

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>OBJECTIVES .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>RESULTS OF THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Skills and Training Needs .....</b>	<b>9</b>
What We Know from Research .....	9
What We Heard from Industry .....	11
Skill Gaps for Production Workers.....	11
Skill Gaps for Supervisors .....	14
Skills Development (Training) Gaps .....	16
<b>Optimal Delivery Methods.....</b>	<b>19</b>
What We Know from Research .....	19
What We Heard from Industry .....	21
<b>Ensuring Transfer of Training .....</b>	<b>25</b>
What We Know from Research .....	25
What We Heard from Industry .....	28
The Need for a Systemic Approach .....	28
The Recruitment/Retention Factor.....	28
Supports for Transfer of Learning .....	30
<b>Sectoral Skills Development.....</b>	<b>33</b>
Best Practice Models Identified by the Research .....	33
Selected Sectoral Development Models and Services .....	35
Products and Services Suggested by Industry .....	46
Financial Assistance.....	46
Training.....	49
Consulting Services .....	51
Information/Links .....	51
Other Suggestions .....	52

<b>CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Summary of Key Findings.....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Recommendations .....</b>	<b>55</b>

**APPENDICES**

<b>Appendix 1: Steering Committee Members .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Appendix 2: The Consultant Team .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Participants in the Research .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Appendix 4: Interview Questions .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Appendix 5: Questionnaire: Production Worker Skills .....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Appendix 6: Questionnaire: Supervisor Skills .....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Appendix 7: Survey Data: Production Worker Skills .....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Appendix 8: Survey Data: Supervisor Skills .....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Appendix 9: Workplace Learning Centre – Molson Canada, Edmonton .....</b>	<b>77</b>

## **AAFRD SKILLS DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Skills Development Initiative proposed by Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development, in partnership with the Alberta Food Processors Association, will support expansion and growth of the industry through skills development of production workers and first-line supervisors. A needs assessment was conducted from October, 2001 to February, 2002 to define the skills development needs of companies undergoing an expansion or new investment and suggest positive strategies and performance measures to assist companies in meeting this challenge.

The needs assessment was guided by a Steering Committee and included both qualitative and quantitative elements. Information interviews were held with key contacts in the industry to define issues and companies undergoing or considering an expansion. Forty-two managers, supervisors and shop stewards from 26 food and beverage plants across Alberta participated in interviews and completed questionnaires evaluating workforce skills. Research of best practices in workforce skills development, transfer of training strategies and sectoral models for skills development revealed solid prototypes and clear direction to guide design and implementation of the Skills Development Initiative.

Key findings of the research include:

- ◆ All stakeholders indicated that production workers and supervisors would be critical to the success of an expansion or new investment.
- ◆ 76% of managers surveyed indicated that they would likely have to hire more staff in the event of an expansion and 88% predicted that such a move would require training for existing staff.
- ◆ 70% of all managers surveyed and 100% of representatives from small- to medium-enterprises reported that they would need additional resources to meet training requirements in the event of an expansion.
- ◆ 1-2% of start-up or expansion costs would typically be devoted to skills development.
- ◆ Communication skills, especially English as a Second Language and related basic skills were identified most often as the primary 'skills gap' for production workers.
- ◆ Leadership and interpersonal skills were most often identified as skill gaps for first-line supervisors.
- ◆ All respondents felt that production worker training is best offered on-site by internal trainers. Supervisory training is more possible offsite and even preferable in the minds of some respondents.
- ◆ Many respondents felt that the post-secondary system is not adequately preparing graduates for work in this industry.

- ◆ 83% of respondents reported confidence that sufficient equipment is provided to support production workers in their jobs; as did 72% for required information and 67% for clear performance expectations. This number dropped to 50% for personal motivation, 44% for effective training and 22% for clear incentives.
- ◆ Confidence in supports for supervisors was higher, in the range of 90% for equipment, information, expectations, personal motivation and feedback. Again, confidence in effective training and clear incentives was considerably lower (44% and 22%, respectively).
- ◆ 94% (all but one) of managers surveyed indicated that recruitment and retention is their number one issue and has a direct impact on training.
- ◆ Research of sectoral skills development programs revealed four broad categories of administrative structure (government agency, sectoral council, industry association and cluster/consortia) and four main categories of product/service offering (financial assistance, training, consulting services and information/links).
- ◆ Many respondents expressed reservations about the viability of a training fund as the only option to support skills development in the industry and recommended a mix of products and services in a coordinated and systemic approach.
- ◆ All respondents felt that financial support for skill development of workers and supervisors will enhance the growth and viability of Alberta's food and beverage processing industry.

Based on these findings, five recommendations were made for the administrative structure and product/service offering of the Skills Development Initiative:

- ◆ **Recommendation #1: The Skills Development Initiative should be coordinated through a Skills Enhancement Team under the direction of the Alberta Food Processors Association and guided by an industry advisory council.**
- ◆ **Recommendation #2: Provide carefully monitored financial assistance for specified industry training.**
- ◆ **Recommendation #3: Develop and provide effective, responsive and well-tailored training for first-line supervisors.**
- ◆ **Recommendation #4: Provide consulting services in training and human resources development.**
- ◆ **Recommendation #5: Facilitate networking, linking and information dissemination in the industry on human resource issues.**

## INTRODUCTION

The Alberta food processing industry is the province's largest manufacturing sector. The lack of human resources development and specifically workplace training is resulting in considerable pressure on the economic vitality of this sector and its ability to grow. Not only is there increasing difficulty among food processors to attract labour, there is also a marked lack of emphasis by management as well as programs in place to improve the skills of existing workers. As a consequence, the food industry is faced with significant challenges to achieving its potential. In some cases, the competitiveness and growth of the industry is threatened. Clearly this is of serious concern to food processing operations in the province as well as other stakeholders in the agri-food value chain.

In 2000, the Alberta Food Processors Association (AFPA) conducted two comprehensive human resources development needs assessments within the agri-food industry, which illustrate the urgency of the situation. Both studies, while conducted autonomously, led to the same conclusion: that the industry is in dire need of a human resources development strategy to attract workers and retain its existing workforce. A review of existing human resource requirements estimates that 18,000 new workers will be needed within the next five years to keep plants at existing output levels. In order to attract this volume of new workers, the industry must position itself as an industry of choice within a labour market drought.

In February 2001, AFPA with its partners, specifically Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development (AAFRD), identified the need to develop strategies to retain existing agri-food workers and become an industry of choice for new workers. In April 2001, AFPA was asked to project manage a needs assessment to uncover the skills development needs of industry, how best to address them and how to measure the improvements. The initiative was named the *Skills Development Initiative*, planned to support skills development and performance improvement for production workers and first-line supervisors in Alberta's agricultural processing industry. The transfer of learning to the workplace and support within the organization were also identified as important to support and sustain the acquisition and application of skills in the workplace.

Hammond & Associates Inc. of Calgary, Alberta was chosen to conduct the first phase of the Skills Development Initiative, a needs assessment to determine industry needs and preferences for learning support. This needs assessment took place over the months of November 2001 to February 2002.

## OBJECTIVES

The goal of the needs assessment was to lay the foundation for the Skills Development Initiative to support skills development in the agricultural processing industry. To meet this goal seven key objectives were defined:

1. Confirm management's assessment of needs for training of new staff related to an expansion or new investment.
2. Confirm the skills development needs of production workers and first-line supervisors.
3. Identify what existing delivery mechanisms and learning formats will meet the skill development needs of production workers and first-line supervisors.
4. Determine what is needed to support and sustain successful use of these skills in the workplace environment.
5. Explore existing models and best practices for skills development funding programs (other jurisdictions such as provinces or states).
6. Define evaluation methods for implementation in the Skills Development Initiative.
7. Make recommendations for the program product/service offering of the Skills Development Initiative.

## METHODOLOGY

The following activities were undertaken to meet the objectives of the needs assessment:

**Formation of a steering committee**, with representation from Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development, Alberta Learning, Alberta Human Resources & Employment and the Alberta Food Processors Association. (See Appendix 1 for a complete listing of Steering Committee Members). This committee met in late October of 2001 to approve the objectives and methodology of the needs assessment and to suggest contacts in the industry to participate in the research. The committee met again in February, 2002 to review a draft of the results of the research and to shape recommendations.

**Information interviews with key contacts** in industry and government to suggest industry-based skills development models in North America and suggest industry contacts to define the needs of new companies in the industry or companies undergoing expansion.

**Review of recent research in the industry** defining skill gaps and training needs of the workforce.

**Research of best practices** for skills development of production workers and first-line supervisors; for supporting and sustaining the application of these skills in the workplace and for evaluation of skills development programs and supports. This research involved a literature review and Internet research.

**Research of skills development models** through Internet research, literature review and telephone interviews with fund/program administrators. Appendix 6 features a summary of highlights from that research. This involved accessing over 200 web sites in Canada, US and worldwide, including approximately 40 industry associations, 100 government sites, 30 sector councils or clusters, 20 educational institutions and 25 international organizations.

**Development, piloting and validation of a questionnaire** designed to confirm skills requirements and identify skill gaps for first-line supervisors and production workers and to focus attention on skills and contributing factors in preparation for the interview. Two managers, two supervisors and the project manager at AFPA participated in piloting and validating the questionnaires. (See Appendices 4 and 5 for copies of the questionnaires.)

**Interviews with senior managers, supervisors and shop stewards** to gain multiple perspectives on training needs and required supports related to expansion or new investment. Managers of companies currently undergoing expansion or considering an expansion were identified with the assistance of the Steering Committee and contacted to ask if they would participate in the research. Eventually, 26 managers, ten supervisors and seven labour representatives (serving as a proxy for production workers) in 26 Alberta food and beverage processing plants provided their perceptions through a structured interview process. Participants were drawn from a representative sample of small, medium and large companies in Lethbridge, Calgary, Edmonton and rural Alberta, including bakeries, dairies, processors of meat, poultry, beverages, vegetables and snack and specialty foods. (For a complete list of participating companies, see Appendix 3.)

In order to focus attention on skills, job performance and barriers and supports and to obtain some quantifiable data on each, participants were asked to complete the short skills questionnaires as a prelude to participating in the interview. Managers completed a questionnaire about supervisors' skills and about production worker skills as well, if they felt that they were in a position to comment on skills at that level. Supervisors were asked to complete two surveys: one about supervisors' skills (a self/peer assessment) and one about production worker skills. Shop stewards were asked to comment on production worker skills only.

**Data analysis and preparation of strategic options** for consideration by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee reviewed a number of options for sectoral skills development based on needs identified by industry and best practices identified through the research. Several options were selected, based on parameters of budget and infrastructure, for further consideration and validation by senior managers.

**Feedback and validation of strategic options by senior managers.** Strategic options selected by the Steering Committee were forwarded to senior managers who were invited to comment on the options under consideration. Their feedback was incorporated into final decisions of the Steering Committee on the structure and direction of the Skills Development Initiative.

**Preparation of the final report**, documenting the process and outcomes of the needs assessment, including recommendations for implementation of the Skills Development Initiative.

## RESULTS OF THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The results of the needs assessment are framed in order of the first five objectives of the needs assessment. *Skills and Training Needs* focuses on the first two objectives, to confirm management's assessment of training needs related to an expansion or new investment with particular attention to skills development for production workers and first-line supervisors. *Optimal Delivery Methods* addresses the third objective of identifying best practices for skills development of production workers and first-line supervisors. *Ensuring Transfer of Training* addresses objective number four: to define what is needed to support and sustain successful use of skills in the workplace and *Sectoral Skills Development* explores number five: to define options and best practices models for skills development programs. The two remaining objectives will be the focus of the *Conclusions and Recommendations* section to follow.

### Skills and Training Needs

#### What We Know from Research

Skills gaps and training needs in Alberta's food and beverage processing industry have been well documented through several recent human resource studies and corroborated by similar assessments in other provinces and related sectors.

An essential skills needs assessment of the industry<sup>1</sup> conducted in 2000 featured interviews and focus groups with managers, production workers and labour representatives in 83 plants and 22 communities across Alberta. That study identified English as a Second Language as the most pervasive skill gap among production workers, as well as a need for stronger skills in documentation, math and problem-solving. Furthermore, basic skills are often required as a foundation for learning new technical skills, product knowledge and regulatory requirements, a key consideration given the change the industry has gone through to implement food safety programs.

Lead hands and supervisors were singled out as a group requiring certain support in supervisory, communication, time management, problem-solving and training/coaching skills. As most supervisors were promoted from within, basic skills were also an issue in many cases, required as a basis for acquiring new technical knowledge and skills as companies merged, expanded, automated or diversified their product line.

Statistics revealed through that research included:

- ◆ 18.2% of workers and as high as 75% of employees in some plants speak English as a Second Language (ESL)

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<sup>1</sup> Hammond & Associates Inc. (2000). *Adding skills, adding value: The essential skills needs assessment in Alberta's food processing industry: Final report*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Workforce Essential Skills Committee.

- ◆ 37.3% of the workforce has not completed high school
- ◆ an estimated 45% of the workforce likely does not have the literacy or numeracy skills to cope with workforce change.

The *Adding Skills, Adding Value* research indicated that training in the industry was limited, undervalued, and challenged by barriers of time, production pressures and limited training budgets. The report concluded with numerous recommendations to address skill gaps and training issues, including the establishment of a training investment fund; the development of resources suitable for in-house training; training resources targeting ESL and supervisory skills and increased opportunities to access workforce education.

These findings were echoed in *People...Pathways...Possibilities!*<sup>2</sup>, a labour market study of Alberta's agri-food industry conducted in the same year and funded by Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development, AAFRD and AFPA. Training requirements were identified in three main areas:

- ◆ operational support for production workers, to address areas such as workplace safety, food safety, first aid and process control;
- ◆ supervisory skills, especially as they relate to team leadership, communication and working with a culturally diverse workforce; and
- ◆ management training, focusing on leadership, business strategy, marketing, human resource management, technology development and implementation.

The labour market study identified several obstacles to implementation of training, including constraints of time and financial resources, a lack of appropriate delivery methods, apparent disconnects between industry and local educational institutions, and the fact that training as a priority within the industry was low. The recommendations from that study included the need to make a long-term commitment to the adoption of a human resource development and training culture, to develop a network of qualified training providers for production workers and supervisors and to implement an executive development program.

Related research in other provinces and similar sectors confirms these findings and recommendations. A 1996 study of training needs related to export readiness in western Canada's food and beverage processing industry<sup>3</sup> identified a lack of programs targeted to line employees and the need to address basic skills of line employees, especially in literacy, numeracy and technology based skills. A human resource study for the Canadian

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<sup>2</sup> Toma & Bouma Management Consultants. (2000). *People...pathways...possibilities!! A human resources study of Alberta's food and beverage processing industry*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Food Processors Association.

<sup>3</sup> Trimension Training & Consulting Group Inc. and the Advisory Group Inc. (March, 1996). *Final report: Human resource needs assessment study for the pan western food and beverage processing industry..*

Food Retail and Wholesale Sector<sup>4</sup> identified below-average levels of literacy and numeracy as a threat to the workers' ability to participate and succeed in higher-level skill training, and also a need to increase the quality and quantity of training for first-line workers and supervisors. Independent human resource studies in the dairy<sup>5</sup>, meat<sup>6</sup> and grain<sup>7</sup> industries all pointed to the same skills and training issues. Clearly, skill gaps and the resulting effect on achieving business potential are being reported across the industry.

### **What We Heard from Industry**

The 26 managers who were interviewed for this research are drawn from 17 Alberta food and beverage processing plants. Twelve of the 17 plants are large operations (more than 100 employees), four are medium (26-100 employees) and one is a small operation, employing fewer than 25 employees. Four of the plants have recently completed or are in the midst of an expansion, 4 are planning or seriously considering expanding, 4 reported "continual growth", 3 indicated that they would expand "tomorrow" if they could "get the workers" and 2 have no plans for expansion at present.

Ten supervisors from ten plants as well as six shop stewards and a business representative from three union locals also participated in the research to provide multiple perceptions on skills needs, barriers and supports in the industry. In preparation for the interview, respondents were asked to complete a short questionnaire to focus on key issues and provide some quantitative data at the same time. Managers completed a survey about supervisors' skills in their facility, and, if they were in a position to comment, a second survey on production worker skills. Supervisors were asked to comment on both supervisor skills (a self- and peer-assessment) and the production worker skills they supervise. Shop stewards were asked to act as a proxy for production worker input, evaluating production worker skills. In the end, 20 questionnaires about production worker skills and 27 supervisor skills surveys were received.

In conveying these comments and reporting these numbers it is important to emphasize that this is a valid and representative but small sample, and generalizations to the whole population of the agri-food industry should be carefully considered. What we have here is a snapshot in time, an accurate record of "first-line" perspectives by people most directly involved in and impacted by a plant expansion. As potential users and ultimate benefactors of the Skills Development Initiative, their voices should be heard.

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<sup>4</sup> CLMPC Consulting Services Inc. (1998). *Creating the future: Human resources study of the Canadian food retail and wholesale sector*. Toronto, ON: The Steering Committee of the Canadian Grocery Distributors.

<sup>5</sup> Price Waterhouse Management Consultants. (1996). *Canadian dairy processing at the crossroads: A human resource study. Final report to the steering committee*.

<sup>6</sup> Price Waterhouse Coopers. (July, 1998). *A human resource study of the Canadian red meat processing industry: Final report*.

<sup>7</sup> Deloitte & Touche Management Consultants. (Spring, 1995). *Human resources study of the western Canadian grain storage and handling industry: Final report to the steering committee*.

