

# Strengthening Ontario's Workforce for the Jobs of Tomorrow



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# Table of Contents

<b>04</b>	<b>Foreword</b>
<b>06</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>08</b>	<b>List of Recommendations</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Aim our Students in the Right Direction</b>
11	Industry-Education Collaboration
13	College-University Collaboration
14	Business Training
<b>16</b>	<b>Strengthening Education and Training</b>
18	Industry-Education Collaboration
19	College-University Collaboration
20	Business Training
<b>22</b>	<b>Foreign Trained Professionals</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
<hr/>	
<b>28</b>	<b>Appendix A – Various sources of Labour Market Data</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>End Notes</b>



# 01

## Foreword

**By Benjamin Tal**

Deputy Chief Economist, CIBC





FROM A LONG TERM PERSPECTIVE, ECONOMIC GROWTH POLICY IS EDUCATION POLICY. RETHINKING THE RELEVANCE OF TODAY'S EDUCATION SYSTEM TO THE WORKPLACE OF TOMORROW IS ESSENTIAL FOR CANADA'S FUTURE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY.

Our country has the highest proportion of adults with a post-secondary education among all Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, and the cost of those degrees is roughly double the OECD average. Yet, more and more of these degree holders are falling behind on the earnings scale. The share of university graduates making less than half the national median income is the largest among OECD countries.

While a higher education may be a necessary condition for a good job in Canada, it is no longer a sufficient condition. Narrowing employment and earning premiums for higher education mean that, on average, Canada is experiencing an excess supply of post-secondary graduates. And, the risk attached to the investment on that education has never been higher.

Despite the overwhelming evidence that one's field of study is the most important factor determining labour market outcomes, today's students have not gravitated towards degrees in more financially advantageous fields that reflect the changing reality of Canada's labour market. Across subjects, the biggest bang for buck comes from specialized and professional fields, such as medicine, law and engineering.

The field-of-study premium isn't just a Canadian phenomenon - it's been observed in the U.S., Sweden and other industrialized nations. But, it's not clear that students, armed with that knowledge, have been making profitable decisions. With the exception of commerce, in the last 10 years, Canada has not seen a meaningful influx of students into degrees with more advantageous earnings outcomes.

Improving participation rates in these fields will likely require collaboration - a combination of developing an information infrastructure system designed to identify emerging trends in labour market needs, improved quality and equity of learning opportunities, increased resources, improved system efficiency and increased private investment. Any remedy must also include a much simpler and efficient credential recognition process for new immigrants, better access to language training and better and more specific information to prospective immigrants on labour market demand and skills requirements.

**With the exception of commerce, in the last 10 years, Canada has not seen a meaningful influx of students into degrees with more advantageous earnings outcomes.**

# 02

## Introduction

TIME FOR  
SOMETHING  
NEW!



NTARIO'S ECONOMY IS CHANGING AT A RAPID PACE. ITS WORKFORCE IS AGING, ITS INDUSTRIES ARE SHIFTING AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION IS CHANGING THE JOB REQUIREMENTS OF TOMORROW. BUSINESSES HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO KEEP UP TO THE PACE OF THIS CHANGE, AND THEIR GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS HAS BEEN IMPACTED. DELOITTE'S 2015 HUMAN CAPITAL TREND REPORT TELLS US THAT CANADIAN COMPANIES ARE UNDERPERFORMING WHEN IT COMES TO INNOVATION. USING DATA FROM THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM'S COMPETITIVENESS REPORT, DELOITTE EXPLAINS THAT CANADA RANKS ONLY 23RD IN THE WORLD ON THE ABILITY TO INNOVATE, AND ONLY 18TH IN THE WORLD WHEN IT COMES TO TECHNOLOGICAL READINESS OVERALL.<sup>1</sup>

Ontario must ensure its workforce is well positioned to adapt to these changes if we are to compete in the global economy and improve these rankings. As the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) highlighted, students need to be prepared "for jobs that have not yet been created, to use technologies that have not yet been invented, and to solve social problems that we do not yet know will arise."<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, this is not happening in today's Ontario.

Education continues to be a high public priority, however, students are not provided with the best career advice, and according to a study by Dr. Rick Miner at Miner Management Consultants, many are earning multiple post-secondary degrees, certificates, or diplomas in an attempt to gain the skills necessary to get a job<sup>3</sup>. Indeed, Ontario has highest proportion of post-secondary educational attainment among OECD countries<sup>4</sup>.

While this creates a challenge for students, it is also a problem for businesses that cannot find properly trained workers. The Conference Board of Canada noted in 2013 that this "Province-wide skills gap" may cost the economy as much as \$24.3 billion in lost economic activity.<sup>5</sup>

Additional pressure is being placed on the economy as Ontario's population is aging and 89% of its population growth in the coming years will have to come from net migration.<sup>6</sup> This places an ever growing importance on Ontario's immigration policies.

Faced with these changes, the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) argues that Ontario must develop a highly skilled workforce in order to ensure the economic success of our

province. A highly skilled workforce is defined as a workforce that has the skills and training necessary to adapt to an evolving economy. By adapting, the workforce harnesses these changes and turns them into prosperity and a competitive advantage. In the coming years, those jurisdictions that are able to develop a highly skilled workforce will flourish, while those that do not risk falling further and further behind.

The Government of Ontario recognizes the need to prepare its workforce for the jobs of tomorrow. In June, the Premier's Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel released its final report which made recommendations on how achieve this goal. The Government is now in the process of working with the Panel to develop actions to implement its recommendations.

This paper identifies some of the challenges currently preventing Ontario from creating a highly skilled workforce and makes recommendations on what actions could be taken to help develop one. It recommends that to achieve this goal, businesses, and the government must work together. It makes recommendations in three areas:

- 1. Aim our students in the right direction**, by providing accurate labour market information and ensuring students are properly supported so they can make informed decisions;
- 2. Strengthen our education and training programs**, including workplace training to ensure our existing workforce has the skills required to succeed in the new economy; and,
- 3. Improve the foreign credential recognition framework**, to help businesses make the best use of foreign trained professionals.

