



Best Practices for Recruitment and Retention Guide

Recruiting and Retaining a Dynamic and Diverse Workforce

ABOUT CAF-FCA

CAF-FCA is an inclusive organization working with the apprenticeship community in all regions of Canada. It promotes apprenticeship as a valuable form of post-secondary education that leads to rewarding careers in high-demand occupations to youth, parents and employers. CAF-FCA works with representatives from business, labour, educators, equity-priority groups and the jurisdictions.

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1. Introduction

Many companies have limited time and money to devote to human resources. You don't have to be an expert or independently wealthy to embrace workplace diversity. Often, it is a matter of simple adjustments that can yield positive results.¹ We appreciate dedication to diversifying Canada's workforce and we hope that this guide can help you as you continue down this important path. In the pages that follow you will find tips and recommendations from employers who are using simple and successful strategies to recruit and to retain women and equity-priority groups in the skilled trades. CAF-FCA hopes that this guide will assist you as you not only grow your workforce but retain formidable workers who will help your company thrive. In these few pages we present a couple of examples based on real-life situations from within the skilled trades. These composite examples are based on case studies and include strategies that work successfully. Additionally, we include findings from our own research which indicate the many benefits to diversifying Canada's skilled trades workforce. We also identify some proven methods that have been shown to work successfully. If you have any questions or would like additional assistance with recruitment and retention strategies, the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum looks forward to hearing from you at info@caf-fca.org.

2. Set Your Target

Improving gender diversity is like any other strategic business objective: It begins with a clear understanding of the business case, as well as an understanding of how systems of oppression impact the workplace, and it requires effective leadership. Once a baseline has been established it calls for goal setting. It is strongly recommended that employers incorporate employee feedback and metrics when informing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessible (DEIA) initiatives. And finally, its progress needs to be measured.²

Still, the factors that influence performance can be difficult to identify. Companies that measure outcomes and understand the costs and benefits related to hiring and retention are better positioned to make women and equity-priority groups integral to their business strategy.³

Once you have determined your targets for your organization, you will have a better understanding of the kind of recruitment strategies you will implement, and the various methods you can use. Some strategies outlined in these pages will suit your company better than others.

3. Looking at Real-life Scenarios and Employer-driven Solutions

This section presents a couple of scenarios based on a compilation of real-life experiences. Each one combines elements of stories told by multiple employers and apprentices who have experienced similar challenges or successes. These examples are blended from actual circumstances, but key details have been altered to ensure anonymity.

Case study #1: Excellent recruitment, but retention could use some work

Company background

Tremendous Transport is a small employer that delivers goods across Canada. The company began with a relatively small fleet of dedicated drivers who had been with the company for a long time. Over the years, Tremendous Transport experienced good retention of employees. The company had its own in-house maintenance program and there was little turnover of the mechanics who worked on the trucks. Tremendous Transport was well regarded in the transport and distribution field and decided to expand its operations.

Company expansion means new recruits

As Tremendous Transport started to gain more customers, the business began to grow faster than the company was able to recruit. A two-member team of dedicated office management staff was responsible for recruitment. Not surprisingly, they relied heavily on word-of-mouth and referrals from existing employees to find new people. Using this strategy, the company could not find enough recruits. Tremendous Transport determined it was time to start hiring differently with a view to reaching a wider selection of possible candidates. The management team worked with local employment organizations and the local college to find people who were interested in the trades. They had great success in finding new employees through these methods and were thrilled to fill a position whenever they posted it.

Training process

Tremendous Transport's onboarding process was built on pairing a new apprentice with an available mentor inside the company and letting the mentor take over from there. They trusted their own staff and had a history of successfully training each new apprentice, who would often become a journey person and stay with the organization. Because of the high retention and infrequent need to train new people, Tremendous Transport had never thought about formalizing this onboarding program or providing any additional training for the staff who did the mentoring. They operated very much as they had in the past, confident that things would work out. They did not consider training for their existing staff and managers about such things as apprentices who had different learning styles. They had not considered different cultural practices or the issue of gender diversity or of accommodating various needs. After all, Tremendous Transport's workforce had been very similar in terms of who "fit" in the company and there wasn't a great deal of diversity to consider when thinking about training and retention. Over time, as the company expanded even more and needed to hire additional new apprentices, the workforce had become much more diverse, coming from a variety of cultures. Some identified with a different gender. Some had different learning styles that required approaches that were new for some of the mentors. And some had disabilities that required accommodations.