### ***Skill Gaps for Production Workers***

In interviews, managers, supervisors and shop stewards unanimously agreed that the skills of production workers and first-line supervisors would be key to the success of an expansion or new investment, and that effective training would support the acquisition and application of those skills. Most managers estimated that 1% to 2% of startup costs would be devoted to skills development in the event of an expansion and one suggested that this may range to as high as 15%, depending on the type of expansion undertaken. In cases where an expansion would require hiring additional staff, orientation training would be needed to address expectations for work and operating procedures, food safety and health and safety standards.

The majority of managers surveyed (76%) indicated that they would likely have to hire new workers in the event of an expansion and 88% predicted that such a move would require training for existing production staff, depending on the type of expansion. Technical training on new equipment, in new processes and in regulatory compliance such as HACCP were often mentioned as likely skill gaps. Several managers in the meat sector repeatedly singled out knife skills as a skills/training gap for workers.

Communication skills, especially English as a Second Language (ESL) and related basic skills such as reading, document use and computer skills, was the category most often identified by all stakeholders as a recognized skills gap for production workers. More than one-half of managers, one-half of supervisors and four of seven labour representatives indicated that these are the most significant skills gap for production workers, both for those currently working in the industry and the job applicants that have to be turned away because of poor English skills.

*I can't promote my production workers into supervisory positions because they don't have English ... I'm desperate for workers and yet I have to turn away (applicants) because they don't speak English – a safety issue. If they had that basic mindset and we had the ability to train them in customized English I might be able to hire them.*

*- General Manager, Commercial Bakery*

*We've just had a big expansion in the plant and plan to continue to grow ... we've hired a lot of new people but they aren't really 'trainable' because they can't speak English. Over the next few years English skills and computer skills will be critical to us in expansion.*

*- Office Manager, Meat Processing Plant*

*A lot of our new hires are ESL speakers and we have a lot of borderline illiteracy here. As we progress with our new (quality management) system we will have more posted information with graphs, standard operating procedures and safety information posted. Our aim is to make the business transparent to our staff and they need skills to listen, read, communicate ...*

*- Plant Manager, Commercial Bakery*

*ESL, reading and writing skills are needed here to keep up with changes in technology, production and documentation, both on a day-to-day basis and to take the training to get these new skills.*

*- Business Representative, Union Local*

*We have people who are really limited in what they can understand about the product, the process and the safety guidelines because they cannot speak English or they can't read and write.*

*- Shop Steward, Commercial Bakery*

Information drawn from the questionnaires completed by all participants also serves to illuminate skills and skill gaps for production workers. Table 1 summarizes a composite view of production worker skills, derived from combining and averaging the results of all surveys completed by managers, supervisors and shop stewards. (More detail on these numbers is found in Appendix 7.)

<b>Table 1: Skill Gap Assessment: Production Worker Skills (Survey Data)</b>			
Task No.	Job Tasks	% Below Adequate <sup>1</sup>	% Below Proficient <sup>2</sup>
1.	Follow health and safety guidelines	20%	75%
2.	Follow food safety and quality guidelines	10%	35%
3.	Meet production targets	10%	55%
4.	Follow work/operating procedures	30%	65%
5.	Communicate with co-workers	30%	70%
6.	Communicate with supervisor(s)	30%	90%
7.	Problem-solve / troubleshoot	45%	75%
8.	Understand the full production process	50%	80%
9.	Apply product knowledge	40%	70%
10.	Learn and adapt to workplace change	45%	80%
<sup>1</sup> Percentage of respondents who rated production workers' skills, as a whole, below "Adequate", defined as "performs this task successfully and independently in routine situations; needs help in difficult/unusual situations" <sup>2</sup> Percentage of respondents who rated production workers' skills, as a whole, below "Proficient", defined as "consistently and successfully performs this task, even in difficult/unusual situations"			

Managers, supervisors and shop stewards completed the production worker skills questionnaire, rating production workers in their plants, as a whole, on ten common work tasks. These tasks were identified from existing research and validated by a panel of managers and supervisors. The survey results show significant consistency between all raters. 90% of respondents felt that production workers in their facilities (judged as a whole) have Adequate, Proficient or Expert skills at meeting production targets and following food safety and quality guidelines. 80% assigned production workers the same ratings of skill for following health and safety guidelines. The largest skills gaps suggested were related to understanding the full production process, problem-solving and troubleshooting, learning and adapting to workplace change and applying product knowledge, where 40 – 50% of respondents rated skills as “basic” or “little/no skill”. However, it should be noted that in some cases respondents indicated that they do not expect production workers to apply these skills in their work and therefore rated their skills lower in these categories.

If one raises the bar to consider ‘Proficient’ performance the minimum acceptable standard rather than ‘Adequate’, the skills gap widens considerably. Less than half of respondents (45%) rated workers’ skills at the Proficient or Expert level in meeting production targets, 25% would rate workers at those levels for following health and safety guidelines and a mere 10% would be Proficient or better at communicating with supervisors.

### ***Skill Gaps for Supervisors***

This research revealed strong consensus among managers, supervisors and shop stewards as to skill gaps and training needs for supervisors in the event of an expansion. Virtually every respondent pointed to leadership, interpersonal skills and communication which, along with training and coaching, form a core of “soft” skills required and too often lacking in first-line supervisors.

*Leadership, motivation are key ... We are moving to self-directed work teams with the supervisor as coach, resource, arbitrator, conflict resolver, communicator ... much less command control.*

*- Human Resource Manager, Dairy*

*Interpersonal skills for supervisors are “number 1”. Communication skills are extremely lacking ... how to treat other people...*

*- Shop Steward, Commercial Bakery*

*We likely wouldn't hire new supervisors. We'd promote from the floor, and they would need their basic supervisory/management training. Our supervisors would need to know how do you start fresh: interviewing, the whole selection process, orientation, leadership...*

*- VP Operations, Commercial Bakery*

*I've seen people just tear a strip off of people ... It's a status thing ... We are more concerned about the (supervisor's) ability with people. That's number one. We put a very big emphasis on how people are treated.*

*– Plant Manager, Meat Processing Plant*

Technical skills required to operate, troubleshoot and train others in new equipment as well as new product knowledge were also identified as likely training priorities for supervisors in a new plant or expanding operation.

Data derived from questionnaires completed by managers and supervisors provide further insights on supervisory skills, as summarized in Appendix 8. Again, ratings between both groups was fairly consistent, with managers rating supervisors slightly lower (one level) in five of the ten tasks listed: coaching and training workers, planning and scheduling production, problem solving, maintaining accurate records and learning and adapting to workplace change. Table 2 presents the combined results of their assessment.

<b>Table 2: Skill Gap Assessment: Supervisor Skills (Survey Data)</b>			
Task No.	Job Tasks	% Below Adequate <sup>1</sup>	% Below Proficient <sup>2</sup>
1.	Coach and/or train workers	19%	75%
2.	Lead/motivate workers	15%	74%
3.	Plan/schedule production	18%	48%
4.	Meet production targets	0%	30%
5.	Meet health and safety targets	22%	59%
6.	Meet food safety and quality targets	4%	34%
7.	Problem-solve / troubleshoot	11%	52%
8.	Communicate with peers and supervisors	19%	60%
9.	Maintain accurate records	19%	63%
10.	Learn and adapt to workplace change	15%	52%
<sup>1</sup> Percentage of respondents who rated production workers' skills, as a whole, below "Adequate", defined as "performs this task successfully and independently in routine situations; needs help in difficult/unusual situations" <sup>2</sup> Percentage of respondents who rated production workers' skills, as a whole, below "Proficient", defined as "consistently and successfully performs this task, even in difficult/unusual situations"			

If one accepts 'Adequate' skills as the benchmark, then 100% of managers and supervisors indicated that supervisors in their facilities, as a whole, make or exceed this standard in meeting production targets. 96% agree that supervisors meet this standard for meeting food safety and quality targets, 89% for problem-solving, down to a low of 78% in meeting health and safety targets. Note: two managers indicated that "plan and schedule production" is not the job of a supervisor in their facility, and therefore rated these skills lower.

Again, if 'Proficient' skill (performing this task consistently and successfully, even in difficult/unusual situations) is the goal, the skills gap widens significantly. Using this standard, 70% of respondents feel supervisors are Proficient or Expert at meeting production targets, but only 25% would assign this same rating in terms of coaching and/or training skills, similar to leading and motivating workers. Less than half of respondents feel supervisors are Proficient or Expert at problem-solving (48%), meeting health and safety targets (41%), communicating with peers and supervisors (40%) and maintaining accurate records (37%).

### ***Skills Development (Training) Gaps***

In addition to identifying what new skills might be required in the event of an expansion, participants in the research were asked to describe what supports are currently in place in their plants to develop the skills of production workers and supervisors and what additional resources might be needed if expanding. (Note: although training is not the only means of skills development most managers and supervisors typically equated the two and training is certainly regarded as the primary vehicle to skills development. Their comments regarding training are therefore presented first, followed by input received regarding other skills development activities and supports.)

According to managers and supervisors, orientation, food safety and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) and/or the HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) system, health and safety, and WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System) top the list of standard training offered to new hires, according to managers and supervisors. Managers and supervisors reported that new production workers receive anything from two hours of formal training to several days. All labour representatives agreed that orientation training does take place, but four of the seven suggested that more and better training is required.

Respondents from three companies, all branch plants of large corporations, described very detailed training programs overseen by dedicated staff trainers with clear performance measures.

*We have targeted programs designed and developed "within corporate" and we have targets for the percentage of employees at all levels that require a defined level of training...as a measure of success we have an assessment audit that is reviewed by each of the teams to ensure they have the correct training and business results ... Part of our culture is to measure and track.*

*- General Manager, Snack/Specialty Foods*

*We have a training department with 20 employees that train new employees. New employees go through a one-week program before they even start ... We have two training rooms ... linked wage rate increases to training ...*

*- Plant Manager, Meat Processing Plant*

Respondents from all other plants reported more informal and ad hoc processes for production worker training, relying principally on on-the-job training where new hires learn the job from a co-worker or supervisor. Managers and supervisors agreed that they could certainly use help in improving and offering more consistent training and that good training would play a role in reducing staff turnover. However, their efforts in this regard are often challenged by a chronic labour shortage and long hours of overtime for workers. Most respondents indicated that ideally, assistance could be offered on both fronts.

*If there was money that would assist in training and I really did believe that we could “get more folks”, we’d start tomorrow.*

*- Plant Manager, Meat Processing Plant*

*When you’re paying to train people in your plant, you still have the functions happening. When they’re offsite being trained, what do you do? How do you step in and fill those roles?*

*- VP of Manufacturing, Specialty Foods*

*We developed a program for line workers but we don’t have the staff to train on it, or the crew leaders to do the coaching. We can’t free them up.*

*- HR Manager, Commercial Bakery*

Training for supervisory staff was more consistent across the industry. Most managers and supervisors indicated that they had offered or experienced some level of formal training for supervisors either in-house, in the case of several branch plant operations, or by sending individuals to programs at local colleges or private trainers. These programs typically ranged from two- to five-days in length and included modules on leadership, decision-making, problem-solving and motivating employees.

Managers were asked about what additional resources they might need to support skills development in the event of an expansion. Managers of five plants, all in established branch plants of large corporations, felt that they had everything they needed to take care of training, indicating that assistance is more likely required by independent companies, SMEs (small or medium enterprises) and companies undertaking a substantial new investment.

*If the government did have a sophisticated program, I doubt we’d participate. If we were “stand alone” like we were in ‘94, we would be listening more*

*- General Manager, Meat Processing*

*We're taken care of. We aren't really going to give you the bang for your buck. We can do what others can't dream of.*

*- HR Manager, Meat Processing*

*We do all of this (training) through our head office. We know what our needs are. These apply more to smaller companies that may not have an HR department.*

*- VP Operations, Commercial Bakery*

Managers of the 12 remaining companies indicated that they would need additional resources to meet skills requirements in the event of an expansion. Two companies indicated that they need help in any and all aspects of training, from training needs analysis to design, development, delivery and training resources.

*I would give anything to get some help. It will make the difference as to how I can complete the HACCP certification. When it comes to technology, it would get our company up to par.*

*- Office Manager, Meat Processing*

*We have so many needs that any assistance would be most welcome.*

*- HR Manager, Meat Processing*

Two companies focused specifically on training facilities, suggesting that financial support in setting up an onsite learning centre or training room would top their wish lists. The majority of managers suggested that resources to help them develop in-house expertise and build capacity in workforce skills development, rather than outsourced resources, would be the most beneficial. The products and services suggested by industry are explored in more detail under the *Sectoral Skills Development* section of this report.

To summarize the training activities reported by respondents in this research, out of 26 plants represented by all participants:

- ◆ 26 provide orientation and on-the job training for production workers
- ◆ 3 have a formal ongoing skills development program for production workers
- ◆ 26 have provided some level of formal training of new supervisors in the past
- ◆ 3 have a formal, ongoing skills development program for supervisors
- ◆ 26 identified a need to train more and more effectively than at present.

Out of 17 plants represented by managers who participated in this research:

- ◆ 12 indicated that they require additional resources to train effectively
- ◆ 17 support the concept of financial assistance for training in the industry
- ◆ 14 recommended a two-pronged approach, addressing training and recruitment.

Respondents were also prompted to comment on other skills development activities and supports for workforce skills development. All of these are opportunities to define and develop skills outside of training or to support and reinforce learning gained through formal training. Out of the 26 plants represented by participants in this research:

- ◆ 2 have a formal coaching and mentoring program (although several commented that they are looking into such a program)
- ◆ 18 have job aids, such as checklists and translated documents (although several commented they needed more and better job aids)
- ◆ 23 have information sources, such as written operating procedures and manuals (again, many respondents suggested there was room for improvement here in terms of quantity and quality)
- ◆ 23 have current job descriptions.

Finally, managers were asked how influential financial assistance for skills development would be in their decision to proceed with a plant expansion or new investment. Every manager responded the same way: while financial support for training is warranted in this industry (especially for SMEs) and they would certainly take advantage of the opportunity for funding assistance, it would have a marginal influence, if at all, on their decision to proceed with an expansion. Other factors such as market influences, access to capital and workers would guide this decision. Training dollars would just be the “icing on the cake”.

## **Optimal Delivery Methods**

### **What We Know from Research**

What is the best way to develop the skills of production workers and first-line supervisors? The research is consistent in recommending that prevalent delivery methods such as classroom programs, Internet or computer-based training and traditional teaching methods such as lecture or “book learning” are not appropriate for production workers in most situations<sup>8</sup>. Many workers in the industry did not do well in formal classroom settings and lack the literacy or computer skills to benefit from traditional lecture methods or distance/on-line learning options. (This is supported by workforce demographic statistics, reported earlier: 18.2% of the industry and up to 75% of the workforce in some plants speak English as a Second Language; 37.3% of workers have not completed high school and an estimated 45% of the workforce have inadequate literacy and numeracy skills.)

Production demands, shift work and regular overtime makes attending regularly scheduled courses difficult and many companies lack training facilities or general access

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<sup>8</sup> Toma and Bouma Management Consultants. (2000).

to computers for training purposes<sup>9</sup>. The research furthermore indicated that many managers felt post-secondary programs in the province were not effective or responsive to industry needs<sup>10</sup>. Human resource studies in the industry have repeatedly called for practical training solutions that can be implemented in-house, customized to meet company needs, and that integrate basic skills training with technical training.

The research supports the critical role of the workplace in developing workers' skills, especially workers challenged by a literacy and language barrier, as opposed to assigning this responsibility to the public education system. Workplace-based skills development programs have proven to be far more efficient and effective in upgrading workers' literacy than "general" literacy programs<sup>11</sup>. Likewise, the research demonstrates that workers obtain language skills best in a relevant, work-related context<sup>12</sup>. This research suggests that the best place for workers to develop basic skills for work is likely *at work*, and that employers have a critical role to play in communicating the need for and support of strong basic skills.

Best practices for workplace education in general and for basic skills training in particular have been defined by the Conference Board of Canada, the National Literacy Secretariat, ABC Canada and other organizations. Principles of good practice include:

- ◆ collaboration and participation of all stakeholders;
- ◆ equality of opportunity for workplace development;
- ◆ basing workplace curriculum on the needs and goals of employees;
- ◆ integrating basic skills with specific knowledge;
- ◆ nourishing a learning culture within the organization; and
- ◆ engaging the services of skilled/qualified trainers and educators<sup>13</sup>.
- ◆ utilizing the skills and experience of the learners and
- ◆ considering skills training within the context of other workplace issues<sup>14</sup>.
- ◆ starting with a careful needs assessment to identify organizational needs, available resources and learner skills abilities and needs and
- ◆ implementing ongoing evaluation of progress and outcomes<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Hammond & Associates Inc. (2000).

<sup>10</sup> Hammond & Associates Inc. (2000).

<sup>11</sup> Sticht, T.G., & Mikulecky, L. (1984). *Job-related basic skills: Cases and conclusions*. Ohio: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education.

<sup>12</sup> Pershing, J.A. (1988). *A basic skills collection: Bridging education and employment with basic academic skills*. Indiana: The Office of Education and Training Resources, Indiana Commission on Vocational Education.

<sup>13</sup> Belfiore, M.E. (1996). *Understanding curriculum development in the workplace: A resource for educators*. Ottawa, ON: ABC Canada.