The paper builds off of the CanadaWorks 2025 report the HRP prepared with Deloitte, which laid out alternative future scenarios. The scenarios - The Lost Decade, Unsustainable Prosperity and The Northern Tiger - created fulsome pictures of the Canadian workplace and workforce with respect to the labour market, workplace productivity, changes to the employment contract, and the organization of work. By following the recommendations of this paper we can ensure Ontario does not move towards the "lost decade" scenario.<sup>7</sup>

The recommendations laid out below are based upon a scan of various studies, as well as, actions taken by other jurisdictions, and the findings of a survey of 525 of the HRP's members, conducted online from April 18-26th, 2016. The paper has a special emphasis on what human resource professionals can do to help in these areas.

# 03

## List of Recommendations







## BETTER DATA IS REQUIRED

- The province should implement its own labour market research - It has been an ongoing recommendation of the HRP that Ontario should conduct its own labour market research to project demand for skills, both in the near and distant futures; and on a rolling basis, amend those projections as the data changes. The current federal model takes too long, and the Province can do a better job in determining what skilled professions are needed.
- The province should consolidate Data Sources - Current sources for labour market information should be consolidated into one, user focused website, that easily allows students to understand the projected trends of the industry.



## BETTER GUIDANCE IS REQUIRED

- The government should expand support for experience-based learning opportunities for students.
- The government should encourage greater participation in co-op programs from small and medium sized businesses.
- The government should amend the terms of business support programs to include the condition of participation in co-op programs.
- HR Professionals should build relationships with local schools and share internal job forecasts as well as their industry's latest employment trends with guidance counselors.
- HR Professionals should encourage employers to participate in co-op programs.



## SUPPORTING THE SKILLED TRADES

- The government should highlight the benefits of careers in skilled trades by advertising both the financial benefit and various technologies that are used in the skilled trades.
- The government should further support the Cooperative Education Program.
- HR Professionals working in industries that rely on skilled trades should ensure they are educated about the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program and encourage their organizations to participate in them.



## INDUSTRY - EDUCATION COLLABORATION

- Government, industry and educational institutions should increase collaboration between each other to ensure curriculum is relevant and meets the needs of industries.
- Knowledge is important, but the ability to apply it is critical. Curriculums should be refocused to show students how to apply the knowledge they use to in the real world.
- HR Professionals should encourage their companies to become more involved with local educational institutes.



## COLLEGE - UNIVERSITY COLLABORATION

- Colleges, universities and high schools should be encouraged to promote joint degree programs to students so there is a greater awareness of joint programs as an option.
- Government should consider a marketing campaign to raise awareness of the benefits of joint programs.



## BUSINESS TRAINING

- HR professionals understand the value of employee training and must continue to encourage their organizations to invest in this area.
- Government should look for ways to reduce training costs for businesses.
- HR Professionals should explore joint-training programs as possible ways to reduce training costs for their employers.



## FOREIGN TRAINED PROFESSIONALS

- HR Professionals should familiarize themselves with Express Entry system.
- Government should promote the various ways for businesses to verify foreign credentials.
- Immigration policies should continue to focus on skilled immigrants that meet current and future labour needs.

# 04

**Aim Our Students  
in the Right Direction**

~~UNPREPARED~~



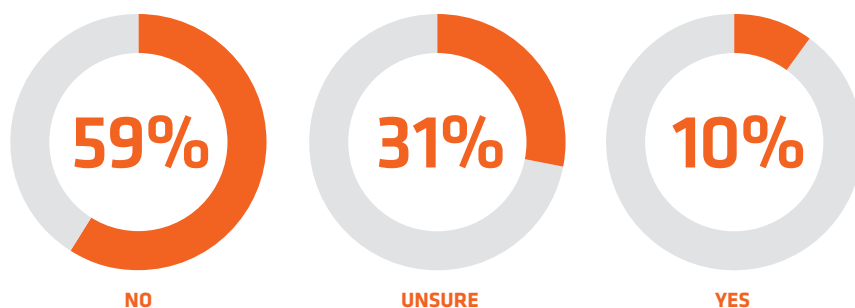
ACCORDING TO RESEARCH PUBLISHED BY THE HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY COUNCIL OF ONTARIO, THE MAJORITY OF STUDENTS APPLY TO POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS WITH THEIR FUTURE CAREERS IN MIND. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE FOR THOSE WHO ATTEND COLLEGE.<sup>8</sup> UNFORTUNATELY, STUDENTS TODAY MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR POST-SECONDARY FIELD OF STUDY AND FUTURE CAREERS WITH INADEQUATE INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT OCCUPATIONS WILL BE IN HIGH DEMAND WHEN THEY GRADUATE. AS A RESULT, SOME INDUSTRIES HAVE TOO MANY STUDENTS FOCUSING ON THEM, WHILE OTHER SECTORS, SUCH AS THE STEM (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, MATHEMATICS)-BASED OCCUPATIONS AND THE SKILLED TRADES, FACE SKILLS SHORTAGES. THESE SHORTAGES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED BY THE CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AS ONE OF THE TOP BARRIERS TO COMPETITIVENESS.<sup>9</sup>

These problems compound - students take longer to find jobs, many end up in fields unrelated to their training, and some go back to school to gain further education.<sup>10</sup> This is not an issue that is unique to Ontario, but is endemic across Canada. One study found that one out of three Canadian graduates were in careers unrelated to their education. Unfortunately, students are attracted to programs that are superficially appealing, but which offer no simple path into jobs that are in demand. Despite the existence of these issues in other provinces, these conditions must be improved in order to aim students in the proper direction and build a highly skilled workforce.