Retention issues

For the first time in its history, Tremendous Transport encountered challenges in retaining new people. They began to hear complaints from their new recruits about their onboarding or their mentor. No formal grievances were brought forward, just occasional rumours relayed by a third party. Management found that some apprentices were calling in or simply not showing up for work. When the administration team asked the mentors what was going on, they said that they were just doing what they had always done. After all, that was why the company was successful. It was what they had always done, and it worked. The team then asked the department managers to speak with the company's new recruits to dig a bit deeper and find out what was creating the issue. Not surprisingly, the new recruits were reluctant to share very much. They were afraid they'd get in trouble or that their comments would get back to their mentor and the relationship would be damaged. Finally, one newer recruit who was having a more positive experience decided to intervene. This person told the manager they had heard a couple of the new staff say that they didn't feel like they fit in. They were women and they felt that Tremendous Transport was a "boy's club" and the men who had worked there for a long time didn't want women to "wreck" the culture they were used to. The women didn't feel they could raise this issue themselves because they thought they would be ridiculed or talked down to and accused of not knowing how to use the tools or equipment. They said they felt like the existing staff were being mean to them because they were women. Some had even been told, "This isn't girl's work."

Conclusion

Tremendous Transport's situation isn't unique. Many employers experience similar challenges when they go through rapid expansion, especially when (for various reasons) they have not put in place an appropriate training infrastructure that growth requires. Tremendous Transport had a company culture that worked for them for years. They had employees who had grown in their careers together. Naturally, this created a bit of a divide with newer employees who had not developed alongside them. The intentions of the company were to expand the candidate base. They were enthusiastic about reaching out and hiring people from diverse backgrounds and experiences but they had missed an important step. Tremendous Transport had not prepared their existing staff to mentor people with different skills, experiences and identities. This lack of preparation resulted in conflict, a sense of exclusion and, in some cases, reported of bullying. Situations like this can be addressed effectively. There are many strategies that can help reduce the likelihood of a company having the same experience as Tremendous Transport.

Case study #2: Highly successful recruiting and retention outcomes

Company background

ABC Shipping began as a medium-sized organization transporting goods throughout North America via freighters and other cargo ships. Early in its growth strategy, ABC Shipping decided that it needed a dedicated recruiting and training program. One of the managers had previously worked in a trades school and felt that having a well-developed recruitment and onboarding plan would be pivotal to both growth and retention.

Company expansion and the need for new recruits

ABC Shipping targeted South America as the region for expanding its shipping business. This meant growing and hiring a crew for a larger fleet in order to accomplish this goal. The plan involved every department and meant hiring a number of new marine engine mechanic apprentices, in addition to other team members. Luckily, ABC Shipping had a strong partnership in place with local trades schools. This provided them with co-op students as well as opportunities to speak to various classes about the company and its needs. ABC Shipping regularly posted jobs with these local colleges and ensured that the career management team within the college was aware of their recruiting efforts. Additionally, ABC Shipping successfully linked up with a local employment services agency and a women in trades organization. These partnerships helped connect employers with apprentices. ABC Shipping contacted these organizations to let them know about the increased need for candidates. Their efforts were successful and the company was able to fill most of the new jobs.



Training and onboarding

ABC Shipping works diligently to create an onboarding program which includes detailed company-wide safety information and guidelines that are specific to each department. They also provide inclusive workplace training twice a year, scheduled so all staff members have the opportunity to participate. Each new recruit is paired with a mentor, chosen based on their technical skills as well as their leadership aptitude. At ABC, prior to being paired with a mentee, each mentor is required to complete a mentorship training course provided by a local not-for-profit organization. The new mentees are provided with a typical training schedule which identifies the mentorship milestones that the apprentice is expected to reach at certain intervals. The program also includes a rotation schedule that gives the apprentice first-hand experience in other departments, giving them the opportunity to meet with more of the company's staff members. Each new recruit is provided with a list of expectations that the company has of them. They are encouraged to ask questions and they are told how to bring forward any relevant issues or complaints. Lastly, each new recruit is also provided with information about how to register for their technical training, where they can access any equipment and tools they will need and how to procure equipment if they do not already possess it.

Retention success

ABC Shipping reports that they have very little issue with turnover and were able to implement a referral program with their new recruits which resulted in filling all their available vacancies. At the regular check-ins with managers, new apprentices report feeling confident about their training and excited about being able to experience multiple departments to further their understanding of the organization as a whole. Some of the recruits determined that they would rather be in a different department than the one into which they were hired and were transferred to the new department. This was because ABC Shipping believes in helping all its team members to find their best fit.