<sup>14</sup> Steel, N, Johnston, W., Follinsbee, S. and Belfiore, M.E. (1997). Towards a framework of good practice. In M. Taylor (Ed.) *Workplace education, the changing landscape*. (pp. 95 – 107). Toronto, ON: Culture Concepts Inc.

These best practices are clearly evident in the award-winning workplace education programs offered by food and beverage processors in Canada, including National Sea Products, Molson Breweries, Avon Foods and Kraft Canada<sup>16</sup>.

## What We Heard from Industry

Managers and supervisors in the industry voiced very clear opinions as to what constitutes “good” training. All respondents agreed that, with the exception of training by suppliers, technical training in equipment and operating procedures could only be offered onsite and primarily through “hands-on” on-the-job training, paired up with a co-worker or supervisor who knows the job well. This tried and true method is common to most manufacturing environments.

*This is the kind of job where people learn by doing. We have very high tech equipment. You need to do the technical training in house.*

*- HR Manager, Commercial Bakery*

*On the technical side, you can't do it from a classroom. We have so many specific needs, products, routines ... You have to be involved in the flow here. Each of the seven production lines is different. We can't send (workers) to school for that.*

*- VP of Manufacturing, Specialty Foods*

*Our equipment is too unique. You won't find it “out there”.*

*- President/CEO, Commercial Bakery*

*A trainer would have to work here for six to nine months before he could be very helpful.*

*- President, Commercial Bakery*

*It wouldn't work to have someone come in. They need to know the business.*

*- GM, Specialty Foods*

*It's better to learn at the company, working on the line and learning at the same time. Schools just give you paper ... you won't learn that way.*

*- Supervisor, Commercial Bakery*

Even non-technical training such as basic skills instruction or first-aid was seen as only viable if offered onsite or at a training facility close to the worksite. All stakeholders suggested that the company was unlikely to support sending workers offsite and felt that many workers would just not go if the training were not onsite or close by. The one exception noted by several managers might be an “introduction to the industry” program

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<sup>15</sup> The Conference Board of Canada. (January 5, 2001). *Overcoming barriers: strategies for enhancing workplace literacy and learning in the workplace: Phase 1 report*. Ottawa, ON: Conference Board of Canada.

<sup>16</sup> The Conference Board of Canada. (1998). *Awards for excellence in workplace literacy. In 1998 Workplace literacy best practices reader*. Ottawa, ON: Conference Board of Canada.

that offered instruction in the more generic “basics” of work in the food industry to new or potential hires, covering topics such as basic safety, HACCP, GMPs and WHMIS.

All stakeholders suggested that scheduling training to coincide with work shifts and offering training on company time or in some cost-shared arrangement would be required to gain sufficient support for a workplace education initiative. Two managers and two labour representatives recommended a learning centre model such as the one offered by Molson Canada afforded the best scenario for upgrading of production worker skills. (See Appendix 9 for a brief description.)

Respondents in all three stakeholder groups called for training that was practical, “hands-on”, and participatory, focused on realistic tasks and work situations and stressed personal application of the content. Shop stewards stressed the importance of gaining “buy in” of all workers and gaining the support of the union in a training initiative. Two shop stewards and two managers recommended training curriculum that addressed production workers’ roles and needs “*as people...family members, community members, citizens*” rather than focusing solely on job functions.

For supervisory training, training offsite and/or by external trainers were considered more feasible. In fact, several managers and supervisors suggested that the opportunity to take training with other supervisors in other facilities might be preferable to internal programs to enable participants to gain new perspectives from outside of the organization.

Many managers and supervisors expressed dissatisfaction with “canned” or “off the shelf” programs offered by private training companies, with the exception of one manager in a large meat processing operation and a supervisor in the bakery sector that praised the Frontline Leadership course offered by Zenger Miller. Two meatpacking plants expressed satisfaction with customized supervisory training offered through Red Deer College and Lethbridge Community College. Apart from these, managers and supervisors repeatedly charged that post-secondary institutions and apprenticeship programs were not well connected or responsive to industry needs in terms of content and/or teaching/learning style. From the meat and poultry sector:

*The majority of the courses at Olds College don’t see the packinghouse industry as their customer. They are training for retail, and yet there are 10,000 people employed in this industry as opposed to retail. The way the courses are structured right now are not necessarily training for us at all. And yet the opportunities are huge.*

*- Plant Manager, Meat Processing*

*Our experience with Olds is that they are strictly retail. We have different needs, rules and regulations.*

*- HR Manager, Meat Processing*

*NAIT and SAIT are not what we need. They are generalist, we are specialist.*

*- HR Manager, Meat Processing*

*Re: apprenticeship – for large meat packing plants I haven't seen anyone coming out with what we need ... they don't have knife skills ... they are more focused on a customer service – a beautiful steak in the wrapper. It has to look to spec and they are looking at what appeals to customers. They don't focus on high speed line. On our lines, they have 3 seconds. We re-train them when they get here.*

*- HR Manager, Meat Processing*

*There is no apprenticeship program out there that suits our needs. Most of what's out there like SAIT focus on small operations. We need training for a production plant, not “retail bedside manner”... Supervisory training? I don't use them because I am not aware of them.*

*- VP Operations, Meat Sector*

*We sent one supervisor to Grant McEwan in the spring for a supervisory certificate program. We have someone looking for other supervisory programs out there, but we need a very basic course. Not all convinced that the two we want to send can read well enough in English to do the coursework. We don't want to send someone to school to overwhelm them.*

*- HR Manager, Meat and Poultry Sector*

From the bakery sector:

*We run a production plant.– more like a refinery...a process. At NAIT they spend weeks and weeks learning how to decorate cakes. Of no use to us at all even though we pay for the training. They come back as great cake decorators but in terms of how to run a process operation – no training in that. Still geared to retail, corner bakery. I've talked to them ... not sure who to talk to ... mentioned it to them, but no difference.*

*- President, Commercial Bakery*

*Why not use local colleges like SAIT or MRC (Mount Royal College)? My own experience is they treat (courses) as a school thing versus a real life thing. We won't get much out of it. Just too academic.*

*- VP Operations, Commercial Bakery*

*We sent some supervisors to Grant McEwan for training. It was not really effective for our guys – designed for university students when our people have very little education.*

*- HR Manager, Commercial Bakery*

*We've hired people from NAIT. Most hires from there don't have the skills we are looking for ... The problem with the academics coming out of universities is that they have no practical skills. I'm talking zero ... no knowledge of functionality of ingredients, not equipped with life skills, mechanical aptitude.*

*- President/CEO, Commercial Bakery*

Five managers and one supervisor singled out the current Leadership Development Course offered by AFPA as a model of good practice for supervisory training, recommending the schedule of two days one month and one the next and the emphasis on interaction and personal application. Three of these are currently enrolled in the program and had this to say:

*Following the model of the (AFPA Leadership Program) has been very helpful. Most of the people are in similar environments. There are people there from (large meat packing plants), but also from very small. But at least it's all operational, based on dealing with same kinds of outlooks on things. Putting a course together and keeping similar groups underneath it is helpful. Not so much the curriculum but the shared experience has been great. Even if it's just me whining I can do that. There is a lot less of lecturing. At some point in the day if you never internalize it to relate it to you, then in 3 days it's gone.*

*- Warehouse Manager, Distribution Facility*

*Right off the bat AFPA does some of this stuff better than these private guys ... AFPA could do it more affordably and better because they gear it to our industry and second off I know them and there is a certain amount of familiarity that comes with working relationship. Rest of these guys are just road shows. I look at the AFPA stuff with a great deal more seriousness. These private ones are geared to people who have a great deal of money and are professional course takers with limitless budgets. That doesn't suit my budget or situation. I want to go with the idea that I'm learning something.*

*- Plant Manager, Specialty Foods*

*We sent six people to a two-week train-the-trainer program with Zenger Miller. They came back and instructed whole plant in various group sizes ... was kind of a canned program. I've taken more and the (AFPA program) is far more interactive. With Zenger you get a booklet in front of you, but with this course you have people from similar operations, mostly food industry in the room important – enough diversity in the group – sales, production and a lot of our facilities are very directed towards manufacturing ... not oil and gas.*

*- Production Supervisor, Commercial Bakery*

## Ensuring Transfer of Training

### What We Know from Research

*Transfer of training* is the effective and continuing application, by trainees to their jobs, of the knowledge and skills gained in training – both on and off the job<sup>17</sup>. In recent years transfer of *learning* has become the more preferred term to embrace all learning activities undertaken by an organization or individual. In essence this concept refers to whether or not training, however positive and well received, ultimately makes a difference on the job. It is the “so what” phase in the learning process, the question of what return on investment is gained for the individual or for the organization. Unfortunately, the answer may in fact be “very little”. One comprehensive survey of research and literature on transfer found that “...while American industries annually spend up to \$100 billion on training and development, not more than 10% of these expenditures actually result in transfer to the job”<sup>18</sup>.

In other research, human resource development professionals were asked to assess the transfer of content of management development programs. On average, the HRD professionals estimated that 40% of the content of programs was transferred to the work environment immediately following training, about 25% was still being applied six months later, and only 15% was still being used at the end of a year<sup>19</sup>. Why so little impact? Research by Newstrom (1986) and Broad and Newstrom (1992) identified eight barriers to transfer, in order of importance<sup>20</sup>:

**Table 3: Barriers to Transfer (In Order of Importance)**

1. Lack of reinforcement on the job (the perception that “no one seems to care”)
2. Difficulties in the work environment (e.g., work and time pressures, insufficient authority, ineffective work practices, inadequate equipment or facilities)
3. Non-supportive organizational climate (i.e., a culture that does not provide strong philosophical support for learning)
4. Learners’ perception that new skills are impractical or irrelevant
5. Learners’ discomfort with change and associated effort
6. Separation from instructional source (i.e., the inspiration of the trainer)
7. Poor instructional design or training delivery
8. Negative peer pressure (i.e., pressure from peers to not transfer learning to the workplace as in “don’t rock the boat”)

<sup>17</sup> Broad, M.L. and Newstrom, J.W. *Transfer of Training: Action-Packed Strategies to Ensure High Payoff from Training Investments*, Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1992, p. 6

<sup>18</sup> Baldwin, Timothy T., and Kevin J. Ford. “Transfer of Training: A Review and Directions for Future Research.” *Personnel Psychology* 41(1988), p.63

<sup>19</sup> Newstrom, John W. “Leveraging Management Development through the Management of Transfer.” *Journal of Management Development* 5, no. 5 (1985): 33-44.

<sup>20</sup> Broad, M. L. (2001). *Supporting transfer of learning: Gaining full performance in the workplace*. Presentation to the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Workplace Learning Conference, Chicago Ill., 2001

In contrast, research by Rummler and Brache (1995)<sup>21</sup> has identified six factors that serve to support effective transfer of learning:

**Table 4: Factors Supporting Performance (Transfer)**

1. Clear performance expectations (expected outputs, standards)
2. Necessary support (resources, priorities, responsibility, authority, time)
3. Clear consequences (reinforcement, incentives, rewards)
4. Prompt feedback (how well performance matches expectations)
5. Individual capability (physical, mental, emotional capacity, experience)
6. Necessary skills and knowledge (training, learning to perform)

These factors align well with three key strategies suggested by Kemerer (1991) for increasing learning transfer<sup>22</sup>:

- ◆ Clarify expectations ( i.e. what trainees are expected to do);
- ◆ Improve skills, through the use of effective and appropriate methodology; and
- ◆ Establish rewards to encourage application of new skills.

While many of these factors are beyond the control of training providers, researchers have defined numerous, concrete steps to be taken by key stakeholders in facilitating the transfer of training, as summarized by Taylor (1997) in the following chart<sup>23</sup>:

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<sup>21</sup> Rummler, G.A. & Brache, A.P. (1990). *Improving performance: How to manage the white space on the organization chart*. San Francisco, Calif: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

<sup>22</sup> Kemerer, R. (1991). Understanding the application of learning. In Sork, T. (Ed.), *Mistakes made and lessons learned: Overcoming obstacles to successful program planning.*, San Francisco, Calif: Jossey- Bass Publishers.

<sup>23</sup> Taylor, M. (February, 1997). *Transfer of learning: Planning effective workplace education programs*. Ottawa, ON: Partnerships in Learning, National Literacy Secretariat.

Table 5: Strategies for Transfer of Learning	When			Who		
	Before Program	During Program	After Program	Trainer	Supervisor	Trainee
Involve supervisors and trainees in the program development	X			X		
Design instruction systematically	X			X		
Provide practice opportunities	X			X		
Develop trainee readiness	X			X		
Design a peer-coaching component for the program	X			X		
Develop application-oriented objectives		X		X		
Answer the "What's in it for me" question		X		X		
Give individualized feedback		X		X		
Provide job performance aids		X		X		
Provide follow-up support			X	X		
Conduct evaluation surveys and provide feedback			X	X		
Develop recognition strategies			X	X		
Provide refresher sessions			X	X		
Involve supervisors in the needs assessment	X				X	
Provide orientations for supervisor	X				X	
Provide supervisory coaching skills	X				X	
Select trainees carefully	X				X	
Provide a positive training environment	X				X	
Prevent interruptions		X			X	
Transfer work assignments to others		X			X	
Recognize trainee participation		X			X	
Participate in transfer action planning		X			X	
Review information on employees in training		X			X	
Provide opportunities to practice new skills			X		X	
Debrief the trainer			X		X	
Provide role models			X		X	
Give positive reinforcement			X		X	
Celebrate small wins			X		X	X
Provide input into program planning	X					X
Actively explore the training situation	X					X
Participate in advance activities	X					X
Link with a buddy		X				X
Maintain an ideas and application notebook		X				X
Plan for applications		X				X
Anticipate relapse		X				X
Review training content			X			X
Develop a mentoring relationship			X			X
Maintain contact with training buddies			X			X

*The research is conclusive: training is not enough.* Transfer of learning to reap real and sustainable benefits in terms of improved performance requires deliberate and strategic supports, many of which are beyond the control or authority of trainers. Management, supervisors and all stakeholders need to collaborate in a systemic approach to workforce skills development that will overcome barriers and enhance supports to facilitate early, consistent and sustained application of skills.

## **What We Heard from Industry**

### ***The Need for a Systemic Approach***

Several managers commented on the importance of the systemic nature of training issues and the importance of systemic solutions.

*Our objective is to provide something that changes performance ... We haven't done a lot of training yet as parts of our leadership don't know what to do with it anyway. You have to go in and evaluate a company and say hey – we won't train your employees. We have to train your plant managers first! Or it will just die. I know at our plant here I have not got the proper leadership training to do serious development yet.*

*- VP Operations, Commercial Bakery*

*You need to start at the top. The GM needs to be convinced that they need the training. You need buy-in.*

*- VP Operations, Meat & Poultry Sector*

*Recruitment, retention, leadership, training, incentives ... it all rolls up into one.*

*- VP/GM, Commercial Bakery*

*If a company doesn't have a human resources manager you are just wasting your time. We've been there. It wasn't until we made the conscious decision to have an HR manager that we got into training.*

*- Plant Manager, Meat Processing*

*When you don't have a basic training program or specific direction from the top, there will always be high turnover. You have to approach training systemically.*

*- HACCP Coordinator Supervisor, Meat & Poultry Sector*

### ***The Recruitment/Retention Factor***

The most significant contextual issue mentioned by all stakeholders was the challenge of training in a tight labour market. Almost every participant in the research noted that the labour shortage and high turnover rates, especially in the first few weeks of employment, severely impedes the ability of companies to train well, if at all. Managers and supervisors reported devoting so much time and resources to recruitment and training “a revolving door” of new hires that they rarely have the time to plan and implement effective training. Workers and lead hands who might otherwise serve as coaches and trainers are often too busy helping out on the line to assist with training. Many managers commented that without addressing the critical issue of retention, expansion and training were just not “on the radar screen”.

*I've never seen it as bad as this. We have increased scrap levels, safety issues in the plant, increased lost time injuries, quality is down. We have a huge problem in retention. Our HR manager hired 220 people – throughput of 72%. I just spent \$3 million putting in a new oven. Would I put another one in? No. No people and no skills. Getting the people is the issue, then getting the skills ... I could expand tomorrow if I had the people.*

*- General Manager, Commercial Bakery*

*We spend more time on HR than ever before ... it's not the training so much that is the problem, it's getting them and having someone to do the training ... Theoretically, if we could find the workforce, we could add another shift within a month's time.*

*- Production Manager, Specialty Foods*

*In '97 we had 168 staff and now we're just under 300. Have about 350 including temp staff. We hire on temp 50-90 people per day, through a temp agency. They send me people that I can't get – low skilled. The bottom line is we've expanded as much as we can right now until we get more people. We can't run at capacity now just because we don't have the people. We have worked this year, every weekend, we've operated 7 days a week to make our orders. We can't get the workers in to keep the business going...our priority is to get workers ... We developed a program for line workers, but we don't have the staff to train on it, or the crew leaders to coach. Can't free them up.*

*- HR Manager, Commercial Bakery*

*We would double tomorrow should we have the people. That is the single biggest factor for us expanding ... just 25 more meat cutters would be an unbelievably huge change for us ... It's having the bodies here that is the main thing.*

*- Plant Manager, Meat Processing*

*Recruitment really takes precedence for us. That's number one. Recruiting gobbles up the time that we might put into other pursuits, like training. Within the first month we lose 80% or higher of new recruits.*

*- Plant Manager, Commercial Bakery*

*This year was really bad finding people. The competition for jobs was great. We had people for a day or two and then they'd leave. Hard to fill in the back end and hard time getting shippers this year.*

*- HR Manager, Meat and Poultry Sector*

### *Supports for Transfer of Learning*

Managers, supervisors and shop stewards were asked about specific supports for training in their places of work. Out of 26 companies represented by participants in this research, only one food and beverage processing plant undertakes formal evaluation and monitoring of training with set performance measures. Three other plants were identified as tracking training results “very informally”. Formal coaching and mentoring is in place in two of the 26 operations (the same plant offering formal evaluation listed above) with informal programs operating in two other plants. Managers in general, expressed more confidence in the number, detail and availability of job aids (pictures, forms, checklists, translated documents) and printed information (written policies, expectations, manuals) than did supervisors or shop stewards. Individuals in all three stakeholder groups agreed that job descriptions are generally and readily available.

