



B.C. Labour Market Report

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Job development is going to be the cornerstone in the new future of career development

Editorial by Christian Saint Cyr, Publisher of the BC Labour Market Report

VANCOUVER, BC, Tuesday November 7, 2023 — While job development is most often associated with job developers, emerging trends suggest that in the coming decade, job development is going to be the foundation all career development roles build upon. Measurable outcomes and sustainable employment are guiding the development of new employment programming and by adopting a pragmatic approach to job development, career development organizations can thrive in this new world.

For this reason, when we designed this year's **BC Labour Market Year-in-Review Workshops**, *taking place later this month*, we've dedicated a portion of the workshop to the changing role of job developers and how this is likely to transform the career development sector in the years to come.

We obviously live in a period of immense change, but it is easy to focus on the short-term factors and lose sight of the systemic change that is happening behind the scenes.

The factors that get all the attention include Canada's major focus on immigration (*temporary foreign workers, international students, permanent residents and refugees*); the high cost of inflation and the unaffordability of housing; changes in the delivery of government-funded employment programming; and dissatisfaction with historical employment options due to issues like hybrid employment, opportunities for advancement, the growth of contract employment and the desire for greater flexibility.

While these issues get most of the attention, they are just symptoms of a labour market that has reached a turning point. This turning point is being driven by five key factors:

1. **A.I. and other forms of automation are transforming the way work is done.** It will not completely eliminate jobs, but by the time it is as commonplace as the internet is today, the jobs and sectors we know now will be completely transformed.
2. **We are experiencing a multi-generational skills shortage brought about by generation population imbalance.** This skills shortage will impact the future of immigration to Canada; educational pathways and outcomes; the complexity of Canada's labour market; and the cultural composition of the nation.
3. **Our future workforce will be far more inclusive.** While D.E.I. (*diversity, equity and inclusion*) is a consideration to many employers today, within the next ten years, the question of 'fairness' and the inclusion of those who have no role within our labour

market, will be a central concern for everyone in government, business, education and social services. It is incomprehensible to have 625,000 unfilled job openings while simultaneously, there are seven million Canadians who are working age adults (15-64) who are not in school, working or looking for work.

4. **Moving forward, workers will be increasingly evaluated based on the skills they bring to a job.** We've seen this with the growth of micro-credentials and an increasing number of jobs dropping the requirement to have a university degree. This is not to say that college and university won't continue to be an essential component of job qualifications, but workers will be increasingly evaluated on their ability excel in the job.
5. **Strong recruitment and retention practices will be a key differentiator in determining success in the market.** Employers which utilize sound practices will excel while those who are entrenched in traditional employer-employee roles will be forced out of business. In the coming decade career development organizations, more specifically job developers, will be essential subject matter experts in guiding many employers down this path.

Historically, job developers have been extremely task-oriented, training individuals in effective job search; gathering and promoting job postings; organizing job fairs; promoting wage subsidy and skills training initiatives and building community awareness through networking and other community engagement.

While these functions continue to be vital to the future work of job developers, future success is going to be rooted in a whole new set of competencies. As subject matter experts in the development of the labour market, recruitment and retention, job developers will need to be a community resource to employers, helping them stay current in emerging trends, implementing effective recruitment strategies and positioning themselves as an *'employer of choice'* in a tight labour market.

Job developers will be just as important in helping retain existing staff as they are in recruiting new workers.

During our **'BC Labour Market Year-in-Review Workshop'** we will be discussing a four-quadrant approach to job development we've called **'STEP'**; referring to **Strategy; Training; Expertise; and Progress.**

This approach to job development involves:

- **Strategy:** Identifying key measures for evaluating job development success. So often 'employment' is the expected outcome – which it is, but the job developer has little control over whether someone is offered a position. Strategy involves identifying the areas of influence a job developer can pursue which are most likely to result in employment outcomes. Staff development is built around maximizing these areas of influence to achieve the best employment outcomes possible.
- **Training:** The vast majority of employers are small enterprises, with most employing less than 10 employees. Career development organizations are in a strong place to provide training and support to local employers to help them maximize their recruitment and retention approach. This training will also help employers see the value of diversity and

equity in their hiring and will be critical in seeing the increased employment of under-represented groups in the labour market.

- **Expertise:** If career practitioners are not the *'labour market experts'* in any particular community, then who are the experts? It will be critical for career development organizations to gather, share and incorporate labour market information which is not only valuable to those in career transition but also local employers.
- **Progress:** Tracking employment outcomes simply examines whether we are successful or not, but doesn't measure what is and isn't working. The job development role as well as the individual performing the role should be given detailed targets, feedback and performance enhancements to ensure they are able to not only achieve their employment outcomes but excel in doing so.

It's an exciting time of transition in the career development sector even if some of the symptoms and challenges are painful. The role of career development organizations has never been so important and all career professionals will have a role in ensuring effective job development practices.

We plan to discuss this issue in depth at this year's BC Labour Market Year-in-Review Workshop taking place in seven communities between November 22nd and 30th and Online on December 1st. If you haven't yet registered, we hope you can join us. We are currently offering a 20% early-registration discount which will end on November 16th, when full prices take effect.

See you later in November.

To learn more about the **2023 BC Labour Market Year-in-Review Workshops**, taking place in November 2023 please visit: www.labourmarketonline.com/lmiworkshop