**One study found that one out of three Canadian graduates were in careers unrelated to their education.**

#### DO ONTARIO STUDENTS, WORKERS AND BUSINESSES CURRENTLY HAVE SUFFICIENT ACCESS TO LABOUR MARKET DATA?

SOURCE: HRPB MEMBER SURVEY  
APRIL 18-26, 2016



#### BETTER DATA IS REQUIRED

Knowing what industries are growing and which are shrinking is a critical piece of information for students as they begin to plan their futures. Accurate labour market information “is clearly a necessary condition” for matching the needs of businesses with skills people learn, but such information is lacking in Canada.<sup>11</sup> The HRPB applauds the Premier’s Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel for identifying this issue and recommending steps to address it.

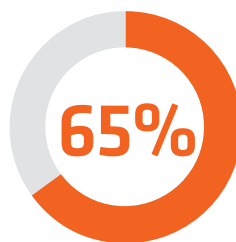
Today, there is a patchwork of federal, provincial, local, and community sources where different labour market data points are available. Due to the sheer number of areas a person can look for advice, students can easily get lost as they tried to figure out the direction they want to take. Despite the plethora of available sources, no one site stands out as the dominate location for information, and all have different flaws. The following list includes some of the more prominent sources (for a further description of each, please see “Appendix 1”):

- Canadian Occupational Projection System (“COPS”)
- [www.JobBank.gc.ca](http://www.JobBank.gc.ca)
- Ontario Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities
- Workforce Planning Ontario

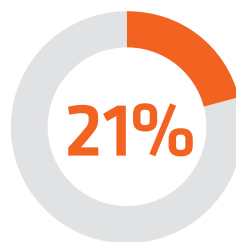
All of these sources have various strengths and weaknesses. However, a common challenge is they do not easily allow users to sort occupations by future demand. As well, most of the websites are difficult to find and navigate, and there is overlap between the information organizations provide. As the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities reported, labour market information must be accessible to those that need it, and be user-friendly.<sup>12</sup> This patchwork of information must be reformed to provide accurate, usable information.

## HOW IMPORTANT WOULD YOU SAY IT IS FOR JURISDICTIONS TO PROVIDE ACCURATE LABOUR MARKET DATA TO ITS STUDENTS, WORKERS AND BUSINESSES?

SOURCE: HRPB MEMBER SURVEY  
APRIL 18-26, 2016



VERY IMPORTANT



UNSURE



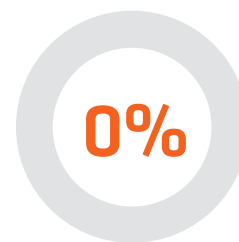
FAIRLY IMPORTANT



SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT



UNSURE



NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL



### The Australian Model

Education Services Australia has developed a user portal for people to help them determine their desired occupation. [www.myfuture.edu.au](http://www.myfuture.edu.au) is funded by several Australian states and territories. The site is user-friendly, and shows information such as “top trending occupations” and those with “skills shortage.” The industry profiles also display information such as projected employment out to 2019. It is an excellent example of what governments can achieve if they work together and focus on the user.



### The New Zealand Model

In New Zealand the government has undertaken to study the income levels of young graduates based on different types of qualifications, in order to help young students decide what to study and guide government funding decisions. Using tax data, the government traced earnings over the first six years of a graduate’s career.<sup>13</sup> This data is made available via the Compare Study Options online portal, which is part of the Careers New Zealand Website. It allows students to easily understand the potential salaries and employment rates of different degrees.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, the Occupational Outlook website is meant to give students and parents a clear picture of career paths by highlighting the popularity of 60 different occupations. Students can access the data through apps available on iTunes and Google Play, or through the website. Dials are used to show the possible job prospects, income and education fees associated with careers.<sup>15</sup>



### RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENSURE A HIGHLY SKILLED WORKFORCE

- The province should implement its own labour market research - It has been an ongoing recommendation of the HRPB that Ontario should conduct its own labour market research to project demand for skills, both in the near and distant futures; and on a rolling basis, amend those projections as the data changes. The current federal model takes too long, and the Province can do a better job in determining what skilled professions are needed.
- The province should consolidate Data Sources - Current sources for labour market information should be consolidated into one, user focused website, that easily allows students to understand the projected trends of the industry.





## BETTER GUIDANCE IS REQUIRED

Accurate labour market information is important, and in addition Ontario must take steps to directly influence the educational choices of students to create a highly skilled workforce. Moves to de-stigmatize the skilled trades will also be critically important. The HRPA was encouraged to see the Premier's Expert Panel identify the promotion of multiple career pathways as a need for government. However, the HRPA believes that to properly influence the educational choices of students, there is a key role for the private sector to play by utilizing their Human Resources Professionals.

The HRPA's survey found that 50 per cent of respondents did not interact with high school students. This highlights both a large gap, and an opportunity for industry to help guide and influence students as they consider their future careers.

HR professionals have direct knowledge of the opportunities and skill requirements of their industries. We need to harness this information and pass it along to students, guidance counselors and educators. This is especially critical in the face of poor labour market data.

Stronger partnerships must be established between schools and local business partners, as recommended by the Learning Partnership in their report "It's Their Future: A Pan-Canadian Study of Career Education".<sup>16</sup> HR Professionals have forecasts for their company's needs and should share this information with their local schools.

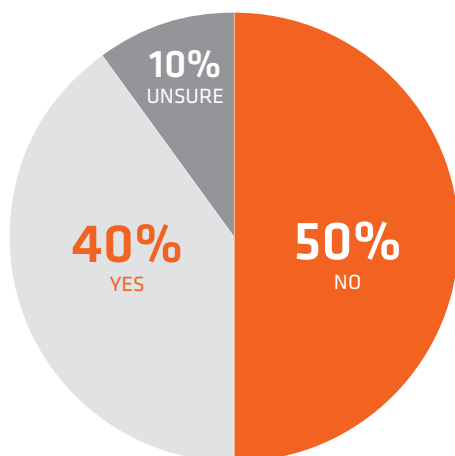
Part of an expanded partnership between businesses and educational institutions should include greater participation by businesses in experience-based learning initiatives for high school students, such as cooperative education programs. Cooperative education programs involve a classroom component, and a component where students are placed in a workplace and are presented with opportunities to develop skills and be exposed to current workplace standards and practices.<sup>17</sup> These types of programs help students build employable and essential skills, and help prepare students for the twenty-first century workplace.<sup>18</sup>

Programs such as the Ontario Employer designation which is given out by the Provincial Partnership Council should be expanded. This designation is awarded to employers who support a significant number of high school students<sup>19</sup>, it is an excellent example of ways to encourage businesses to get more involved with students. Similar programs should be considered that are targeted towards small and medium sized businesses to encourage a greater number of them to participate in co-operative education programs.