Out of 26 plants represented by managers, supervisors and shop stewards, nine plants or 35% were reported as having some form of an incentive or reward program. Two companies have employee recognition awards such as “employee of the month”, three offer bonuses for meeting targets for productivity, safety and quality; two provide cash incentives for new hires and perfect attendance, two have a certificate program for in-house training/skills acquisition and one has a profit-sharing program in place for non-unionized staff. Seven managers and seven supervisors in the remaining 15 plants expressed an interest in developing some incentive programs for staff. Only one manager indicated that his company had made a conscious choice to not implement incentive programs, indicating that they felt such programs lose their effectiveness over time. Other managers and several shop stewards mentioned that incentive programs can be contentious issues in unionized contexts and need to be carefully planned and managed.

*I think the personal motivation for following operating procedures is low. I don't like to say it but it could be partly my fault. Have we done anything to give them some incentives to follow the operating procedures?*

*- Plant Manager, Specialty Foods*

*Incentives and rewards are really weak here. That is really important and can influence performance greatly and I think work suffers because of a lack of incentives and rewards.*

*- HACCP Coordinator Supervisor, Meat and Poultry Sector*

*I would be supportive of recognition programs, depending on how they are set up. They can work well in some plants. My biggest fear is that they will be used against the team.*

*- Shop Steward, Flour Mill*

*If I had one thing I would condemn the union for, it would be people who do a (half-baked) job and get the same benefits as others. I wish there was some way to get rid of some of that. People have to know that they have to do the best they can.*

*Recognition programs are okay – might give people something to work towards.*

*- Shop Steward, Dairy*

Data derived from questionnaires re: production worker skills further illuminate systemic barriers and supports for skills and performance in the work contexts of the respondents. In rating barriers and supports for production worker skills (See Table 6), there was fairly close consensus between managers and supervisors with the exception of the “feedback” category, where managers, on average, indicated that they were “fairly confident” that workers routinely receive helpful feedback on performance and supervisors on average, assigned this a “little confidence” rating. Shop stewards rated equipment and expectations the same as managers and supervisors (fairly confident) but expressed less confidence in all other categories, noting little confidence in adequate information, coaching/training, feedback or personal motivation and no confidence at all in incentives or reward systems.

<i>Average by Stakeholder Group</i>	Equipment	Information	Expectations	Coaching/Training	Incentives/Rewards	Feedback	Personal Motivation
Managers (6 surveys)	3	3	3	3	2	3	3
Supervisors* (6 surveys)	3	3	3	3	2	2	3
Shop Stewards (6 surveys)	3	2	3	2	1	2	2
All (18 surveys)	3	3	3	2	2	2	2
Absolutely Certain (#/18)	2	2	3	0	0	2	0
Fairly Confident(#/18)	13	11	9	8	4	7	9
Little Confidence(#/18)	3	5	6	10	7	7	7
No Confidence(#/18)	0	0	0	0	6	2	2
Absolutely Certain(%)	11%	11%	17%	0%	0%	11%	0%
Fairly Confident(%)	72%	61%	50%	44%	22%	39%	50%
Little Confidence(%)	17%	28%	33%	56%	39%	39%	39%
No Confidence(%)	0%	0%	0%	0%	39%	11%	11%

Overall, 83% of respondents were confident that adequate equipment is provided for production workers to do their jobs well, 72% expressed confidence that sufficient information is provided in a language or format that workers can understand and 67% were confident that performance expectations, policies and procedures were clearly communicated and readily available. Confidence slipped to 50% for effective feedback and personal motivation, 44% for “sufficient, timely and effective coaching or training”. Only 22% of respondents indicated any confidence in the “clear incentives e.g., formal or informal recognition, financial rewards” and 39% expressed no confidence in this category of support.

Turning to data collected from managers and supervisors regarding barriers and supports for supervisory skills, both groups were completely consistent in their ratings. As for production worker skills, respondents indicated strong confidence that supervisors have what they need in terms of equipment, information and expectations (99%, 93% and 93%, respectively). Confidence reported in the provision of helpful feedback was rated much higher for supervisors than for production workers (90% versus 50%) and 92% of respondents expressed confidence in personal motivation of supervisors, as opposed to 50% for production workers. 19% of respondents expressed little confidence in coaching/training supports. Similar to results reported for production workers, incentives and rewards earned the highest vote of non-confidence, in this case 53%. In fact, this was the only category that earned a “no confidence” rating from managers and supervisors.

**Table 7: Supervisor Skills: Barriers & Supports (Survey Data)**

<i>Average by Stakeholder Group</i>	Equipment	Information	Expectations	Coaching/Training	Incentives/Rewards	Feedback	Personal Motivation
Managers (16 surveys)	3	3	3	3	2	3	3
Supervisors* (10 surveys)	3	3	3	3	2	3	3
All (26 surveys)	3	3	3	3	2	3	3
Absolutely Certain (#/26)	3	2	8	1	2	2	6
Fairly Confident (#/26)	20	22	16	20	10	21	18
Little Confidence (#/26)	3	2	2	5	10	3	2
No Confidence (#/26)	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
Absolutely Certain (%)	12%	8%	31%	4%	8%	8%	23%
Fairly Confident(%)	77%	85%	62%	77%	38%	81%	69%
Little Confidence(%)	12%	8%	8%	19%	38%	12%	8%
No Confidence(%)	0%	0%	0%	0%	15%	0%	0%

## Sectoral Skills Development

### Best Practice Models Identified by Research

If one assumes that best practices defined for workforce skills development apply equally at the sectoral level, then “good” models for sectoral skills development will elicit the support and collaboration of all stakeholders, provide development opportunities at multiple levels of the industry, align closely with goals of the industry and workers, nourish a learning culture within the industry and involve strong evaluation guidelines.

This research identified four general categories of administrative structure for sectoral skills development initiatives, categorized by the organization(s) taking the lead role. Although not always mutually exclusive, these initiatives might be administered by:

- ◆ **Government Agencies:** Departments or agencies of the federal or provincial government that directly manage and administer the program product and/or service.
- ◆ **Industry Associations:** Organizations representing companies within a common industry, that are directed and funded by their membership, with a mandate to provide information, products and services that benefit that industry as a whole.
- ◆ **Sector Councils:** Organizations established to bring together representatives from business, labour, education and other professional groups in a neutral forum to address sector-wide human resources issues. A Sector Council is funded by HRDC and follows clearly defined HRDC guidelines.
- ◆ **Cluster / Consortia:** Independent organizations established to facilitate cooperation between member-partners who have come together to meet a common need. Members are interconnected by markets they serve, products they produce, suppliers, or even geographic location. Cluster / consortia join together to deal with any number of issues and receive their funding from a variety of internal (member) or external (solicited) sources. The membership of any cluster may vary considerably and may or may not include representatives from business, government, labour, education, professional associations, and/or independent individuals.

Beyond the ‘who’ of sectoral skills development is the question of “what and how”. Our research identified four broad categories of products and services typically offered through such administrative bodies.

- ◆ **Financial Assistance:** Funding, in the form of a grant, bursary or loan provided to individual companies for the explicit purpose of addressing the training and development needs of their employees. The applicant company coordinates and delivers the training and applies for financial assistance to mitigate the cost. Expenses eligible for funding vary by program, but may include wages for trainees, design and/or delivery of training, training materials, resources, facilities, etc.

- ◆ **Training:** The agency or organization coordinates and delivers the training to the individual companies, either from a learning centre or at the company's work-site. The cost of this training may be subsidized.
- ◆ **Consulting Services:** The agency or organization provides expertise and assistance to assess the needs of the individual companies, and works with them to identify and/or implement the most appropriate and cost-effective solution to their skills development needs. These consulting services may be provided at a subsidized rate.
- ◆ **Information / Links:** This is a broad category, which includes all types of information that may be relevant to the stakeholders, such as reports on industry trends, career information, labour market information, certification/accreditation information, industry intelligence, and regulatory information. Links are resources made available to connect companies to other sources of information, training, funding, research, programs, potential employees, and relevant products and services.

Selected models of sectoral skills development identified through the research are summarized on the following chart, grouped alphabetically under the administrative structure that best describes them. This list summarizes programs explored in some depth. Numerous others were reviewed and these were found to be most relevant to this project. Some of the organizations profiled here offer a variety of products and services, not all of which are profiled here.

Organization	Financial Assistance	Training	Consulting Services	Information/Links	Notes
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## Selected Sectoral Development Models and Services

### GOVERNMENT AGENCY

Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training www.tradesecrets.org				■	Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training coordinates working relationships between employers and apprentices, and works with industry to develop and regulate the formal instruction. <u>Apprenticeship</u> : The objective is to build a trades workforce that meets accreditation/ credentialing/ standards.
Alberta Learning Language Training Department www.learning.gov.ab.ca/	■				<u>English in the Workplace</u> : A former program run through Alberta Learning in partnership with local colleges, provided one-time funding (50%) for companies to offer customized English language training to their staff. Employers paid employee wages for one-half of training hours. The typical course contained a needs assessment and 80 hours of instruction.
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency http://www.acoa.ca/e/financial/business.shtml	■				ACOA is a federal department serving the four Atlantic provinces. Account Managers monitor disbursements very closely. Success measures: productivity per employee, growth rates, profitability rates, etc. Barriers: companies hesitate to finance soft / training costs with long term loans, and do that only in very sure business cases. <u>Business Development Program</u> : This program was established to provide economic benefit to the area. ACOA provides interest-free, unsecured loans of up to 75% for a variety of business development needs including training, productivity improvement, consultant advice, and other initiatives. ACOA will do consulting on the needs assessment and then recommend relevant experts.
Australian National Training Authority Victoria University www.staff.vu.edu.au/alnarc/		■		■	ALNARC is a consortium of five research based universities and is funded through Department of Employment Training and Youth Affairs to promote research into adult literacy and numeracy. <u>Workforce Literacy</u> : Goal is to increase adult literacy, numeracy practices, and workplace skills.
California Employment Training Panel http://www.etp.cahwnet.gov	■			■	ETP is a state agency that works with business, labour and other stakeholders to address training needs of California businesses. Annual funds of \$60-80 M are allocated to ETP through a special state tax. <u>Career Ladder</u> : Established to improve skills and employment security of first-line workers. ETP provides grants (\$13/hour/person) to companies to train workers in low wage jobs in the necessary skills to move up in the organization. Companies must be interested in building job ladders and employees must commit to training. Success measures: internal promotions, retention, increased productivity and earnings. Barriers: Guidelines eliminate some participants. Some companies don't believe in the benefits of training and/or don't release workers. <u>Employment Training Panel</u> : Established to increase efficiency and competitiveness of businesses, and to improve the skills of the workers. ETP provides a \$13/hour/person subsidy to California companies for providing high-skilled, high-wage training to their employees. Success measures: increased retention rates, increased employee earnings, decreased periods of unemployment.

Organization	Financial Assistance	Training	Consulting Services	Information/Links	Notes
California Regional Workforce Preparation and Economic Development <a href="http://www.regcolab.cahwnet.gov">www.regcolab.cahwnet.gov</a>	■				Regional Workforce Preparation and Economic Development funds six regional collaboratives for a total of \$4.5 million. These collaboratives have initiated individual projects that seek to provide employers and/or employees with ready access to training and other opportunities that improve the skill level of the workforce. Examples include: <u>Inland Empire Economic Investment Collaborative</u> : develop a regional performance reporting system to inform and support choices among education and training services by employers and job, education and training seekers, form a staff development institute to provide cross-functional training, develop pilot projects for youth, support regional School-to-Career programs and Tech Prep consortias, and prepare a development plan for voluntary skills standards in occupational clusters in targeted growth industries <u>Los Angeles County Workforce Preparation and Economic Development Collaborative</u> : develop an interactive electronic information management system that will connect the current/future workforce, business/industry and education/training providers. It will provide employers and employees and job seekers with ready access to the latest training, distance learning, and on-demand skill enhancements.
Department of Education, Training and Employment <a href="http://dino.tafe.sa.edu.au/vet_div/trb/ne_wapprentices/fdprcgde.htm">http://dino.tafe.sa.edu.au/vet_div/trb/ne_wapprentices/fdprcgde.htm</a>				■	<u>Food Processing Industry Training Package</u> : Provides certification / accreditation at basic levels. Identifies specific competencies for each job (general) and provides courses and apprenticeships to obtain certification. Also provides links to qualified trainers/institutions.
Georgia Department of Labour Workforce Investment Board <a href="http://www.dol.state.ga.us/wia">www.dol.state.ga.us/wia</a>	■				<u>Workforce Investment Boards</u> : Oversee a system of services in local areas to provide employment and training services for dislocated workers and low-income adults and youth, as well as retraining for growth occupations and high technology employment. Targeted to individuals rather than businesses. Funded by the state and operated as a regional commission.
Human Resource Management Government of Canada <a href="http://employers.gc.ca/pager.cfm">http://employers.gc.ca/pager.cfm</a>				■	<u>HR Centre</u> : A Government of Canada site with links to information on all aspects of human resource management.
Idaho Workforce Development Council - Idaho Works <a href="http://www.labor.state.id.us/id-gen-e.htm">www.labor.state.id.us/id-gen-e.htm</a> <a href="http://www.labor.state.id.us/wia1/wiainfo.htm">http://www.labor.state.id.us/wia1/wiainfo.htm</a>	■			■	Idaho Works is a state agency funded by diverting 3% of UI pmts, through the Workforce Investment Act. Idaho Works partners with business, education, labour and government to create a highly trained workforce and establish a workforce development delivery system which includes 'One-Stop' career services and several other types of programs. The goals are to link industry needs with education, and encourage and facilitate lifelong learning in workforce. Several independent organizations respond to the state's need for programs to assist individuals in becoming employable and/or enhancing current skills. Each is a member-driven, private, non-profit corporation that works in conjunction with Idaho Works. Sites: <a href="http://www.labor.state.id.us/wia1/wiainfo.htm">www.labor.state.id.us/wia1/wiainfo.htm</a> <u>Workforce Development Training Fund</u> : Established to enhance economic development by providing funding to companies for customized training to take advantage of opportunities and expansion initiatives and to upgrade skills of current workers. <u>Workforce Investment</u> : Established to enhance economic development, and reduce overall unemployment. Develops workforce investment/job-training programs for north Idaho. Increase the

Organization	Financial Assistance	Training	Consulting Services	Information/Links	Notes
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					occupational skill attainment, employment, retention, and earnings of low-income adults and youth and others, to reduce welfare dependency, and to result in an improvement in the quality of the workforce, and in the enhancement of productivity and competitiveness.
Indiana Department of Commerce – Skills 2016 <a href="http://www.in.gov/doc/skills2016/skills/">http://www.in.gov/doc/skills2016/skills/</a>	■				Skills 2016 is a diverse state program that provides financial assistance to existing and new businesses committed to offering lifelong learning and training opportunities to their workers. Skills Enhancement Program: Provides financial assistance in the form of a grant for reimbursement of eligible costs for existing, new and expanding businesses to train their workforce. Stringent application, reporting and auditing process prior to funds disbursement. Some restrictions on what is eligible. Well-monitored process. Evaluated by the legislature every year. Evaluated internally to see if we are responsive to the customers. Success measures: individuals' skill improvement, business growth, increases in productivity. Tech Fund: Provides financial assistance in the form of a grant to reimburse companies training their workers in the latest information technology skills.
Indiana Department of Workforce Development - Advance Indiana <a href="http://www.state.in.us/dwd/advanceindiana/program/dscript.html">www.state.in.us/dwd/advanceindiana/program/dscript.html</a>	■			■	Advance Indiana operates through many different types of programs and is funded by diverting 3% of UI payments. <u>Workforce Development Training Fund</u> : Established to increase education level of workers and enhance business productivity. Advance Indiana assists companies with locating appropriate training to take advantage of opportunities and expansion initiatives and upgrade skills of current workers. <u>Workforce Investment Now (WIN)</u> : Funds are intended to build career pathways and worker training programs to meet the workforce needs of the future. <u>Gain Education &amp; Training (GET)</u> : Targeted to Indiana businesses and organizations that develop innovative training programs to train workers who are currently employed. <u>Workforce Literacy</u> : Established to strengthen skills of the workforce and increase competitive edge of businesses. Grants are provided for on-site, customized, specific job-related training. (Office of Workforce Literacy <a href="http://www.state.in.us/dwd/workforce_lit2.shtm">www.state.in.us/dwd/workforce_lit2.shtm</a> ) <u>Regional Skill Alliance</u> : Grants (50%) assist consortiums of companies with similar training needs.
Key Skills Support Programme <a href="http://www.keyskillssupport.net/">http://www.keyskillssupport.net/</a>	■	■		■	Learning for Work is a non-profit organization set up specifically to manage the Key Skills Support Programme funded by the Department of Education and Skills (UK). <u>Key Skills Support Programme</u> : was established to provide development funding, mount staff development events, disseminate good practice and provide advice and information to training providers, schools and colleges to improve delivery of key skills training.

