

## RESOURCES

For the full report on the study please see 'Following the Success' Project (2009) at:

<http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/Research/FundedResearch/project-funding-work.htm>

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## 4 Importance of Informal Learning

Youth and employers agree that informal learning experiences are important determinants of success including:

- The scope of assigned tasks
- The expertise of immediate supervisors
- The knowledge of owners and/or management
- The types of interaction with senior co-workers

Involving co-workers in providing informal learning is an effective way for employers to train and/or retrain youth or other new employees. Employers may not always know how to utilize co-workers in this process. Although youth employment and related social service agencies may be aware of how informal learning helps retain young employees, additional knowledge of informal learning practices might benefit these service deliverers.

### RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. Provide professional development training/ learning about the role of informal learning practices in the workplace to youth employment and other social service agencies that work with at-risk youth.
2. Develop employer education and orientation for use by youth employment and other social service agencies.
3. Deliver these resources in a convenient and accessible manner to employers.

## 5 Formal Policy

There is little evidence of formal organizational policy about the recruitment, development and support of at-risk youth. Often human resources policy and practices blend youth with new hires and do not provide any help to ensure successful hiring and job retention for these youth. Youth employment and related social service agencies have a major role to play in supporting employers to develop policy in this area that would take the best practices defined through this project into account.

### RECOMMENDATION

Develop resources to help employers create HR policies that support successful youth hiring and retention practice.

“ I basically believe we need to give young people a chance... I came to Canada in 1974 as a youngster, 14 years old, and I had a hard time and there were people who would give me a chance. So now fortunately in my position I like give back, give to young people an opportunity because of race or status... ”

(OWNER/MANAGER, SMALL AUTO REPAIR GARAGE)

# Successful School Work Transitions: What Employment Agencies Can Do



# FACTORS THAT LEAD TO SUCCESS

Following the Success project (FTS) focuses on youth unemployment and barriers to successful school work transitions. The project builds on research done in Canada and elsewhere and explored two central issues:

1. How do youth and employers understand the impact of youth marginalization on achieving successful and sustainable employment and career development opportunities?
2. What are the workplace learning practices that help youth obtain stable positions that lead to careers and are able to sustain these jobs?

## ABOUT FOLLOWING THE SUCCESS

For the FTS project interviews were done with youth in Ontario experiencing difficulties finding and staying in meaningful jobs. Interviews were also done with the employers. The purpose of the research was to highlight successful examples of labour market access. The research looked both at the individual youth and the environment around the youth that helped him or her succeed at work. Attention was paid to individual efforts, supportive work environments and workplace learning practices. The project arose as a response to the high levels of youth unemployment in Toronto. The work was funded by the Canadian Council on Learning.

## 1 The Importance of Individual Efforts of Employers

Youth employment and related social service agencies as well as job developers know that individual effort, interest and understanding among employers are significant success factors. Resources leading to broader awareness of the contribution of employers to their communities are useful. For example, organizing a speaker series at local chambers of commerce to highlight individual efforts and successful examples to the local business community.

### RECOMMENDATION

- a) Youth employment and related social service agencies promote and celebrate the efforts of individual employers by organizing community events.
- b) Employer education and orientation work done by youth employment and other social service agencies include materials about the gains for firms, the surrounding community and society through a commitment to employing at-risk youth.

## 2 Understanding the Full Scope of Barriers Facing Youth

Many employers don't understand the full range of barriers that affect youth's access to the workforce. Youth employment and related social service agencies, as well as job developers, are very aware of these factors. Agencies are challenged by the conflicting needs of two client groups; at-risk youth and their employers. Helping employers understand all the factors that marginalize youth and providing useful techniques for dealing with them might encourage more employers to hire these youth.

### RECOMMENDATION

- a) That youth employment and related social service agencies, as well as job developers, work with researchers to develop employer education and orientation materials.
- b) That these resources be delivered in a convenient, attractive manner that is sensitive to employer scheduling restrictions. Providing employers with useful resources will work to build awareness of the range of marginalization factors facing youth.

## 3 Matching Effects of Youth Work Orientations to Work Practices

Youth attitudes to work change through employment and broader life experiences. Employers may see this as youth work ethic and this may limit the success of employers in hiring, training, retaining and effectively using at-risk youth. The "match" between the youth and the employer or employment situation is central to the youth's success. The factors that make up this "match" include:

- a) occupational orientation or general employment orientation of the youth;
- b) the organizational environment;
- c) management/supervisory style;
- d) the tasks the youth is expected to perform; and
- e) the training/learning processes on the job.

If these factors are not taken into consideration, the youth may experience a sense of "mis-match" in terms of managerial/supervisor style and their own needs. Youth employment and related social service agencies as well as job developers are trained to be aware of these factors.

### RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. Consider these factors in the assessment and matching of youth to specific job positions and/or employer expectations. This might include matching the scope of tasks, expectations of the employer, informal learning practices and management/supervisor style to the existing work orientations of youth.
2. Create tools for youth employment and other social service agencies that explain the importance of "matching" in the job development/employment process.

“ [John] is a young man who had left high school and was sort of floundering in life a little bit. Somehow he managed to find his way to the [youth employment centre] and to us, and they managed to get him on their program and spent some time with him... We entered into a deal and I am proud to say that [John] finished his Grade 12 while he was employed by us and he has also been enrolled as an apprentice in the apprenticeship program and is now working through that and will be going to school in a couple of weeks for his first time in the apprenticeship program... So, I think that's one of my success stories... it didn't take very long before he could start working on his own. ”

(MANAGER, CAR DEALERSHIP/GARAGE)

