

Employee Training Falls Short In Canada How to Catch Up?

Ottawa, September 14, 2006 – The message is loud and clear: labour shortages are rapidly developing in Canada. At the same time, the demands of the knowledge economy coupled with the transformational nature of information technology mean skill requirements are constantly increasing and changing. The need to invest more in the skills of our current workforce has never been greater.

Still, one third of Canadian workers say they're *not* getting the training they need. Less than 30 per cent of adult workers in Canada participate in job-related education and training, compared to 45 per cent in the United States. As a matter of fact, American firms spend almost fifty per cent more on training than Canadian firms. We're also far behind European countries such as Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Employers hesitate for what are – on the surface – good reasons. Training is expensive and it means employees miss time on the job. Many employers aren't convinced of the return on that investment. And they worry that after they've spent a lot of money on training, employees might be “poached” by another firm. This, even though evidence shows that training boosts productivity and innovation.

The Canadian Council on Learning has commissioned a discussion paper, *Employer Investment in Workplace Learning in Canada*, prepared by Canadian Policy Research Networks. The paper, by Mark Goldenberg, assesses the impact of current employer investment in training, examines incentives used in other countries and offers suggestions for improvement.

The paper raises questions that will spark discussion at a CCL/CPRN forum to be held November 9, 2006, in Ottawa.

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For more information on *Employer Investment in Workplace Learning in Canada*, visit our home page: <http://www.cprn.org>

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For more information, contact:

Ron Saunders, Director, CPRN's Work Network

- Tel: 416-482-1052
- E-mail: rsaunders@cprn.org

Daryl Rock, Associate Director, Knowledge Exchange, Canadian Council on Learning

- Tel: 613-786-3230 ext. 205
- E-mail: drock@ccl-cca.ca

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Elizabeth Everson, Director, Communications, Canadian Council on Learning

- Tel: 613-786-3230 ext. 207
- E-mail: beverson@ccl-cca.ca

Jennifer Fry, Director, CPRN's Public Affairs

- Tel: 613-567-7500 ext. 2019
- E-mail: jfry@cprn.org