Organization	Financial Assistance	Training	Consulting Services	Information/Links	Notes
Manitoba Education, Training & Youth - Workforce Education Manitoba www.edu.gov.mb.ca	■	■	■	■	<p><u>Workforce Manitoba</u>: Established to promote skills training for a competitive edge and to get organizations involved in training. WFMB partners with business and industry to analyze existing and emerging human resource and training needs, and to develop a sectoral approach to meet HR &amp; training needs. They develop training, coordinate training, and/or provide cost shared assistance. WFMB arranges funding (100%) for training coordinator and infrastructure in the industry associations, who then develop association specific training initiatives, which are funded at about 50%. Cost of the training coordinator and infrastructure are estimated at \$100K annually. No formal/standardized proposal process. Annual audit consists of spot checking records. Training coordinator is on government payroll and is responsible for bi monthly financial reporting and reconciliation.</p> <p><u>Adult Learning &amp; Literacy</u>: provides grants to support the development and delivery of adult focused programming. Also provides training to new or experienced professionals to deliver adult literacy programs.</p>
Manufacturing Skills Standards Association (MSSA) www.msscusa.org				■	<p>MSSC is a government committee, a coalition of interested stakeholders from industry, labour, trade associations, with financial support from Dept. of Labour. (\$4-5 Million over a 3 year period) Expectation that MSSC will become self-sufficient.</p> <p><u>Skills Profiles</u>: Objective was to establish a national system of manufacturing skills standards, assessment and certification methods for use by industry and education. The work identified critical work functions, key activities and performance indicators, as well as academic and employability skills and technical skills. The detailed skills profiles were defined by process at a sectoral level rather than distinct occupations. Six sub-processes include production and production support; logistics/inventory; quality control; process development; health &amp; safety; maintenance, installation and repair.</p>
Massachusetts Workforce Training Fund www.detma.org/workforce/learn.htm	■				<p>Workforce Training Fund is a state-funded division of the Department of Labour and Workforce Development.</p> <p><u>Workforce Training Fund</u>: Established to improve employee skills and maintain the economic strength of businesses. The grant program provides employers with 50% of the funds to train current and newly hired employees. The focus is on projects that will result in higher job retention, higher wages and productivity growth. Grants are awarded competitively, and grantees must file reports to obtain funding and demonstrate attainment of goals set out.</p>
Office of Learning Technologies HRDC http://olt-bta.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca	■	■			<p>HRDC has funded these and other projects relating to the use of technology in learning.</p> <p>Effectiveness of Learning Technologies: Technology-mediated learning - project describes five demonstration projects involving four delivery modalities: audiographics, computer conferencing, computer based training and multimedia CD Rom. Final report: <a href="http://olt-bta.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/download/69038final_e.pdf">http://olt-bta.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/download/69038final_e.pdf</a> Electronic Portfolio Web Site: Developed to assess and address skill gaps. Electronic Basic Skills Assessment: Learners across Canada can self-assess with this instrument. The project involved the preparation of large databases containing descriptive, evaluative and learning materials relating to users' specific employment skills. Web based. Confidential. Grant of \$100K from HRDC to develop product.</p>

Organization	Financial Assistance	Training	Consulting Services	Information/Links	Notes
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Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) <a href="http://www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA/english/food/industry/callkit/hire_train_ssi.htm">http://www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA/english/food/industry/callkit/hire_train_ssi.htm</a> <a href="http://www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA/english/food/industry/callkit/web_guide.htm">http://www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA/english/food/industry/callkit/web_guide.htm</a>	■			■	<p><u>Strategic Skills Investment</u>: Established to promote business partnerships that enhance businesses' competitiveness and effectiveness. A \$100MM program that supports one-time, start-up costs integral to implementing a project that creates networks of companies that break skills bottlenecks and equips industries to grow and create more jobs. Application is a competitive process. Reimbursement based on documentation.</p> <p><u>Targeted Wage Subsidy Program</u>: Goal is to provide incentive to hire employees that have difficulty getting employment, and require work experience. Some restrictions apply.</p> <p><u>Food Processors Guide to Programs and Services</u>: categorized list of resources relating to industry.  <a href="http://www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA/english/food/industry/callkit/web_guide.htm">http://www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA/english/food/industry/callkit/web_guide.htm</a></p>
The Canadian Technology Network <a href="http://ctn.nrc.ca/ask.html">http://ctn.nrc.ca/ask.html</a>			■	■	<p>CTN links federal and provincial government labs, agencies, universities, industry associations and other organizations to provide integrated, accessible pathways to information and services relevant to small- and medium-sized enterprises using technology.</p> <p><u>Ask an Expert</u>: Advisors offer counsel and put individuals in touch with a wide range of assistance. The Advisor will assess the company's needs and work confidentially to provide an appropriate, cost-effective solution. No charge for initial assessment and diagnosis.</p>
Wyoming Department of Employment <a href="http://wydoe.state.wy.us/doe.asp?ID=342">http://wydoe.state.wy.us/doe.asp?ID=342</a>	■				<p><u>Workforce Development Training Fund</u>: Established to create higher skilled workforce, and enhance economic development. Funds are used to assist existing and new industries in the state in meeting the training needs of their newly-hired or current employees. Revenues to the fund are generated from interest earned on deposits to the State Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund.</p>

## INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Alberta Construction Safety Association <a href="http://www.acsa-safety.org/oldsite101101/default.htm">http://www.acsa-safety.org/oldsite101101/default.htm</a>		■		■	<p>ACSA is a non-profit organization directed and funded by industry, and their mandate is to provide education, training, information and resource material to members and workers. Funding is provided by industry through a levy of 1% of all construction rates paid into WCB. ACSA charges on a cost recovery basis for its courses. WCB tracks success measures through actual savings – a reduction in incidents. Companies that take the 4 core courses, report a drastic lowering of accidents and injuries. Companies that participate are eligible for a rebate on their WCB rates. WCB rebated approximately \$50 million in 1999. Other construction associations across Canada are seeing reduction in costs as well through similar programs.</p> <p><u>Training &amp; Development</u>: The objective is to reduce safety incidents through training and knowledge. ACSA provides a variety of training programs (certification) and information on safe work practices that meet the needs of the members and the mandate of the association.</p>
Alberta Food Processors Association <a href="http://www.afpa.com">www.afpa.com</a>	■	■		■	<p><u>Workplace Language Training, Coaching &amp; Consulting</u>: NorQuest College provides free services to food processing companies needing improvements in workplace communication or training. Funding is provided by Alberta Learning.</p>

Organization	Financial Assistance	Training	Consulting Services	Information/Links	Notes
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BC Construction Industry Skills Improvement Council <a href="http://www.nald.ca/skill.htm">http://www.nald.ca/skill.htm</a>		■		■	Skillplan is a joint labour/management initiative and is partially funded through collective agreements. <u>SkillPlan</u> : This program provides essential skills upgrading opportunities to union members within the construction industry. SkillPlan has a variety of initiatives including support to individuals, training programs for the industry, apprenticeship support and publication of documents.
Manitoba Food Processors Association <a href="http://www.mfpa.mb.ca/">http://www.mfpa.mb.ca/</a>	■	■		■	MFPA is an industry association that receives significant funding through HRDC, Workforce Manitoba and other government sources to enable them to provide training programs and services to their members. <u>Rebate Programs</u> : Any training directly related to food manufacturing is eligible for up to 50% rebate for course registration. Other rebate programs include advertising, networking and in-store demos. <u>Programs and Services</u> : Provide a variety of additional programs and services addressed to a industry needs. <u>Training &amp; Education Committee</u> : Industry members serve on an advisory group to participate in decisions around training and program policies that affect the members. <u>Web Resources</u> : Reference material and information is presented on the association's web-site.

## SECTOR COUNCIL

Biotech HR Council <a href="http://www.bhrc.ca">www.bhrc.ca</a>		■	■	■	Biotech is a sector council. Currently HRDC funds the initial programs but these programs must become self-sufficient to continue. <u>Training &amp; Development</u> : The objective is to raise skill level of biotech workers, and increase overall productivity and efficiency through the design and delivery of training programs. Success Measures: Individuals/companies served. Metrics are set when project is developed. Barriers: Varied client base - many types of companies, few consistencies. <u>Virtual HR Assistant</u> : This is a software package, a one-stop suite of internet-based tools, that was developed to simplify the administration of human resources in small to medium sized biotech companies. It was designed for use by the individuals responsible for managing and directing human resources, particularly in companies that do not have a dedicated HR department. The modules cover variety of HR needs. <u>HR Network</u> : The objective of the network is to increase HR expertise within the biotech industry by connecting the HR representatives, using the website as a central contact point. The network is self-sustaining, with members communicating in a variety of ways to assist and mentor others in HR challenges. <u>HR Centre</u> : Established to increase HR expertise among members. The HR Centre provides information, tools and resources specially designed for biotech organizations. The on-line resource provides industry intelligence for the HR community, reports, studies on HR issues, career information, trends, conferences, training available, e-magazine. Web traffic on the site exceeds 650,000 hits per month and averages 23,000 per day.
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Organization	Financial Assistance	Training	Consulting Services	Information/Links	Notes
Canadian Automotive Repair & Service (CARS) www.cars-council.ca		■		■	CARS is a sector council established to meet the training and human resource needs of the Canadian car and truck service repair industry and funded through HRDC. CARS also provides links to training developers and course providers for its members, as well as career and accreditation information. <u>Workplace Mentor / Coach Program</u> : Established to strengthen skills of the workforce and increase competitive edge of businesses. This program is similar to a train-the-trainer program.
Canadian Council for Human Resources in the Environment Industry http://www.cchrei.ca		■	■	■	CCHREI is a sector council funded by HRDC that provides information, industry trends, career resources, job posting, youth internship program, newsletter covering environment employment trends, certification and accreditation information, labour market information, etc. <u>Occupational Standards</u> : The objective is to improve human resource management and awareness of career opportunities within the environmental industry. The site includes environmental occupational standards that cross three sub-sectors. <u>Links</u> : Thorough index of environmental and related industry associations, government departments, educational institutions and career sites. <u>Business Services</u> : Detailed list of wage subsidy programs, internships and related services that are accessible by Canadian environmental organizations.
Canadian Trucking Human Resources www.cthrc.com		■	■	■	CTHR is a sector council, funded through HRDC, and provides a variety of training programs, career information, industry intelligence and HR services. <u>Web Based Training</u> : Several programs are available on-line, e.g., Training for Dispatchers. <u>CTHRC Consulting Group</u> : Provides management consulting and advisory services as well as strategic planning services.
National Seafood Sector Council www.nssc.ca		■		■	NSSC is a sector council funded through HRDC that develops and delivers training programs that meet the needs of the industry. <u>Training &amp; Development</u> : Provide a variety of training programs that address the needs of the seafood sector. <u>CD ROM Training Course</u> : Maintenance of Electronic Equipment is a computer-based training course that covers a range of relevant subject matter and can be delivered conveniently on site, regardless of schedule. <u>Web Resource</u> : Industry links and publication information is located on the NSSC web-site.

Organization	Financial Assistance	Training	Consulting Services	Information/Links	Notes
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CLUSTER / CONSORTIA					
Canadian Business Education Network Conference Board of Canada www2.conferenceboard.ca/cben/who.htm	■	■	■	■	<p><u>Business Education Network</u>: Established to facilitate sharing of information and research and exchange of best practices relating to business-education partnerships. The network promotes the exchange of best-practices; develops effective tools for business-education partnerships; and examines the impact of partnerships on business, education and society.</p> <p><u>Business &amp; Education Awards</u>: Grants are provided on a competitive basis for projects that invest in education and skills development. Recipients have included companies involved in workplace literacy, leadership, etc.</p>
Canarie, Inc www.canarie.ca	■				<p>CANARIE is a not-for-profit corporation supported by its members, project partners and the Federal Government, with a mandate to accelerate Canada's advanced Internet development and use.</p> <p><u>Canarie Learning Program 2001</u>: Projects approved under the Learning Program are expected to address broad, structural barriers to the adoption of network-based learning. Most project teams will involve consortia and include representatives from educational institutions, research centres, Canadian companies and government. Funding is limited to a maximum of 50% of eligible costs.</p>
Connecticut Business & Industry Association www.cbiam.com	■	■	■	■	<p>CBIA is a business organization serving its members (approximately 10,000) with a broad range of products and services.</p> <p><u>Customized Job Grant Training Program</u>: Funding for basic skills or technical skills. Provide recommendations for training sources.</p> <p><u>Business Training Network</u>: Established to encourage collective use of resources. Bringing together similar companies to maximize resources and provide grants for collective work. Evaluated based on project objectives and measurable outcomes. \$10,000 exploratory grants and \$25,000 developmental and operational grants are available. Participating companies will be expected to match the grant funds with cash and/or or in-kind resources.</p> <p><u>Job Finance Training Program</u>: Objective is to enable workplace training by providing financial assistance to employers to help them meet specific training needs through OJT, classroom training or combination. Also provides non-financial assistance to employers in form of assessment of training needs and brokering of services. CIBA provides low rate loans and performance grants to eligible businesses for job related training facilities.</p> <p><u>HR Centre</u>: Provides a wide variety of products and services to members: customized training, career services, business trend information, government information, HR &amp; Safety, including an HR help-line. On-site training, workshops and conferences. HR info, job descriptions, etc. Full serve.</p>

Organization	Financial Assistance	Training	Consulting Services	Information/Links	Notes
Executive Networks <a href="http://www2.conferenceboard.ca/councils.htm">www2.conferenceboard.ca/councils.htm</a>			■	■	<p>The Conference Board of Canada is an independent research organization with a mandate to develop and exchange information about emerging issues, strategies and practices.</p> <p>Executive Networks: are established to increase communication; address specific strategic issues. Participants set the agenda and meet to discuss issues of interest and concern. Program staff also offer special services to members such as responding to specific information requests, individual consultation with research directors and staff, and briefings on issues of concern to participating members.</p> <p>Funded by Conference Board of Canada. Examples:</p> <p><u>National Business and Education Centre</u>: To help business and education leaders work collaboratively, to promote the development of a learning society that will prepare Canada's learners for a changing world.</p> <p><u>Council on Workforce Solutions</u>: assist member organizations to maximize the potential and contributions of all who work for them through the exploration of innovative and effective workforce/workplace practices and solutions.</p>
Grundtvig <a href="http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates/adult/overview.html">http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates/adult/overview.html</a>	■				<p>Grundtvig is part of the European Commission's aim of promoting lifelong learning and was established to enhance the provision of adult education through European cooperation.</p> <p>Four types of activities are funded:</p> <p><u>Transnational Cooperation Projects</u>: collaboratives of institutions/organizations from at least 3 different European countries working together on a project to achieve concrete and innovative results/products that advance developments in adult education.</p> <p><u>Learning Partnerships</u>: are small scale cooperative activities between organizations and aim to broaden the participation of smaller organizations in transnational educational activities.</p> <p><u>Mobility for Training of Educational Staff</u>: grants are provided for individuals to take short-term training courses which take place in a country other than where the participant works.</p> <p><u>Networks</u>: aims to strengthen links and encourage sharing between various actors involved in adult learning.</p>
Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network <a href="http://www.jointventure.org">www.jointventure.org</a>	■				<p>Joint Venture is a non-profit organization funded by individuals, businesses, local government, professional associations, etc. in Silicon Valley. Its objective is to stimulate the local economy, improve productivity, protect the environment, and connect people to opportunities. Projects are coordinated and funded or subsidized by Joint Venture.</p> <p><u>Challenge 2000</u>: Partnership between school teams, community leaders, teachers, parents and industry, with the objective of creating a sustainable regional strategy to create a well-educated workforce and a better K-12 education system. Challenge investors provided cash, equipment and HR support to the school teams.</p>

Organization	Financial Assistance	Training	Consulting Services	Information/Links	Notes
National Organization for Adult Learning <a href="http://www.niace.org.uk">http://www.niace.org.uk</a>	■	■		■	<p>NIACE is a not-for-profit membership organization with a formal aim to promote the study and general advancement of adult continuing education. NIACE works in partnership with government, member organizations and other stakeholders to achieve these goals.</p> <p>Examples of their activities:</p> <p><u>National ESOL Programs</u>: an aggressive program to train all ESOL teachers in England in the new ESOL curriculum. NIACE has partnered with government to provide this training free to qualified teachers.</p> <p><u>Basic Skills Community Fund</u>: established to promote and build capacity for basic skills in the community through various projects.</p>
NxLevel Training Network <a href="http://nxlevel.org">http://nxlevel.org</a>		■	■	■	<p>NxLevel is a group of entrepreneurial organizations committed to developing the best business training curriculums and promoting economic development.</p> <p><u>Business Training Network</u>: Assisting businesses to come together and use joint resources. Develop and deliver courses.</p> <p><u>Program / OD Support</u>: Assist in the development of the initial programs, working with industry and government.</p> <p><u>Web-Based Resources</u>: are available to members only.</p>
Ontario Learning Partnership Group <a href="http://www.olpg.on.ca/english/Resources/resources.html">http://www.olpg.on.ca/english/Resources/resources.html</a>		■		■	<p>The Ontario Learning Partnership group facilitates communication between educators and industry, focusing on continuing education, workplace learning, conferences, etc.</p> <p><u>Business/Education Partnership</u>: Encourage partnership to share information, develop strategies, take action. Goal is to foster partnership between education and industry.</p>
Ottawa and Capital Region <a href="http://www.ocri.ca">http://www.ocri.ca</a>	■	■		■	<p>OCRI is a not-for-profit organization with over 600 members from industry, post secondary institutions, government and private individuals.</p> <p><u>Training Network</u>: Objective is to advance R&amp;D, professional development and lifelong learning in the Ottawa region through supporting partnerships, developing and delivering learning events, and address career development in technology.</p>
Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board <a href="http://www.slfdb.com/">www.slfdb.com/</a>		■		■	<p>SLFDB is a consortium of labour, industry, education and government, established to advocate building a learning culture in the province.</p> <p><u>Workplace Literacy</u>: Created a guide to essential workplace skills development. Learning@Work site is a web-based resource for information for companies interested in essential skills training for the workplace.</p>

Organization	Financial Assistance	Training	Consulting Services	Information/Links	Notes
The Reinvestment Fund - Regional Workforce Partnership <a href="http://www.trfund.com/rwp/">www.trfund.com/rwp/</a>	■	■		■	The Reinvestment Fund is an alliance of employers, business and technology associations led by a committee to identify strategic initiatives and take action. Funded by grants from various foundations. <u>Workforce Partnership</u> : Established to develop a world-class workforce for the Philadelphia region by providing leadership on workforce development policy and by implementing innovative initiatives to address strategic workforce challenges. BEST is a current project to develop skills standards for IT for four entry level IT clusters. PhAME offers training to provide skills as precision machinists to address the skills shortage in precision manufacturing.
Victorian Industry Education Partnership <a href="http://www.viep.org.au">www.viep.org.au</a>		■		■	VIEP is a consortium of industry and cross sectoral education training partners, funded by government and industry sources on an annual basis, and administered by a small secretariat. The body coordinates 14 regional industry education networks - goal is to inform and educate; foster alliances between education and industry. Conduct and support research and publication.
Workplace Education - PEI <a href="http://www.nald.ca/wepei.htm">www.nald.ca/wepei.htm</a>			■	■	Workplace Education PEI is a not-for-profit initiative of business, industry, labour and government. A board directs 3 field officers who are responsible for initiating, monitoring and evaluating workplace learning programs in the province. Operational funding obtained through industry and government. <u>Workplace Education</u> : This organization helps businesses identify and address particular workforce learning needs, with particular emphasis on literacy. WE-PEI assists with needs assessment, with locating and obtaining funding for the project, and provides support while the program is going.

