

Half of Ontarians fear their skills will soon be obsolete: NEWMARKET CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

New Ontario Chamber of Commerce report urges action to improve alignment of skills, education, career opportunities

TORONTO, June 20, 2017 - Today the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC), in partnership with the Newmarket Chamber, released a comprehensive report, *Talent in Transition: Addressing the Skills Mismatch in Ontario*, which identifies ten recommendations that will better align the skills acquired by Ontarians with those required by employers.

The report, which was developed in partnership with leading officials in the private and educational sectors, as well as with representatives from across Ontario, includes exclusive, new research of both Ontario Chamber Network members as well as the general population on sentiment toward skills development. Of the six in ten of businesses who attempted to recruit staff in 2016, 82 per cent experienced a challenge in hiring someone with the proper qualifications.

“Ontario employers are finding it more and more challenging to recruit properly qualified talent. If improvements are not made, we will find ourselves in a situation where there are ‘people without jobs and jobs without people’” said Richard Koroscil, interim-President and CEO, Ontario Chamber of Commerce. “Our latest report identifies opportunities to improve alignment of skills, education, career opportunities.”

It is not just employers who are concerned with the growing skills mismatch. Of the general population, half of Ontarians are concerned their skills and expertise will no longer be useful or will become less valuable in the next decade.

Over the last decade, the skills mismatch has been a major concern for the future growth of Ontario’s economy. The report states that as Ontarians move into the knowledge-based economy, with rapidly changing technological advancement, it is essential to leverage our greatest asset, human capital.

The OCC’s report outlines a strategy that unites government and industry to work collaboratively to ensure that all regions across Ontario have access to the skilled workforce required to compete in the global economy. In working together on the recommendations presented in this report, Government and industry can:

- Improve the transition from school to the workplace (through the expansion of experiential learning opportunities).
- Improve the labour market outcomes (achieved through Employment Ontario programs).
- Develop a modernized apprenticeship system (reflective of the current business climate and focused on the integration of young people into the trades).

“Employers in Newmarket are experiencing challenges to find qualified employees all the time,” said Debra Scott, President and CEO of the Newmarket Chamber of Commerce. “If we align government, employers and educators to find solutions to the skills mismatch, we can strengthen our economy and ensure there are meaningful career opportunities here in Newmarket. We are working collaboratively with the school boards, businesses and other community stakeholders to address some of the local opportunities and challenges.”

Ontario’s Chamber Network has been active on the skills issue since 2012. This report is part of larger advocacy work to ensure all regions across Ontario have access to the skilled workforce that they require to compete in the global knowledge economy.

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Newmarket Chamber of Commerce

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce is Ontario’s business advocate.

Media Contact:

Abdus Samad

Newmarket Chamber of Commerce

abdus@newmarketchamber.ca

905-898-5900 ext: 222