The province should also consider using its various business funding programs such as the Jobs and Prosperity grants to encourage businesses to participate in co-op programs. Funding conditions of these types of grant programs could easily be updated to require corporate participation.

### DOES YOUR COMPANY EVER INTERACT WITH STUDENTS AT A HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL, FOR EXAMPLE, TO ATTEMPT TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO ENTER INTO YOUR INDUSTRY?

SOURCE: HRPA MEMBER SURVEY  
APRIL 18-26, 2016



### RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENSURE A HIGHLY SKILLED WORKFORCE

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Canada, estimates that roughly 250,000 skilled tradespeople will retire over the next ten years. As a result, recruitment of students into the skilled trades will be critical.



### SUPPORTING THE SKILLED TRADES

The skilled trades are one area of Ontario's workforce that continues to struggle to attract worker, despite continued demand. BuildForce, a national industry-led organization focused on workforce planning for the construction industry in Canada, estimates that roughly 250,000 skilled tradespeople will retire over the next ten years. As a result, recruitment of students into the skilled trades will be critical. To achieve this, myths and misconceptions about the industry must be overcome.<sup>20</sup>

Much has been said regarding the need to eliminate the stigmas associated with working in the skilled trades. The HRPAs continue to recommend that the government expand efforts to raise awareness of the future economic prospects for students that enter the skilled trades.<sup>21</sup> In addition, the government should investigate different advertising techniques such as highlighting the experiences students can expect and various technologies that are used. This approach has been successful for organizations like the U.S. Army, and other approaches could be beneficial.<sup>22</sup>

North Carolina's Apprenticeship 2000 program is similar to the German model, and has won many accolades. There students as young as 16 are provided with four years of on the job as well as classroom training, which is free, and are guaranteed a job once they are finished.

### Other Jurisdictions

Other jurisdictions have been successful at breaking down stigmas and increasing enrollment in their skilled trades. As Canada's former Minister of Labour Jason Kenney explained in a Financial Post interview, countries like Switzerland, Denmark, Germany and Austria see roughly two-thirds of high school students enroll in paid apprenticeships at 16 and graduate at 19 "unencumbered by debt."<sup>23</sup>

The German success can be attributed to their "dual system" where students receive vocational training at a workplace, which is then complemented by general education and theoretical training which they receive once or twice a week at training schools. This system links demand for labour with training by having the employer participate in the training, making a very efficient system.<sup>24</sup>

North Carolina's Apprenticeship 2000 program is similar to the German model, and has won many accolades. There students as young as 16 are provided with four years of on the job as well as classroom training, which is free, and are guaranteed a job once they are finished.<sup>25</sup>

Ontario's Youth Apprenticeship Program operates in a similar fashion to these programs, by allowing high-school students to work in apprenticeships through the Cooperative Education Program.<sup>26</sup> Based on the continued success of similar programs in other jurisdictions, Ontario should continue to invest in this valuable program, and HR Professionals working in industries that rely on skilled trades should ensure they are educated about this excellent opportunity.



### RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENSURE A HIGHLY SKILLED WORKFORCE

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- The government should further support the Cooperative Education Program.
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# 05

## **Strengthening Education & Training**







NTARIO STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW WHAT WILL BE NECESSARY FOR THE CAREERS OF TOMORROW. CURRENT INDICATIONS ARE THAT THIS IS NOT THE CASE.

Ontario has the highest level of post-secondary attainment amongst OECD countries<sup>27</sup>, however, course curriculums may not be up to date, and students may not be receiving the employable skills they require given that as Minor points out, there is a high number of university graduates that are deciding to return to school and get a college diploma or certificate.<sup>28</sup>

A further indication of this problem comes from how employers feel their new hires have been taught. According to a 2015 survey released by McKinsey and Company, only 34 per cent of businesses in Canada believed graduates they hired were prepared for work.<sup>29</sup> When the HRPAs surveyed its members, the results slightly better, with 43 per cent of respondents agreeing with the statement that “employees we hired in the past year have been adequately prepared by their pre-hire education and/or training.” Despite the variance, these figures point to a large gap between the skills being taught in Ontario schools, and those skills required by the ever changing economy.

So what skills might be missing? The HRPAs surveyed its members to determine what are the most important attributes are of a highly skilled worker. The top three characteristics selected were:

1. Well-rounded critical thinker, analytical with problem-solving skills. Creative, imaginative and resilient;
2. Strong communication skills; and,
3. Able to work in complex and evolving environments.



1

WELL-ROUNDED  
CRITICAL THINKING



2

STRONG  
COMMUNICATION SKILLS



3

ADAPTIVE  
WORK HABITS

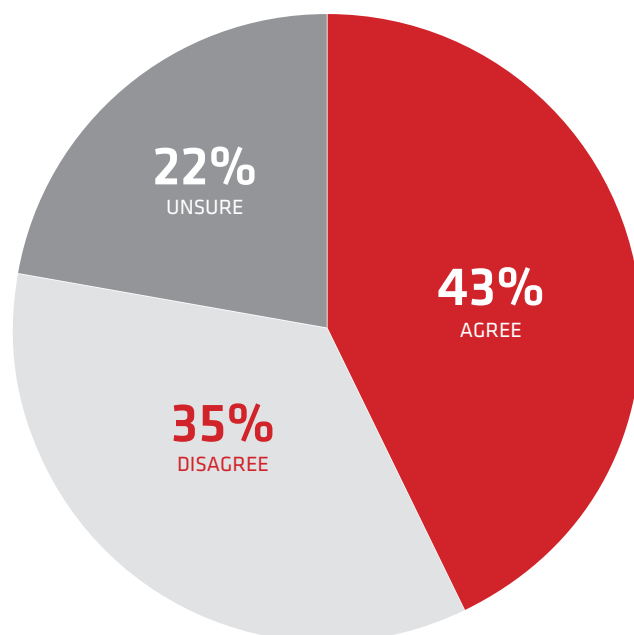
Based on feedback from its members, the HRPAs believes three things must occur for the situation to improve:

1. Educators must work more closely with businesses so they are aware of the needs of industries. Their roles are not just to educate but also to prepare students;
2. Colleges and universities must work more closely together; and,
3. Businesses must provide more on-the-job training.