## **Products/Services Identified by Industry**

Managers, supervisors and shop stewards were asked to suggest what products or services AAFRD should provide to best support skills development in new or expanding companies. For comparative purposes, we have grouped the products and services suggested by industry under the same broad categories identified in the research of sectoral skills development models.

As described earlier, most, but not all, of representatives of branch plants of larger corporations indicated that they would have less need for assistance than the independent and small- to medium-operations. Needs identified by rural and urban operations differed only on the degree to which limited English language skills impact operations, with urban centres reporting greater challenges in this regard than their rural counterparts.

### ***Financial Assistance***

#### **Training Fund**

The concept of a training fund where companies could apply for reimbursement of money spent on training activities brought mixed reviews from managers. Managers of two companies made no comments on this topic. Two of the remaining 15 plants supported this idea readily, but just over one-half (8/15) did not feel this was the best option:

*No. The potential for abuse is too high.*

*- President/CEO, Specialty Foods*

*No. The consultants will be all over it. The money will be wasted.*

*- General Manager, Meat Sector*

*Sure! What's the criteria? That's a joke. You may as well flush it down the drain.*

*- HR Manager, Dairy*

*No...it would drain too quickly.*

*- Office Manager, Meat and Poultry Sector*

*Off the top of my head I don't know what we'd use it for at the moment.*

*- HR Manager, Meat and Poultry Sector*

*I'd love it, but good luck tracking it. Then you are unable to evaluate the training. They could say "my brother does training on computers. I'll bring him in"... you'll get into a real rat's nest ... The important thing is accountability. The last thing we need is that abuse.*

*- VP Operations, Commercial Bakery*

One third of managers supported this idea, providing there were strict guidelines. Even then, some had reservations:

*That would be wonderful. We need all the help we can get.*

*- Human Resources Manager, Meat and Poultry Sector*

*A training fund would be a big help. You'd have to set constraints, but that would be a big help.*

*- Plant Manager, Meat Processing Plant*

*Grants or bursaries that are specific, justifiable, fall into certain criteria. Very strict criteria, say businesses only within certain ranges of sales could apply or a certain number of employees, perhaps different ranges of support. Viability of the business too, not fly-by-night operations.*

*- General Manager, Commercial Bakery*

*Sure – we'll always take free money ... This would be invaluable for the little guys...you'd need strong guidelines.*

*- HR Manager, Meat and Poultry Sector*

*I'd shy away from that kind of investment, unless it's for a major expansion. Maybe a training fund in those cases, say if it changes capacity from 1000 units per hour to 2000 per hour and this would take the edge off of that investment. Shy to say that's what we should be doing.*

*- General Manager, Specialty Foods*

*There would have to be clear standards set by the government that the companies must achieve. What training ... who does it ... but we would support that.*

*- Plant Manager, Commercial Bakery*

*Yea ... tough to administer though ...*

*- President/CEO, Specialty Foods*

From the perspective of supervisors, five of ten commented on the training fund idea and of these, three thought it was a good idea, one commented that this would be a second choice in his mind, and one did not support this option.

*This would be a fine idea. We all have unique needs.*

*- Production Supervisor, Commercial Bakery*

*This would be okay if direct training is not an option.*

*- Warehouse Supervisor, Distribution Facility*

*In my experience at this plant that is not a good idea. The money would not be used effectively for employees.*

*- HACCP Coordinator, Meat and Poultry Sector*

Of the six labour representatives who commented on the concept of a training fund for companies to access, one supported the notion readily, two suggested tentative support if strict guidelines were in place and unions were allowed to participate, and three dismissed the idea as too easily abused.

*As long as the company can make a case for making people's skills better. I think our company would do what they should. They will use the money, that's for sure.*  
- Shop Steward, Flour Mill

*I don't think you should have a pot of money for the company to get. I don't believe all of it would be put into training. I think they'd diversify it elsewhere. Better to direct funds into training.*  
- Shop Steward, Poultry Plant

*The problem is the company many times promises to train and we never see the results. You'd need very strict guidelines... If there is a training fund, then the union would want to be able to access the funds too or even combine with other union locals. My big dream is funding from companies to develop training centres in conjunction with every labour council ...*  
- Business Representative, Labour Union Local

*A training fund would be wonderful as long as the money is targeted for the workers and ensure that it goes where it's needed. You should have the union involved and set conditions. So much of government money is abused so much of the time ...*  
- Shop Steward, Commercial Bakery

#### Other kinds of financial assistance

Some managers suggested that subsidizing a training or human resources position within a plant would allow companies to develop internal systems, programs and supports better than through external consultants, who would not have the time to learn their operations well. Others worried that it would be too easy for this person to be assigned duties beyond training and human resources. Temporary wage subsidies for the initial weeks of work, when most training takes place, was suggested by others. Several plant managers suggested that support for retrofitting a facility to expand and do more training (e.g., building a training room) would be welcomed.

## ***Training***

### ESL/Basic Skills Training (with Financial Assistance)

Training programs in English as a Second Language and/or basic skills upgrading (reading, writing, math, computer literacy) received support from many managers interviewed for this research. Managers from 13 plants commented on this option, and of those only two felt they did not have a need for such training. Managers from the other 11 plants indicated that they would take advantage of this option and five of these indicated that this would be a training priority for their production workforce. All suggested, however, that this training would only be feasible if it could be offered onsite or close by and subsidies were in place to pay for some or all of employees' time to attend. One manager felt this kind of training would be best offered through a learning centre model and suggested that they might be able to use the corporate training centre for this purpose, if they had the assistance to set up and offer the training.

*I can't promote my production workers into supervisory positions because they don't have English ... Pay is the magic word if you're adding to their work day or evening outside of working hours ... I have a number of people who I have to turn away because their English is not so good. We've had to turn away people because they don't speak English ... If they had the basic mindset we need and we had the ability to train them in customized English that would be great. Maybe two levels – one very basic and one higher for people who want to move into supervisory positions. This is our key focus for production workers.*

*- HR Manager, Commercial Bakery*

*The government is going to say teaching people basic skills is industry's responsibility, but as new regulations come I your employees have to know ... they nod their head and haven't a clue ... there were funding to pay for their wages we would consider offering ESL training.*

*- VP Operations, Commercial Bakery*

*We need workers to speak English ... reading and writing are the problem most of us are having. We have the people, but they're not trainable. We'd like to see funds for joint programs with other companies to address this, like through NorQuest...*

*- Office Manager, Meat Processing Plant*

### Supervisory Skills Training

The idea of a first-line supervisor course custom-designed for the industry was supported by managers from 13 out of 19 companies and by 7 of 10 supervisors. Again, some of the larger branch plants felt that they had the resources to provide this kind of training internally but even some of them suggested that the opportunity for their supervisors to meet their counterparts in other companies would be valuable. All respondents indicated that their support for this training would be contingent on the quality, practicality,

suitability and scheduling of the training. As noted previously, First-line Leadership offered by Zenger Miller and the Leadership course currently offered by AFPA were suggested as positive models for this training.

### Introduction to the Industry

Six companies saw value in an introductory course that would provide an overview of the industry and teach “the basics” of working in a food processing plant. This one-to two-day course would include topics like personal hygiene, GMPs, safe food handling, health and safety and would be available for new hires or marketed to people between jobs to consider work in the industry.

### Apprenticeship Training

A manager at one meat processing plant advocated making meat cutting an apprenticeable trade and/or setting up a certificate program following that model with the government cost-sharing workers’ wages. Managers at all other plants in this sector questioned the viability of that option, given the tight labour market” and the many managers’ evident lack of confidence in the ability or willingness of training institutions to respond to industry needs. One company suggested having someone come in to teach knife skills at their plant would be a welcome service.

*We can’t get the people we need right now. I can hardly believe they will go to school for 2-3 months when we are willing to train them on the job.*

*- HR Manager, Meat and Poultry Sector*

*There is no apprenticeship program that serves our industry. We need training for a production plant ... We would be willing to help out with a program working with Apprenticeship to cost-share employees wages ...*

*VP Operations, Meat and Poultry Sector*

*Would we use an apprenticeship program? Not sure. We hire people who are in a position that they need to work – they can’t take the luxury of training.*

*- GM, Meat Processing Plant*

*Apprenticeship idea...I wore that hat for a while when we were looking at meat cutting as a designated trade. Go to school for so many months, then come back, learn at schools etc. – they’re not necessary for what we need. We just need highly motivated skilled boning and slaughter. No, I used to think “let’s do this”. Now, no.*

*- Plant Manager, Meat Processing Plant*

### ***Consulting Services***

This option, including “On-call expertise” or an “Ask the Expert” website/telephone service was attractive to smaller or rural companies and/or those that lacked in-house expertise in human resources or training. All companies stressed the value of services that would develop the skill and knowledge base of the companies that used their services. Several managers suggested that where possible, it would be good to have some “payback” required from recipients of these services. Companies stressed the value of services that would develop in-house expertise. Managers suggested a range of options that might be offered by a consultant, as in train-the-trainer programs or assisting companies in setting up incentive and reward programs in-house, for example. In addition tot, managers suggested a range of consulting services that they might make use of, including expertise in health and safety auditing; HR auditing, HACCP and food safety and cross-cultural communication.

### ***Information / Links***

Every manager and most supervisors saw value in the idea of a central information house offering current information on learning opportunities, funding sources or human resources supports for the industry. A database of industry-related training providers and training resources was a very popular idea, as was a web-based job bank or recruitment service. Several human resources managers suggested that they would like to see newsletters with current topics and/or opportunities to network with other human resource manages in the industry. One supervisor in a large commercial bakery commented that while he thought this kind of service was a good idea, he would have limited ability to take advantage of it as supervisors at his plant did not have Internet access.

*A database of training resources would be tremendous. A place we could call, or access on-line would be even better.*

*– President/CEO Commercial Bakery*

*That would be great – one-stop shopping for the training that relates to the meat industry. I get piles of stuff here and I don’t have the time to sort through it all.*

*- Plant Manager, Meat and Poultry Sector*

*A database would be excellent, as along as you include information about what subsidies are available and how to apply for them ... I’d welcome any opportunities to connect more with other managers. We all have the same problems. If we all train and make them good performers, we all benefit, because even if workers leave and go there, I’ll get some of theirs’ too.*

*- Office Manager, Meat and Poultry Sector*

## *Other Suggestions*

### Assistance with Recruitment and Retention

Throughout the interviews, the same pervasive and prevailing theme emerged. Every manager except for one named recruitment and retention as their most pressing need and that their ability to develop the skills of their production and supervisory workforce is severely challenged by the reality of a tight labour market. Plant managers and human resource managers are hard-pressed to evaluate training needs and set up training when they are investing considerable time and effort to fill the line each day. Supervisors are hard-pressed to coach and train workers when dealing with a “revolving door” of new hires while striving to maintain production targets. Workers are hard-pressed to participate in training when they are routinely working overtime as well as their regular shifts.

*Challenge #1 is getting people ... We would double tomorrow should we have the people ... I think whatever we can do on recruitment ... advertising costs are huge ... a way to help with that to make it more in the face of the people who are unemployed. Our hope would really be there.*

*- General Manager, Commercial Bakery*

*It's getting people. Retention. This year was really bad finding people – the competition for workers is great.*

*- Office Manager, Meat & Poultry Sector*

*Recruitment is our number one issue.*

*President/CEO, Specialty Foods*

*Recruitment really takes precedence for us. That's number 1. Recruiting manpower gobbles up the time that we might put to use in other pursuits, like training. Within the first month we lose 80% or higher ...*

*- Plant Manager, Commercial Bakery*

*If there was money that would assist in training and I really did believe that we could get more folks here, we'd start tomorrow ... It's having the bodies is the main thing ... It's a global or at least an industry-wide problem.*

*- Plant Manager, Meat Processing Plant*

*We are all so busy that we can't take the time to do what we'd like to do. Finding labour to work for you is trouble enough, let alone having them take off and get training. You want an infrastructure to prepare for growth and training is good for growth. It's a vicious circle. We are in a growth mode now, but it's really tough to find employees, running overtime.*

*- Vice President, General Manager, Specialty Foods*

*This is the key issue for us. If we didn't have this high rate of turnover we train more in-house trainers. We are so short of people ...*  
- Human Resources Manager, Meat Processing

Managers and supervisors repeatedly suggested that ideally, the Skills Development Initiative would be able to assist with effective recruitment and retention as an integral part of the training puzzle. Any means of assistance in this regard was welcomed: increased liaison with government groups or educational institutions that might encourage more people to consider employment in the industry; advocacy with agencies that might be able to bring in workers from other provinces or countries; subsidies for advertising costs; or subsidies for wages of workers during initial weeks of employment when turnover is greatest. Other managers suggested that the provision of more services for the new Canadians in their employ, especially with managing the process of sponsoring new family members, might be a way to retain workers longer. Two managers advocated a translation service to assist in translating important documents and safety information.

*We have three basic institutes of learning that we draw from – University of Alberta, NAIT and Grant McEwan. I'd like to see if we could go to a source on campus and let them know that we have the following positions available – after hours for any students that want some job experience, learn a trade ...*  
- General Manager, Commercial Bakery

*We have a new HR manager here now and we're trying to get Mexican folks here looking at the agricultural line. We can do the six month thing ... just a matter of recruiting. If there can be appropriate method of getting them here ... 25 more meat cutters would be unbelievably huge change for us. If they could help us with that ...*  
- Plant Manager, Meat Processing Plant

*We wrote to some government department to suggest that we could sponsor jobs over here for people that want to immigrate. Got no response. Over a year ago. If there could be some kind of a service that would go to where the people are and get them to come here...*  
- Vice President of Operations, Specialty Foods

*Someone to help with immigration issues? That would be wonderful. We don't need someone full time, but 2-3 days a month to help out would be great. We get requests all the time ... they need a letter for this or that, but if they have questions, we don't have a clue. Maybe we could share this with other companies.*  
- Human Resources Manager, Meat and Poultry Sector

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary of Key Findings

This research explored the context, captured the voice, defined the needs and highlighted the challenges for production workers and supervisors in Alberta's food and beverage processing industry. As companies grow and change, so do the skills required of the workforce. The growth and vitality of the industry will depend on attracting, retaining and developing the skills of the workforce – no easy task in a shrinking labour market that has companies and sectors vying for workers at all levels. Skills upgrading in the food and beverage industry is challenged by workforce demographics that include low levels of formal education and high percentages of workers with limited literacy, numeracy and English language skills. However, every manager, supervisor and labour representative that participated in this research spoke with one voice in affirming the importance of workforce skills and welcomed the support of Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development in rising to meet this challenge.

