems using real-life scenarios of skilled tradespeople as they perform their daily tasks.
- **Work-site Visits** - almost half of the consultations identified the value of organizing work-site visits for youth, parents, and educators to expose them to the multitude of skilled trades required to develop critical infrastructure in the community.
 - **Tradespeople Involved as Career Counsellors** – almost half of the consultations recognized the value of having real tradespeople involved in the school system to educate youth on career options in the trades based on their experience and knowledge. Furthermore, they indicated that guidance counsellors/other educators should be exposed to skilled trades occupations through work-exchange programs and exposure to skilled trades information during their initial teacher training.
 - **Employer Recognition** – several consultations identified the value of an employer recognition program to not only recognize employers but profile their role and commitment to the training of apprentices within their community.
 - **Increase Exposure of Youth & Influencers to Skills Canada Competitions** – several consultations mentioned the need to increase the number of youth (primary and secondary school) to Skills Canada Competitions and ways to encourage the attendance of more parents and educators to these events as well.
 - **Multi-media/Pop Culture** – many consultations mentioned the need to reach youth through multi-media and pop culture trends such as interactive web sites, celebrity spokespeople, and reality TV shows. Promotional initiatives that were more visual rather than text-based were preferred for the youth audiences.
 - **Reflect European Culture** – several consultations mentioned that there was a need to identify why European cultures value the trades, and how they have been able to position skilled trades as a first-choice and prestigious career option. Exploring techniques or policies that are in place that provide incentives for European employers to have apprentices was also identified as a need, as well as why parents and educators encourage youth to explore careers in skilled trades.

Moving Forward

Participants were very engaged throughout the consultation and were encouraged to collaborate with the Skilled Trades Promotion Project to determine the key priority area and resources that will be needed to promote skilled trades and apprenticeship within their region. The consultation findings were posted on the web site for participants to review and in most regions, implementation teams made up of Skills Canada representatives, Apprenticeship representatives, as well as other participants, volunteered their services to work together to develop a regional promotion plan based on the outcome of the consultations. All regions were encouraged to work in partnership with the national campaign team to submit a plan (Application for Support) that will be considered for future support and partnerships opportunities until the end of the campaign period of December 2006.