These recommendations are supported by findings of research conducted with Ontario postsecondary students. Students, while more optimistic about being prepared for the workforce when they graduate compared to how employers feel, still recommended that schools improve or increase experience-based learning opportunities.<sup>30</sup>

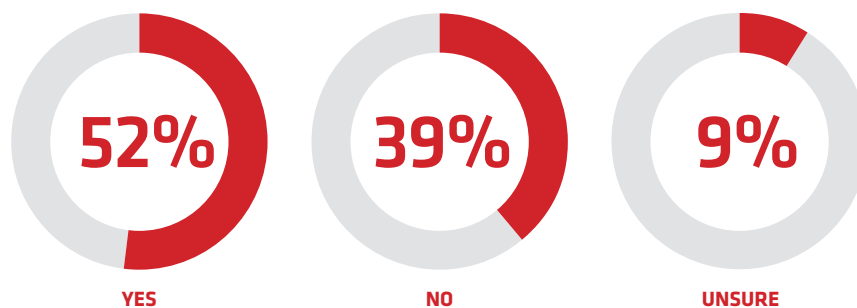
**WOULD YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT: “EMPLOYEES WE HIRED IN THE PAST YEAR HAVE BEEN ADEQUATELY PREPARED BY THEIR PRE-HIRE EDUCATION AND/OR TRAINING.”**

SOURCE: HRPAs MEMBER SURVEY  
APRIL 18-26, 2016



**DOES YOUR COMPANY HAVE AN EXISTING RELATIONSHIP WITH ANY POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION INSTITUTION, WHERE YOU OFFER THEM TIME, SKILLS, MONEY, OR SOME OTHER TYPE OF RESOURCES?**

SOURCE: HRP A MEMBER SURVEY  
APRIL 18-26, 2016



## INDUSTRY - EDUCATION COLLABORATION

The Premier's Expert Panel identified the need for greater partnerships between educators and employers and the HRP A agrees. The same study conducted by McKinsey and Company found that in Canada only 9 per cent of education providers coordinated frequently with business, and 20 per cent did not at all.<sup>31</sup>

The HRP A surveyed its Members to determine how many had existing relationships with a post-secondary education institution and what those relationships looked like. The results were mixed.

The HRP A found that 52 per cent of respondents said they did have existing relationships, leaving much room for improvement in Ontario. The positive news was those companies with existing relationships, had strong relationships. 72 per cent of respondents said they had relationships with universities, and 28 per cent said they had relationships with colleges. A full 84 per cent of respondents said they offer co-operative education programs, 35 per cent have employees act as teachers, speakers or lecturers, and 26 per cent provide input on courses or curriculum.

HRP A Members were asked what other specific policies or steps could be taken to ensure the province has a highly skilled workforce, and the consistent feedback was to improve the education system. One member said "I think the education system needs a fundamental overhaul. There are people walking around with degrees and certificates who cannot find work because nobody is looking for the skills they offer on paper." Another responded said educators should "tap into industry leaders to ensure that curriculum is consistent with a successful job incumbent."

# "The education system needs a fundamental overhaul"

- A HRP A MEMBER

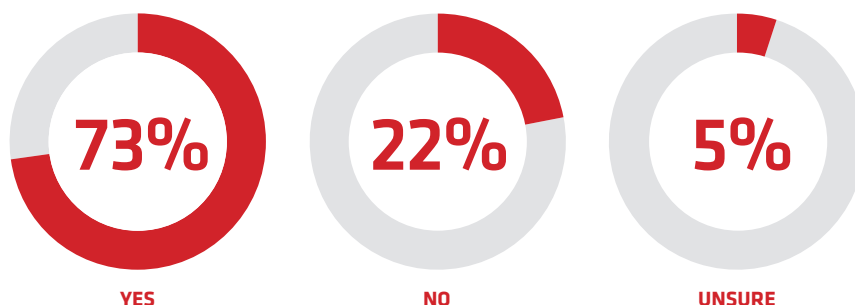


## RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENSURE A HIGHLY SKILLED WORKFORCE

- Government, industry and educational institutions should increase collaboration between each other to ensure curriculum is relevant and meets the needs of industries.
- Knowledge is important, but the ability to apply it is critical. Curriculums should be refocused to show students how to apply the knowledge they use to in the real world.
- HR Professionals should encourage their companies to become more involved with local educational institutes.

## DOES YOUR COMPANY INVEST REGULARLY IN EMPLOYEES TRAINING?

SOURCE: HRPB MEMBER SURVEY  
APRIL 18-26, 2016



## COLLEGE – UNIVERSITY COLLABORATION

As stated previously, there is a growing trend of students pursuing multiple degrees. According to Statistics Canada, 49 per cent of undergraduate students in Canada went on to take further education, as did 35 per cent of college graduates.<sup>32</sup> While this may not in itself be an issue, the government should do what it can to reduce the cost and time it takes for students to achieve the education they require to be prepared for the workforce. As the Globe and Mail recently paraphrased Benjamin Tal, “why not allow a student to get a bachelor’s degree in history and a minor in plumbing, which could help prevent the high costs for some who find they need to return to school after university to learn a trade.”<sup>33</sup>

Tal points us to Germany, where joint programs are used to “close the skills gap in a significant way.”<sup>34</sup> Germany offers a dual postsecondary system such as the Berufsakademien which combines academic training with practical professional training, where businesses bear the cost. Germany also has universities of applied sciences, or Fachhochschulen, which includes practical training and educators who have professional experience outside of education. Courses offer great practical relevance, and offer dual-courses which integrate vocational training and placements. Dual study course graduates receive a Bachelor’s degree and a certificate for the vocational education portion of their training.<sup>35</sup>

Further development of combination programming in Ontario could streamline the education system for our students and help encourage more students to attain practical training in addition to university degrees. Ontario is moving in this direction with Articulation Agreements, and offers numerous collaborative and joint degree programs.<sup>36</sup> The province should look to expand these programs and promote them with high-school students.



## RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENSURE A HIGHLY SKILLED WORKFORCE

- Colleges, universities and high schools should be encouraged to promote joint degree programs to students so there is a greater awareness of joint programs as an option.
- Government should consider a marketing campaign to raise awareness of the benefits of joint programs.

“Why not allow a student to get a bachelor’s degree in history and a minor in plumbing, which could help prevent the high costs for some who find they need to return to school after university to learn a trade.”

– BENJAMIN TAL, DEPUTY CHIEF ECONOMIST, CIBC

According to the World Economic Forum, technology is causing such changes to the workplace, that one study says nearly 50% of subject material a student learns in their first year of post-secondary education is out of date by the time they graduate.



## BUSINESS TRAINING

According to the World Economic Forum, technology is causing such changes to the workplace, that one study says nearly 50% of subject material a student learns in their first year of post-secondary education is out of date by the time they graduate. Because of this, jurisdictions cannot focus only on traditional skills development, and practical skill development is required. Continuous education will also be important.<sup>37</sup>

The responsibility of education and training does not rest solely with government. According to a study by the Conference Board of Canada, Canadian businesses understand this point, and are investing more in training than they did a few years ago. However, investments are still far below 1990 levels. This research found that employers in Canada spend \$800 per employee on training, which is considerably lower than what employers spend in the United States. The good news, however, is that the gap between Canada and the US appears to be diminishing.<sup>38</sup>

Further research conducted by the OECD shows that Canadian workers participate in employer-sponsored education at a lower rate than many other countries including the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia. Yet unlike other countries, the training discrepancy between different types of workers appears to be lower. In Canada there is little difference between the rate of training white-collared workers receive versus blue-collar workers, while white collar workers participate at a higher rates in most other countries.<sup>39</sup>

Companies with HRPAs appear to provide employee training at a high rate. Our survey showed that 73 per cent of respondents companies invest regularly in employee training. However, 57 per cent of those respondents felt their companies should increase the level of training they provide.



The HRPAs surveyed its members to determine what could be the primary barrier to employee training. A full 60 per cent of respondents identified cost as the primary issue. Those that responded by choosing “other” highlighted challenges related to employees taking time off work to complete the training, as well as the costs associated with that time off.

With cost being identified as the primary issue preventing further training, one option for businesses to reduce costs is to utilize joint-employee training programs with other businesses in the same industry. The HRPAs surveyed its members to see if this was a solution deployed by businesses today, and only 30 per cent of respondents said their companies ever participated in joint events. Of those 30 per cent, however, 78 per cent indicated that the joint training programs were successful.

The HRPAs asked members who had not tried joint events why that was. The majority of respondents indicated some form of protectionist answer about not wanting to engage with competitors.

### Reducing Training Costs

Given that the vast majority of respondents that participated in joint programs found them to be successful, HR professionals should look for ways to collaborate with other businesses on training programs.



### RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENSURE A HIGHLY SKILLED WORKFORCE

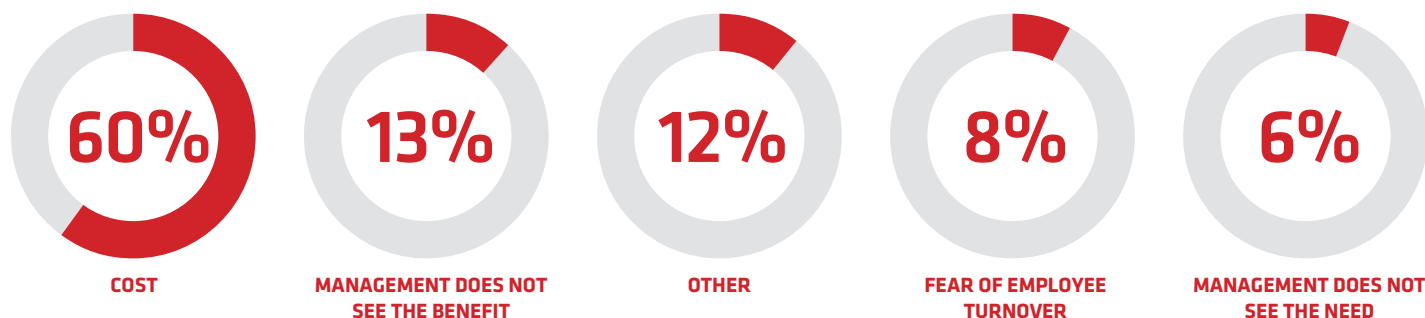
- HR professionals understand the value of employee training and must continue to encourage their organizations to invest in this area.
- Government should look for ways to reduce training costs for businesses.
- HR Professionals should explore joint-training programs as possible ways to reduce training costs for their employers.

“We want employees to work and find it hard to spare time training”

– A HRPAs MEMBER

### WHAT DO YOU THINK THE PRIMARY BARRIER TO EMPLOYEE TRAINING IS?

SOURCE: HRPAs MEMBER SURVEY  
APRIL 18-26, 2016





# 06

## Foreign Trained Professionals





“We need more programs which are specifically designed to understand the current skill level of incoming workers, and can then address any gaps so that these people can join the workforce faster and more efficiently.”