Key findings of this research:

- ◆ All stakeholders indicated that production workers and supervisors would be critical to the success of an expansion or new investment
- ◆ 76% of managers surveyed indicated that they would likely have to hire more staff in the event of an expansion and 88% predicted that such a move would require training for existing staff
- ◆ 70% of all managers surveyed and 100% of representatives from small- to medium-enterprises reported that they would need additional resources to meet training requirements in the event of an expansion
- ◆ 1-2% of start-up or expansion costs would typically be devoted to skills development
- ◆ Communication skills, especially English as a Second Language and related basic skills were identified most often as the primary 'skills gap' for production workers
- ◆ Leadership and interpersonal skills were most often identified as skill gaps for first-line supervisors.
- ◆ All respondents felt that production worker training is best offered on-site by internal trainers. Supervisory training is more possible offsite and even preferable in the minds of some respondents.
- ◆ Many respondents felt that the post-secondary system is not adequately preparing graduates for work in this industry.
- ◆ 83% of respondents reported confidence that sufficient equipment is provided to support production workers in their jobs; as did 72% for required information and 67% for clear performance expectations. This number dropped to 50% for personal motivation, 44% for effective training and 22% for clear incentives.

- ◆ Confidence in supports for supervisors was higher, in the range of 90% for equipment, information, expectations, personal motivation and feedback. Again, confidence in effective training and clear incentives was considerably lower (44% and 22%, respectively).
- ◆ 94% (all but one) of managers surveyed indicated that recruitment and retention is their number one issue and has a direct impact on training
- ◆ Research of sectoral skills development programs revealed four broad categories of administrative structure (government agency, sectoral council, industry association and cluster/consortia) and four main categories of product/service offering (financial assistance, training, consulting services and information/links).
- ◆ Many respondents expressed concerns about the viability of a training fund as the only option to support skills development in the industry and recommended a mix of products and services in a coordinated and systemic approach.
- ◆ All respondents felt that financial support for skill development of workers and supervisors will enhance the growth and viability of Alberta's food and beverage processing industry.

## Recommendations

This research indicates that no single strategy or isolated program will be sufficient to meet the challenge of workforce skills development in Alberta's food and beverage processing industry. The number and complexity of contributing factors call for an integrated and coordinated response. Therefore, the recommendations that follow outline several strategies that were suggested by industry and confirmed by research of best practices as viable options for workforce skills development. Furthermore, as decisions about product/service offering must be made in tandem with decisions about infrastructure required to support each option, the recommendations begin with a suggested administrative framework to effectively carry out the work of the Skills Development Initiative.

### **Recommendation #1: The Skills Development Initiative should be coordinated through a Skills Enhancement Team under the direction of the Alberta Food Processors Association and guided by an industry advisory council.**

Of the four administrative models for sectoral skills development identified through this research, the industry association model appears to be the best fit for the Skills Development Initiative. The Alberta Food Processors Association is well established and strongly connected to the "target population" of food and beverage processing plants, with members of all sizes of operation in all sub-sectors of the industry and regions of the province. As reported by several participants in the research, they have earned a positive reputation in the industry for effective and responsive training programs and have a demonstrated record of collaborative partnerships with business, government, industry

and labour. With offices in both Calgary and Edmonton and an established communication infrastructure, they are best positioned to move quickly, effectively and credibly to implement initiatives emerging from this needs assessment.

The purpose of the Skills Enhancement Team would be to work together to ensure the effective design, implementation, integration and communication of the Skills Development Initiative to industry. The exact makeup of the team would be determined by the number, breadth and scope of the products and services that will come under the Skills Development Initiative (SDI). At minimum, it is anticipated that a core team of a team leader, two learning advisors and an administrative support person would be required.

The team leader would:

- ◆ establish, report to and seek the advice of an industry advisory council;
- ◆ oversee the work, budget, administration and evaluation of the SDI and the SDI team;
- ◆ establish, implement and monitor a communication plan and evaluation framework for the SDI;
- ◆ ensure infrastructure requirements are met, such as website functionality;
- ◆ develop partnerships with business, industry, labour and training providers to maximize positive outcomes and benefits of the SDI;
- ◆ actively promote the programs and services of the SDI with the industry and with the general public; and
- ◆ promote skills development within Alberta's food and beverage processing industry.

The learning advisors would be responsible for:

- ◆ direct implementation, administration and evaluation of SDI initiatives;
- ◆ contracting services as required to meet business objectives; and
- ◆ direct liaison with and service to partners and participants in SDI initiatives.

The first task of the Skills Enhancement Team would be to define a mission and mandate for the SDI and an evaluation framework with carefully defined objectives for first year initiatives, corresponding performance measures, timelines and documentation procedures.

**Recommendation #2: Provide carefully monitored financial assistance for specified industry training.**

The research revealed both a need for direct financial support of industry training and a repeated concern that the funds must be very carefully managed, monitored and evaluated to ensure appropriate and effective use of training funds. The numerous training funds identified through this research provide a rich resource of sample eligibility criteria, application procedures, implementation and evaluation guidelines.

Criteria will need to be defined for:

- ◆ eligible applicants (e.g., companies under a certain size; companies undergoing a certain magnitude of expansion or new investment; companies in existence for a certain number of years)
- ◆ eligible training and costs (e.g., training development/delivery; type of training; recipients of training; providers of training).
- ◆ cost-sharing (e.g. 50% of work-related training; 25% of general skills training)
- ◆ funding limits ('x' dollars per company per annum)
- ◆ application/documentation requirements (e.g. standard form; full training plan)
- ◆ evaluation and/or auditing procedures (what, who, when, how)

Based solely on the needs identified through this research, funding may be made available to support:

- ◆ training needs assessments and/or the development of training plans
- ◆ ESL and basic skills upgrading for production workers
- ◆ leadership and train-the-trainer training for first-line supervisors
- ◆ orientation, food safety and health and safety training for new hires
- ◆ creation of workplace learning centres through companies and/or union locals
- ◆ development of support systems to ensure transfer of training

Summative and formative evaluation of the training fund would be prescribed measuring by defined objectives and performance criteria (e.g. 'x' dollars will be disbursed to 'x' Alberta companies; x % of companies will demonstrate positive outcomes according to preset performance measures; x production workers and x supervisors will receive training). Training participants and company sponsors would be expected to evaluate the training, outcomes and return on investment upon completion of the training and at predetermined points following the training intervention (e.g., three months, six months later) based upon a well-established, multi-level model of evaluation such as Kirkpatrick's<sup>24</sup>:

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<sup>24</sup> Kirkpatrick, D.L. (1975). Techniques for evaluating training programs, in *Evaluating Training Programs*. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development, pp. 1-17.

- ◆ Level 1: Reaction - What did participants think of the program (intervention)?
- ◆ Level 2: Learning – What did participants learn?
- ◆ Level 3: Behaviour – Did participants’ behaviour change, based on what was learned?
- ◆ Level 4: Results – Did the change in behaviour positively affect the organization?

**Recommendation #3: Develop and provide effective, responsive and well-tailored training for first-line supervisors.**

All participants in this research identified the need for stronger interpersonal, leadership and communication skills for first-line supervisors. The need for these skills is often intensified in an expansion, as are skills in training and coaching. However, many managers and supervisors reported that they had not found supervisory courses that were well suited for their needs, either in content, teaching methodology, location or schedule. The majority of managers and supervisors indicated that they would support a first-line supervisor’s course and/or train-the-trainer programs that afforded the opportunity to learn practical skills and learn with other supervisors in the industry at the same time.

Managers and supervisors who were familiar with AFPA’s leadership development program suggested that training following that general design and schedule would serve well. Several others suggested that it may be possible to customize an “off the shelf” program available from a local training provider. Either route can be taken, provided that the outcome is training that is:

- ◆ highly interactive and “hands-on” learning;
- ◆ respectful and accommodating of a range of learning styles and abilities;
- ◆ developed and validated by people with solid expertise in the industry;
- ◆ centered on scenarios and problems commonly encountered by first-line supervisors;
- ◆ flexible and responsive to the needs and context of each group of learners; and
- ◆ offered at a reasonable cost and accessible location.

The training could be offered for general access or available for companies to bring in-house to customize for their use. Ideally, the program would include pre- and post-program activities and suggested roles and supports for company sponsors to assist in ensuring effective transfer of learning.

The evaluation framework for this training would include pre-set objectives and performance measures for the program (e.g., the course will be conducted at ‘x’ number of times throughout the year...) and for participants’ learning. Again, an established evaluation model would be used to plan multiple levels of evaluation and track return-on-investment immediately following and at three-months and six months after the training.

**Recommendation #4: Provide consulting services in training and human resources development.**

Training is not enough. No matter how well-crafted, well-delivered or well-intentioned, the research is clear that training, on its own, will not pay a strong return-on-investment unless it is supported in the work environment with systems and resources that facilitate application and maintenance of new skills. Many companies in the industry lack these systems and supports and the in-house expertise and resources to implement them. Assisting companies with the multiple factors that contribute to skills or skill gaps will ensure that training investments reap sustainable, long-term benefits for workers and companies.

This research supports the need for providing employers with affordable expertise to determine companies' needs and define customized training and human resource solutions. A proven prototype is AFPA's Language Training Consultant service, which has been oversubscribed in two years of service of assisting companies to communicate better with a culturally diverse workforce.

Based on the results of this needs assessment, employers in Alberta's food and beverage industry are looking for assistance that will build the capacity and skills of their own staff in training and human resources management. Affordable and practical assistance in training and human resources is needed, in area such as:

- ◆ training needs analysis;
- ◆ HR auditing;
- ◆ train-the-trainer coaching;
- ◆ setting up performance management systems;
- ◆ setting up incentive programs;
- ◆ recruitment and retention strategies

This expertise could be provided by core team members of the Skills Enhancement Team; contracted out on a fee-for-service basis with individuals, organizations or training providers. Variations on this theme could be the provision of short, targeted workshops addressing common areas of need and a range of online supports such as an "Ask the Expert" chat line or monthly newsletter by experts in these fields.

As described for financial assistance, well - defined criteria would need to be defined, communication and monitored for this service. Criteria would include eligibility and procedures for applicants, cost-sharing arrangements, limits on the amount or type of consulting services provided, contractual arrangements, evaluation requirements and limits of liability and criteria for the qualifications of people providing this expertise to clients.

The evaluation framework would proceed from these criteria and from yearly objectives and performance measures set for this service. Employers who take advantage of the service would be asked to evaluate the service in terms of the professionalism and

expertise of the consultant and the quality and impact of the services rendered following an established evaluation model as suggested earlier.

**Recommendation #5: Facilitate networking, linking and information dissemination in the industry on human resource issues.**

Information alone would be helpful in supporting employers to implement and maintain effective workplace skills development programs. Many managers, especially those in smaller and/or rural operations, welcomed the thought of a central information/referral “hub” offering one-stop shopping for products and services. This service would aim to connect people with people, people with skills development opportunities, people with resources or people with jobs. Again, numerous examples and prototypes can be found in the sectoral skills development models profiled in this report. Web-based services might include:

- ◆ a database of trainers and training programs in the province;
- ◆ an annotated reference list of training resources, possibly with testimonials by industry reviewers;
- ◆ notices of upcoming training and human resource events in the province;
- ◆ links to other websites and professional organizations offering training or human resource expertise/support/resources;
- ◆ an online newsletter addressing hot topics and local events/concerns
- ◆ a job bank and/or job postings for work in the industry
- ◆ chat lines/ bulletin boards to facilitate networking between trainers and HR practitioners in the industry.

Extending this networking and information service beyond web-based delivery is certainly possible, providing, for example:

- ◆ a lending library of popular resources;
- ◆ telephone access for inquiries and information;
- ◆ local networking meetings of trainers and HR professionals; and
- ◆ local learning/networking opportunities, as in half-day or full-day information sessions or symposia on popular topics.

## **APPENDIX 1: STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

- ◆ Lou Normand, Director, Processing Industry Division, Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development
- ◆ Marilyn Boehm, Head, Agri-Food Development Branch, Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development
- ◆ Janet Henderson, Vice President of Training & Development, Alberta Food Processors Association
- ◆ Carolyn Dieleman, Manager of Language Training Programs, Alberta Learning
- ◆ Don Gardener, Manager, Alberta Human Resources & Employment

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT**

- ◆ Peter Woloshyn, Innovation and Business Division Director, Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development
- ◆ Dale F. Engstrom, Agri-Processing Branch, Branch Head, Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development

## **APPENDIX 2: THE CONSULTANT TEAM**

***Hammond & Associates Inc.*** of Calgary, Alberta, was awarded the contract to conduct this needs assessment for Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development and the Alberta Food Processors Association.

**Karen Hammond** served as primary consultant, researcher and writer for the Skills Development Initiative Needs Assessment. Karen is president of Hammond & Associates Inc., a consulting firm offering services in performance improvement, competency profiling and training. Specializing in needs assessment and essential skills analysis, her diverse client base is drawn from manufacturing, oil & gas, hospitality, education and agencies of the municipal, provincial and federal government. In recent years much of Karen's work has focused on the food and beverage processing industry including project management of the *Essential Skills Needs Assessment* and production of the *Adding Skills, Adding Value* final report. Prior to that, she conducted a case study analysis of HACCP implementation in the province (*Essential Skills and HACCP*) and, in response to needs identified through that process, developed the *Frontline HACCP* resource package and training program for AFPA and NorQuest College. She also wrote the *Hot Job Profiles* for AFPA and for Alberta Human Resources and Employment.

**Lynn Sikorski** served as a researcher on this project, conducting Internet research and interviews with program administrators. Lynn is a human resources professional with over 20 years business experience in consulting, management and human resources roles. Her areas of expertise include competency profiling, job analysis, performance improvement and employee development.

### **APPENDIX 3: PARTICIPANTS IN THE RESEARCH**

Individuals in the following organizations participated in the research by completing questionnaires and/or participating in interviews.

Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development

Alberta Economic Development

Alberta Human Resources and Employment

Alberta Learning

Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers & Grain Millers International Union, Loc. 252

Byblos Bakery Ltd., Calgary

Capital Packers Inc., Edmonton

Cargill Foods, High River

Harimex Inc., Strathmore

Hostess Frito Lay Co. Ltd., Taber

Lakeside Packers, Brooks

Lucerne Bread Plant, Calgary

Maple Leaf Poultry, Edmonton

Nillson Brothers, Edmonton/Calgary

Olymel, Red Deer

Parmalat Canada (Sunland Bakery)

Parmalat Canada, Refrigerated Products Division, Calgary

Pepsi Bottling Group, Calgary

Principality Foods Ltd., Edmonton

Quality Fast Foods, Edmonton

Rocky Mountain Select Foods, Edmonton

Sakai Spice (Canada) Corp., Lethbridge

Saxby Foods Ltd., Edmonton

Serca Foodservice Inc., Western Division, Calgary

Trochu Meat Processors, Trochu

United Food & Commercial Workers Union Local 373A

United Food & Commercial Workers Union Local 401

Weston Bakeries Limited, Western Canada, Calgary

## APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Questions for Managers

1. If your company were to consider an expansion or new investment, how would that affect your workforce? Would you expect to hire new workers? To upgrade the skills of current employees?
2. What new skills might be required of your current production workers? For example:
  - ◆ technical (e.g., equipment, operating procedures)
  - ◆ knowledge (e.g., product knowledge; regulatory compliance)
  - ◆ relational/interpersonal (e.g., team work, communication)
  - ◆ essential skills (e.g., reading, writing, math, computer skills)
  - ◆ training/coaching; leadership...
3. What new skills would be required of current first-line supervisors? (as above)
4. How significant would worker skill level be to the success of the expansion/new investment.? Can you estimate what dollar investment or % of startup costs might a company realistically have to devote to skills development to support an expansion or new investment?
5. Which of the following steps have you in place now to ensure that production workers and first-line supervisors acquire and effectively use those new skills? Which might you consider implementing to support an expansion?
  - a) provide training (who? what? how?)
  - b) evaluating/monitoring training results (develop performance measures)
  - c) use formal coaching/mentoring (describe?)
  - d) develop job aids (pictures, forms, checklists, translated documents)
  - e) prepare information resources (policies & procedures, manuals)
  - f) revise/develop job descriptions
  - g) develop new systems/programs (e.g., recognition/rewards program, recruiting/retention strategies, employee development initiatives)
6. In order to implement any of the measures you indicated in question # 5, what *additional* resources or support might you need?
7. If AAFRD were able to assist with the costs or actual delivery of skills development for a new investment or expansion, would that influence your decision to proceed? If so, to what degree (marginally, substantially...)
8. What product/service offering would you recommend for AAFRD/AFPA to support new or expanding companies with skills development? Can you recommend any models of best practice we should consider?

## Questions for Supervisors

1. How would an expansion or new investment at this plant impact your job? What new skills would you need to acquire or develop in that case? For example:
  - ◆ technical (e.g., equipment, operating procedures)
  - ◆ knowledge (e.g., product knowledge; regulatory compliance)
  - ◆ relational/interpersonal (e.g., team work, communication)
  - ◆ essential skills (e.g., reading, writing, math, computer skills).
  - ◆ training/coaching; leadership...
2. How would an expansion or new investment impact production workers in your plant? What new skills might be required? (as above)
3. How significant would worker skill level be to the success of an expansion or new investment?
4. Which of the following steps has your employer undertaken in the past to enable production workers and supervisors to acquire and effectively use skills?
  - a) provide training (who? what? how?)
  - b) evaluate/monitor training results (develop performance measures)
  - c) use formal coaching/mentoring (describe?)
  - d) develop job aids (pictures, forms, checklists, translated documents)
  - e) prepare information resources (policies & procedures, manuals)
  - f) revise/develop job descriptions
  - g) develop new systems/programs (e.g., employee recognition/rewards program, recruiting/retention strategies, employee development initiatives)
5. Review the results of the survey(s) you completed for first-line supervisors and/or production workers. How do the factors listed under barriers and supports contribute to the results in your company?
6. AAFRD and AFPA are looking at ways that they can help new or expanding companies in the industry to acquire and develop strong workforce skills. What would you like to see them do? What would make a difference?

## Questions for Shop Stewards

1. How would an expansion or new investment impact production workers in this company? What new skills might be required? For example:
  - ◆ technical (e.g., equipment, operating procedures)
  - ◆ knowledge (e.g., product knowledge; regulatory compliance)
  - ◆ relational/interpersonal (e.g., team work, communication)
  - ◆ essential skills (e.g., reading, writing, math, computer skills).
  - ◆ training/coaching; leadership...
2. What new skills might be required of current first-line supervisors? (as above)
3. How significant would worker skill level be to the success of the expansion/new investment?
4. Which of the following steps has your employer undertaken in the past to enable production workers and first-line supervisors to acquire and effectively use skills?
  - a) provide training (who? what? how?)
  - b) evaluate/monitor training results (develop performance measures)
  - c) use formal coaching/mentoring (describe?)
  - d) develop job aids (pictures, forms, checklists, translated documents)
  - e) prepare information resources (policies & procedures, manuals)
  - f) revise/develop job descriptions
  - g) develop new systems/programs (e.g., employee recognition/rewards program, recruiting/retention strategies, employee development programs)
5. Review the results of the survey you completed for production workers. How do the factors listed under barriers and supports contribute to the results in your company?
6. AAFRD and AFPA are looking at ways that they can help new or expanding companies in the industry to acquire and develop strong workforce skills. What would you like to see them do? What would make a difference?

## APPENDIX 5: QUESTIONNAIRE: PRODUCTION WORKER SKILLS

### PRODUCTION WORKER SKILLS QUESTIONNAIRE

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**Part 1 will take about 10-15 minutes**

#### PART 1:

This questionnaire is designed to gather information about the skills and on-the-job performance of production workers. **As someone who oversees** the work of production workers, you can provide valuable information about their current skill level, and any relevant barriers or supports there may be to that performance. This information will be used to identify areas of improvement and employee development that may be needed by production workers. Your time in completing this questionnaire is important and is very much appreciated.

Since this information will be used to determine actions to help production workers do their jobs well, we ask that you be as honest as possible in your responses. **Your answers will be treated confidentially.** In Part One of this questionnaire (attached) you will be asked to evaluate production workers in your facility, as a whole, on frequency, skill level and the barriers / supports related to their work. Part Two of the questionnaire will involve an interview, either face-to-face or by telephone, to gather additional information based on your responses to Part One.

#### Section I: Frequency

Please rate **how frequently** production workers in your facility successfully carry **out each of the identified tasks**. Indicate your answers by placing an “X” over the correct number, using the following scale:

- 1 . . . Rarely; less than 10% of the time
- 2 . . . Sometimes, 10-30% of the time
- 3 . . . Usually, 30-60% of the time
- 4 . . . Often, 60-90% of the time
- 5 . . . Almost always; more than 90% of the time

#### Section II: Skill Level

Now, please rate the **level of skill** of production workers in your facility **with regard to each task**. Indicate your answer using the following scale:

- 1 . . . Little or No Skill      Demonstrates little or no skill in performing this activity.
- 2 . . . Basic                      Performs this task in routine situations, but needs help to do so.
- 3 . . . Adequate                  Performs this task successfully and independently in routine situations; needs help in difficult/unusual situations.
- 4 . . . Proficient                 Consistently and successfully performs this task, even in difficult/unusual situations.
- 5 . . . Expert                        Highly skilled; among the very best; sought out by others for assistance or coaching in this task.

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Please complete this questionnaire and return to [hammond.associates@shaw.ca](mailto:hammond.associates@shaw.ca) or FAX page 3 only to 239-9801

1 of 3

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## PRODUCTION WORKER SKILLS QUESTIONNAIRE

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### Section III: Barriers & Supports

Many factors other than skill impact production workers' ability to do their work. Please rate each of the following as to your **level of confidence** that production workers in your facility have sufficient support in each area to do their jobs well. Using the following scale, place your selection in the box provided.

- 1 . . . No Confidence
- 2 . . . Little Confidence
- 3 . . . Fairly Confident
- 4 . . . Absolutely Certain

- Equipment:** Production workers here have easy access to equipment, machines, or tools needed to do the work task.
- Information:** Production workers here have easy, ready access to sufficient information in a language or format they can understand.
- Expectations:** Performance expectations, policies, procedures, etc., are clearly communicated and readily available.
- Coaching/Training:** Production workers here have had sufficient, timely and effective training to do this task.
- Incentives/Rewards:** There are clear incentives for production workers here to perform this task (e.g., formal or informal recognition, financial rewards).
- Feedback:** Production workers here routinely receive helpful feedback regarding if or how well they are completing this task.
- Personal Motivation:** Production workers here demonstrate a willingness to achieve their goals and meet their responsibilities. They appear to be proud of their accomplishments and show a desire to do a great job.
- Other:** This is an opportunity for you to identify an issue that you see as a barrier or a support for production workers in your facility. Examples may relate to: time, workspace, processes, or any other issue that you would like to raise at this time.

### PART 2:

Part Two will consist of an interview with a researcher to discuss your responses to this questionnaire. Supervisors and shop stewards in plants across Alberta will complete these questionnaires and interviews, and we sincerely appreciate your participation. Data from all questionnaires will be summarized to determine overall priorities for development and for other improvements. If you wish, we will be happy to send you the overall results of the questionnaire.

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2 of 3

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PRODUCTION WORKER SKILLS QUESTIONNAIRE

**Part 1 will take about 10-15 minutes**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Company: \_\_\_\_\_

**Production Workers in this facility  
 effectively ...**

Frequency				
1=Rarely				4=Often
2=Sometimes				5=Almost Always
3=Usually				

Skill Level				
1=Little or No Skill				4=Proficient
2=Basic				5=Expert
3=Adequate				

Work Tasks		Frequency				
1.	Follow health and safety guidelines	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Follow food safety and quality guidelines	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Meet production targets	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Follow work/operating procedures	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Communicate with co-workers	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Communicate with supervisor(s)	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Problem solve / troubleshoot	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Understand the full production process	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Apply product knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Learn and adapt to workplace change	1	2	3	4	5

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

Barriers & Supports							
1=No Confidence		3=Fairly Confident					
2=Little Confidence				4=Absolutely Certain			
Equipment	Information	Expectations	Coaching/ Training	Incentives/ Rewards	Feedback	Personal Motivation	Other:

## APPENDIX 6: QUESTIONNAIRE: SUPERVISOR SKILLS

### SUPERVISOR SKILLS QUESTIONNAIRE

---

**Part 1 will take about 10-15 minutes**

**PART 1:**  
This questionnaire is designed to gather information about the skills and on-the-job performance of first-line supervisors. **As someone who oversees** the work of first-line supervisors, you can provide valuable information about their current skill level, and any relevant barriers or supports there may be to that performance. This information will be used to identify areas of improvement and employee development that may be needed by first-line supervisors. Your time in completing this questionnaire is important and is very much appreciated.

Since this information will be used to determine actions to help first-line supervisors do their jobs well, we ask that you be as honest as possible in your responses. **Your answers will be treated confidentially.** In Part One of this questionnaire (attached) you will be asked to evaluate first-line supervisors in your facility, as a whole, on frequency, skill level and the barriers / supports related to their work. Part Two of the questionnaire will involve an interview, either face-to-face or by telephone, to gather additional information based on your responses to Part One.

#### Section I: Frequency

Please rate **how frequently** first-line supervisors in your facility successfully carry out **each of the identified tasks**. Indicate your answers by placing an “X” over the correct number, using the following scale:

- 1 ... Rarely; less than 10% of the time
- 2 ... Sometimes, 10-30% of the time
- 3 ... Usually, 30-60% of the time
- 4 ... Often, 60-90% of the time
- 5 ... Almost always; more than 90% of the time

#### Section II: Skill Level

Now, please rate the **level of skill** of first-line supervisors in your facility **with regard to each task**. Indicate your answer using the following scale:

- 1 ... Little or No Skill      Demonstrates little or no skill in performing this activity.
- 2 ... Basic                      Performs this task in routine situations, but needs help to do so.
- 3 ... Adequate                      Performs this task successfully and independently in routine situations; needs help in difficult/unusual situations.
- 4 ... Proficient                      Consistently and successfully performs this task, even in difficult/unusual situations.
- 5 ... Expert                      Highly skilled; among the very best; sought out by others for assistance or coaching in this task.

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## SUPERVISOR SKILLS QUESTIONNAIRE

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### Section III: Barriers & Supports

Many factors other than skill impact first-line supervisors' ability to do their work. Please rate each of the following as to your **level of confidence** that first-line supervisors in your facility have sufficient support in each area to do their jobs well. Using the following scale, place your selection in the box provided.

- 1 . . . No Confidence
- 2 . . . Little Confidence
- 3 . . . Fairly Confident
- 4 . . . Absolutely Certain

- Equipment:** First-line supervisors here have easy access to equipment, machines, or tools needed to do the work task.
- Information:** First-line supervisors here have easy, ready access to sufficient information in a language or format they can understand.
- Expectations:** Performance expectations, policies, procedures, etc., are clearly communicated and readily available.
- Coaching/Training:** First-line supervisors here have had sufficient, timely and effective training to do this task.
- Incentives/Rewards:** There are clear incentives for first-line supervisors here to perform this task (e.g., formal or informal recognition, financial rewards).
- Feedback:** First-line supervisors here routinely receive helpful feedback regarding if or how well they are completing this task.
- Personal Motivation:** First-line supervisors here demonstrate a willingness to achieve their goals and meet their responsibilities. They appear to be proud of their accomplishments and show a desire to do a great job.
- Other:** This is an opportunity for you to identify an issue that you see as a barrier or a support for first-line supervisors in your facility. Examples may relate to: time, workspace, processes, or any other issue that you would like to raise at this time.

### PART 2:

Part Two will consist of an interview with a researcher to discuss your responses to this questionnaire. Managers and supervisors in plants across Alberta will complete these questionnaires and interviews, and we sincerely appreciate your participation. Data from all questionnaires will be summarized to determine overall priorities for development and for other improvements. If you wish, we will be happy to send you the overall results of the questionnaire.

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2 of 3

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## APPENDIX 7: SURVEY DATA - PRODUCTION WORKER SKILLS

### PRODUCTION WORKER: Frequency Analysis

Chart 1

Average by Stakeholder Group		1. Follow health and safety guidelines	2. Follow food safety and quality guidelines	3. Meet production targets	4. Follow work/operating procedures	5. Communicate with co-workers	6. Communicate with supervisor(s)	7. Problem solve / troubleshoot	8. Understand the full production process	9. Apply product knowledge	10. Learn and adapt to workplace change
6	Managers	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	3
8	Supervisors	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
6	Shop Stewards	4	5	4	4	3	2	2	2	3	3
20	All	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3

  

Almost Always	3	6	3	2	1	0	1	2	2	2	# of Level 5 Ratings/20
Often	9	10	10	11	6	6	5	2	5	5	# of Level 4 Ratings/20
Usually	8	4	5	4	8	7	3	5	5	5	# of Level 3 Ratings/20
Sometimes	0	0	2	3	4	5	5	8	7	8	# of Level 2 Ratings/20
Rarely	0	0	0	0	1	2	6	3	1	0	# of Level 1 Ratings/20

  

Almost Always	15%	30%	15%	10%	5%	0%	5%	10%	10%	10%	% of Level 5 Ratings
Often	45%	50%	50%	55%	30%	30%	25%	10%	25%	25%	% of Level 4 Ratings
Usually	40%	20%	25%	20%	40%	35%	15%	25%	25%	25%	% of Level 3 Ratings
Sometimes	0%	0%	10%	15%	20%	25%	25%	40%	35%	40%	% of Level 2 Ratings
Rarely	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	10%	30%	15%	5%	0%	% of Level 1 Ratings

## PRODUCTION WORKER: Skills Analysis

Chart 2

<i>Average by Stakeholder Group</i>		1. Follow health and safety guidelines	2. Follow food safety and quality guidelines	3. Meet production targets	4. Follow work/operating procedures	5. Communicate with co-workers	6. Communicate with supervisor(s)	7. Problem solve / troubleshoot	8. Understand the full production process	9. Apply product knowledge	10. Learn and adapt to workplace change
6	Managers	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3
8	Supervisors	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
6	Shop Stewards	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
20	All	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

  

Expert	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	# of Level 5 Ratings/20
Proficient	5	10	7	6	5	2	5	3	5	3	# of Level 4 Ratings/20
Adequate	11	7	9	7	8	12	6	6	6	7	# of Level 3 Ratings/20
Basic	4	2	2	6	6	5	7	10	8	9	# of Level 2 Ratings/20
Little or No Skill	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	# of Level 1 Ratings/20

  

Expert	0%	5%	10%	5%	5%	0%	0%	5%	5%	5%	% of Level 5 Ratings/20
Proficient	25%	50%	35%	30%	25%	10%	25%	15%	25%	15%	% of Level 4 Ratings/20
Adequate	55%	35%	45%	35%	40%	60%	30%	30%	30%	35%	% of Level 3 Ratings/20
Basic	20%	10%	10%	30%	30%	25%	35%	50%	40%	45%	% of Level 2 Ratings/20
Little or No Skill	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	10%	0%	0%	0%	% of Level 1 Ratings/20

## APPENDIX 8: SURVEY DATA - SUPERVISOR SKILLS

### SUPERVISOR: Frequency Analysis

Chart 1

Average by Stakeholder Group		1. Coach and/or train workers	2. Lead/motivate workers	3. Plan/schedule production	4. Meet production targets	5. Meet health and safety targets	6. Meet food safety and quality targets	7. Problem solve / troubleshoot	8. Communicate with peers and supervisor(s)	9. Maintain accurate records	10. Learn and adapt to workplace change
16	Managers	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3
11	Supervisors	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
0	Shop Stewards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
27	All	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

  

Almost Always	2	3	7	7	5	9	5	4	3	3	# of Level 5 Ratings/27
Often	12	7	12	17	13	15	10	15	11	14	# of Level 4 Ratings/27
Usually	9	12	3	3	8	2	9	8	11	5	# of Level 3 Ratings/27
Sometimes	4	5	2	0	1	1	3	0	2	5	# of Level 2 Ratings/27
Rarely	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	# of Level 1 Ratings/27

  

Almost Always	7%	11%	26%	26%	19%	33%	19%	15%	11%	11%	% of Level 5 Ratings/27
Often	44%	26%	44%	63%	48%	56%	37%	56%	41%	52%	% of Level 4 Ratings/27
Usually	33%	44%	11%	11%	30%	7%	33%	30%	41%	19%	% of Level 3 Ratings/27
Sometimes	15%	19%	7%	0%	4%	4%	11%	0%	7%	19%	% of Level 2 Ratings/27
Rarely	0%	0%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	% of Level 1 Ratings/27

## SUPERVISOR: Skills Analysis

Chart 2

Average by Stakeholder Group		1. Coach and/or train workers	2. Lead/motivate workers	3. Plan/schedule production	4. Meet production targets	5. Meet health and safety targets	6. Meet food safety and quality targets	7. Problem solve / troubleshoot	8. Communicate with peers and supervisor(s)	9. Maintain accurate records	10. Learn and adapt to workplace change
16	Managers	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	3
11	Supervisors	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4
0	Shop Stewards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
27	All	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	3

Expert	1	1	1	0	0	3	1	1	0	1	# of Level 5 Ratings/27
Proficient	6	6	13	19	11	15	12	10	10	12	# of Level 4 Ratings/27
Adequate	15	16	8	8	10	8	11	11	12	10	# of Level 3 Ratings/27
Basic	5	4	3	0	6	1	3	5	5	4	# of Level 2 Ratings/27
Little or No Skill	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	# of Level 1 Ratings/27

Expert	4%	4%	4%	0%	0%	11%	4%	4%	0%	4%	% of Level 5 Ratings/27
Proficient	22%	22%	48%	70%	41%	56%	44%	37%	37%	44%	% of Level 4 Ratings/27
Adequate	56%	59%	30%	30%	37%	30%	41%	41%	44%	37%	% of Level 3 Ratings/27
Basic	19%	15%	11%	0%	22%	4%	11%	19%	19%	15%	% of Level 2 Ratings/27
Little or No Skill	0%	0%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	% of Level 1 Ratings/27

## **APPENDIX 9: WORKPLACE LEARNING CENTRE – MOLSON CANADA, EDMONTON\***

*\* Excerpt from Adding Skills, Adding Value<sup>25</sup>*

Molson Canada – Edmonton has been running a workplace learning centre since 1996. This joint labour/management initiative is operated by NorQuest College and guided by a training committee with representatives from all facets and levels of the Molson workforce. The learning centre offers the company's 126 employees a variety of courses, ranging from pre-trades math and business writing to keyboarding and software application training. Employees can access a wide range of learning opportunities, including on-on-one tutoring, group instruction and self-paced, computer-based learning.

Molson established the learning centre following a provincially-funded needs assessment in 1995. A company merger, a change to a participatory management style, as well as new production equipment and technology have increased the need for new skills and responsibilities at all levels of employment. Although most employees have a good working knowledge of procedures and technical skills to manage operations, they are increasingly faced with the challenge of learning and developing new skills in response to a changing workplace and marketplace.

The learning centre supports a strategic view of training for new jobs and new roles, for workplace reorganization and for anticipated changes. In addition to offering basic skills training, the learning centre acts as a resource for a wide array of organizational learning and training and provides access to learning materials and training resources.

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<sup>25</sup> Hammond & Associates Inc. (2000).