- A HRP A MEMBER

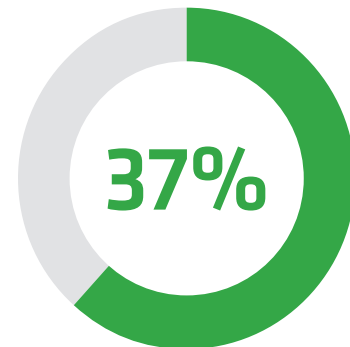
**F**OREIGN TRAINED PROFESSIONALS CURRENTLY PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN ONTARIO'S ECONOMY. IN 2011 ALMOST 21 PER CENT OF WORKERS AGED 25 TO 64 IN ONTARIO HAD POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS FROM OUTSIDE OF CANADA.<sup>40</sup> AS OUR WORKFORCE AGES AND MORE WORKERS RETIRE, THIS FIGURE IS EXPECTED TO GROW, AND ISSUES RELATED TO CREDENTIAL RECOGNITION AND ATTRACTING WORKERS WITH THE NECESSARY SKILLS WILL BE PARAMOUNT TO CREATING A HIGHLY SKILLED WORKFORCE. THE CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE RECENTLY HIGHLIGHTED, “CANADA MUST ENSURE THAT IT CONTINUES TO ATTRACT THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST TO REPLENISH ITS SKILLED LABOUR FORCE.”<sup>41</sup>

The HRP A asked its members how important recognizing foreign credentials was to ensuring Ontario has a highly skilled workforce, and 37 per cent of respondents said “very important”, while 24 per cent said “fairly important”.

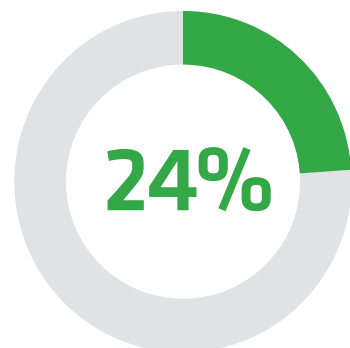
The HRP A asked its members what steps could be done to improve foreign credential recognition in Ontario. Reoccurring feedback focused around unregulated occupations which account for approximately 85 per cent of the total jobs in Canada according to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. As the Chamber explains, having a regulator can help simplify the credential recognition process, but without one, employers are often left on their own.<sup>42</sup>

#### HOW IMPORTANT IS RECOGNIZING FOREIGN CREDENTIALS TO ENSURING ONTARIO HAS A HIGHLY SKILLED WORKPLACE?

SOURCE: HRP A MEMBER SURVEY  
APRIL 18-26, 2016



VERY IMPORTANT



FAIRLY IMPORTANT

HRPA Members suggested the government provide some form of standard competency testing that foreign trained professionals could undergo to show they have attained equivalent skills. In addition, a reoccurring request was for some service to be made available to businesses where they could easily verify the credentials of the people they are hiring. While these services are offered by many different companies today, there is no single government-approved source that businesses can go to for this purpose and finding one can be confusing. These are particularly important issues for non-regulated professions.

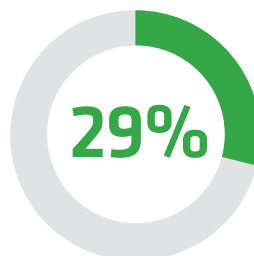
To ensure a highly skilled workforce, the federal and provincial governments must work together to confirm the skills of the foreign trained workers meet the needs of employers. While immigration remains a federal responsibility education and training falls under provincial jurisdictions. The Government of Canada should be encouraged to work with the province to expand a system of pre-arrival qualifications as soon as possible, a model similar to that used by Australia. In Australia, the government verifies people's occupation rather than self-declaring, and do offshore competency assessments.<sup>43</sup> By conducting offshore competency assessments, the government helps ensure workers meet the needs of employers before they enter the workforce.

**“Ontario needs a credible evaluation process and verification to check foreign credentials are genuine. We had instances of people presenting fake certificates from some foreign institutions.”**

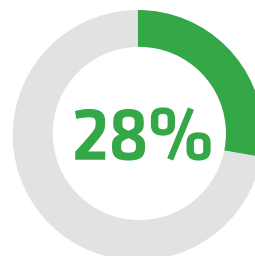
**- A HRP A MEMBER**

#### **IN YOUR OPINION, WHY DO YOU THINK YOUR COMPANY HAS NOT TRIED A JOINT TRAINING PROGRAM?**

SOURCE: HRP A MEMBER SURVEY  
APRIL 18-26, 2016



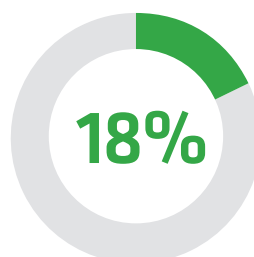
**UNSURE**



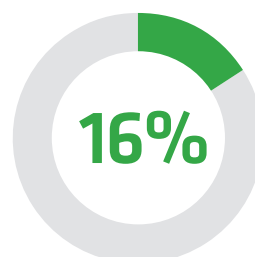
**SKILL REQUIREMENTS ARE  
UNIQUE TO OUR COMPANY**



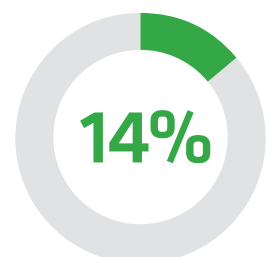
**DO NOT WANT TO WORK  
WITH OUR COMPETITORS**



**OUR TRAINING METHODS  
ARE PROPRIETARY**



**AFFRAID OF STAFF  
POACHING**



**OTHER**



In terms of pre-qualifying foreign skilled workers, the federal government's new Express Entry System is designed to manage how skilled workers apply to immigrate to Canada. When a company cannot find a qualified worker in Canada, they can use the Job Bank on the Express Entry system to find a foreign trained professional. Process time is approximately 6-months.<sup>44</sup> According to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, not enough businesses are using this system<sup>45</sup>. More should be done to promote this tool to Ontario businesses, and the government should look for ways to further improve it.



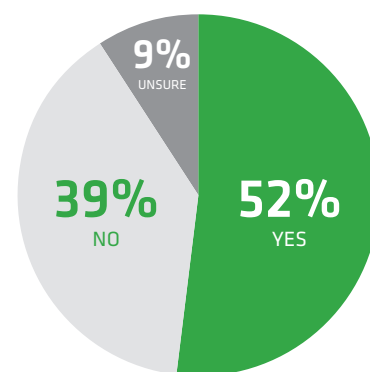
### RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENSURE A HIGHLY SKILLED WORKFORCE

- HR Professionals should familiarize themselves with Express Entry system.
- Government should promote the various ways for businesses to verify foreign credentials.
- Immigration policies should continue to focus on skilled immigrants that meet current and future labour needs.

According to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, not enough businesses are using this system. More should be done to promote this tool to Ontario businesses, and the government should look for ways to further improve it.

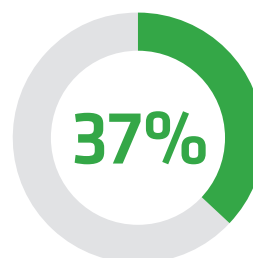
### HOW IMPORTANT IS RECOGNIZING FOREIGN CREDENTIALS TO ENSURING ONTARIO HAS A HIGHLY SKILLED WORKPLACE?

SOURCE: HRPB MEMBER SURVEY  
APRIL 18-26, 2016

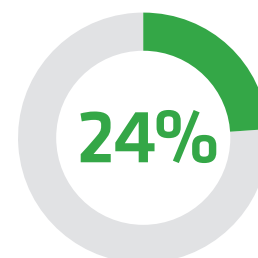


### HOW IMPORTANT IS RECOGNIZING FOREIGN CREDENTIALS TO ENSURING ONTARIO HAS A HIGHLY SKILLED WORKPLACE?

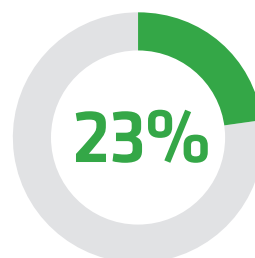
SOURCE: HRPB MEMBER SURVEY  
APRIL 18-26, 2016



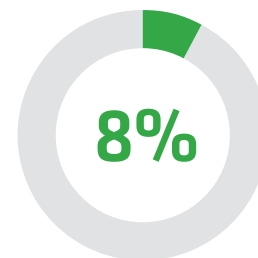
VERY IMPORTANT



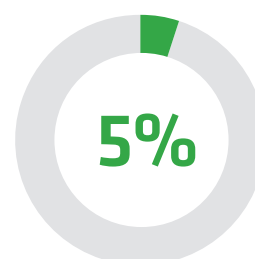
FAIRLY IMPORTANT



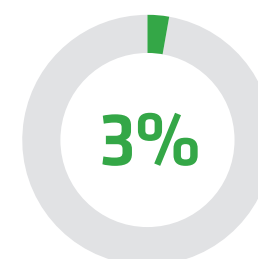
IMPORTANT



SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT



NOT IMPORTANT



UNSURE

# 07

## Conclusion





ONTARIO'S ECONOMY IS CHANGING. BY ENSURING ITS WORKFORCE IS HIGHLY SKILLED, AND THAT IT RECEIVES THE TRAINING AND SKILLS NECESSARY TO ADAPT, THE PROVINCE CAN CAPITALIZE ON THESE CHANGES AND BUILD A BRIGHTER ECONOMIC FUTURE.

There are several challenges currently in the way of developing such a highly skilled workforce. However, if industries, educators and governments work together, these challenges can be overcome. By aiming our students in the right direction, strengthening our education and training programs and improving the foreign credential recognition framework, Ontario's workforce will be well positioned to succeed in the global economy.

There is an important role for HR professionals to play in these necessary reforms. HR professionals work at the critical intersection between management and their labour force. They have the required industry knowledge and planning to understand what their workers' skills and training needs are and will be, and they have the foresight to understand how the recommendations in this report will benefit their organizations. By working together to implement these recommended reforms, Ontario's industries will prosper, and Ontario's economy will grow and prosper.

By aiming our students in the right direction, strengthening our education and training programs and improving the foreign credential recognition framework, Ontario's workforce will be well positioned to succeed in the global economy.

# 08

## Appendix A

Various sources of Labour Market Data

## CANADIAN OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTION SYSTEM (“COPS”)

COPS is the main data source for labour market information in Canada for the Ministry of Employment and Social Development Canada. Its projections are updated every two years only, and calculates occupational needs for 292 different job categories over 10 years<sup>46</sup>. It does this using the National Occupational Classification codes, which are only updated every five years.<sup>47</sup>

## WWW.JOBBANK.GC.CA

The Government of Canada also maintains Job Bank, which is described as the government’s “leading source for jobs and labour market information.”<sup>48</sup> The website hosts job postings, as well as different career and labour market information. Visitors can explore careers by occupation, wages outlook, education program, as well as skills and knowledge, and a Career Tool helps students identify the demand for different fields of study. Employment outlook data, however, is based over a 3-year period, and does not provide a longer-term analysis. For example, at the time of writing the data was based on 2015-17, which is less useful for students trying to understand where demands may be in the future.<sup>49</sup>

## ONTARIO MINISTRY OF TRAINING COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Ontario’s Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (TCU) website has a whole section dedicated to “Labour Market Information.”<sup>50</sup> It too is lacking. If a user can navigate to the right area, its “Choose Your Path” section offers three tools to help with education and career planning, including an Ontario Job Futures section that allows users to explore career options. While the labour market information is laid out in a useable manner - as a rating either “above average”, “average”, or “below average” that data is only projected from 2013-2017, or backwards from 2009-2013. This narrow window does little to allow students to understand what the longer trend might be.

## WORKFORCE PLANNING ONTARIO

Funded by the province, Workforce Planning Ontario is a network of 26 local agencies that provide local research and engage community partners in local labour market projects.<sup>51</sup> While local groups can often provide the best read of local economies, the data laid out on many of the local websites was difficult to interpret for anyone attempting to decide on a career.

# 09

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