Conclusion

ABC Shipping has been recognized and used as an example of best practices in many settings. The company is regularly called upon to contribute to discussions regarding mentorship and retention. ABC believes so strongly in creating comprehensive training and mentorship programs that it has worked with a local training organization to create a customized mentorship training program that is specific to the needs of their trainees. They report that these structured training and mentorship strategies, combined with diligent assessments of possible mentors and trainers, has led to increased retention and productivity. The company's supervisors report feeling more confident in the skills of their employees and say they advance in developing their competencies faster. The result is very little turnover.

4. Moving Forward: Let's Talk Strategy

In this section we identify seven strategies that Tremendous Transport and ABC Shipping used with success. We also include additional strategies gathered through our research, our conversations with employers and through a series of focus groups with apprenticeship stakeholders across Canada.

1) Building genuine relationships within and outside the company

Establishing support from senior company leaders and front-line staff is an important first step. When leaders set the tone and support partnership-building and creating diverse talent pipelines, other staff will embrace diversity as well. Leaders can ease the transition by consulting employees and listening to their concerns.

Reaching out in many directions is important. Typically, this will include local women's groups, newcomer organizations, racialized groups and various Indigenous organizations in your local community. These are the kinds of organizations that offer a variety of services, such as helping you prepare and find qualified candidates and with financial incentives to assist with hiring, training, and retention.

Here is a preliminary list of organizations that can connect you with women and other equity priority candidates across Canada, although there are many more:

- [Aboriginal Apprenticeship Board of Ontario](http://www.aabo.ca) (www.aabo.ca)
- [Apprenticesearch.com | Connecting Employers and Apprentices Across Canada](http://Apprenticesearch.com) (Apprenticesearch.com)
- [Office to Advance Women Apprentices](http://www.womenapprentices.ca) (www.womenapprentices.ca)
- [Training Alberta's Indigenous People for Success in the Trades | Trade Winds](http://www.tradewindstosuccess.ca) (www.tradewindstosuccess.ca)
- [Women Building Futures | Change Your Life](http://womenbuildingfutures.ca) (womenbuildingfutures.ca)
- [Women Unlimited](http://www.womenunlimitedns.ca) (www.womenunlimitedns.ca)

2) Effective recruitment strategies

Tremendous Transport reached out to a local college and employment service office to help them with recruiting and this helped them to expand and diversify their candidate pool. ABC Shipping had a well-established relationship with the local trades school as well as two other organizations that help connect employers to apprentices. They also implemented a referral program with their new recruits which, in combination with their other strategies, was highly successful.

Here are some other solutions to consider:

- Indicate in recruitment materials that your company is serious about hiring women.
- Place job ads where women will see them – within women’s training organizations, trade schools, community bulletin boards and fitness and recreation centres.⁴
- Use social media to recruit women.
- Connect with instructors who teach pre-apprenticeship programs to connect with potential candidates.
- Speak to young women in high school and college about opportunities in your sector.
- Attend job fairs, go to community events and discuss available jobs.
- Make announcements on local radio stations.
- Post jobs at high schools.
- Develop targeted recruitment materials that outline your policies, including the gender inclusive and Indigenous policies and practices at the company.
- Establish ongoing relationships with local trade schools. Provide details about the number of apprenticeship spaces and state an interest in hiring female or other equity-priority candidates.
- Develop contacts and when a job is available reach out them to identify interested individuals.
- Post the job internally for three weeks before the posting goes external. Encourage existing employees to apply for apprenticeship postings.
- Encourage your existing employees to identify possible candidates.
- When interviewing applicants ask everyone the same questions to ensure consistency and fairness.
- Create a diverse interview team to showcase the diversity within the organization.
- Provide inclusion training for all staff and inform candidates so they know how serious your organization is about diversity and inclusion.
- Learn about the needs of those you are hiring and inform candidates of the kinds of accommodations that you can offer.
- Use inclusive language in your job postings and other recruiting materials.
- Refrain from identifying too many requirements in the job posting. Consider listing skills that are “nice to have.” This will increase the number of candidates because it doesn’t deter them before they apply.

3) Hiring process

- Be flexible when setting interview times to accommodate the applicant's work and family needs.
- Consider the interview venue. Is it welcoming for women and people from equity-priority groups? Is it accessible for persons with disabilities?
- Consider adding language regarding accessibility and accommodations across the entire recruitment and hiring process.
- Consider neurodiverse individuals during interview process. For example, offering interview questions beforehand could be very helpful in their preparation for the interview.
- Consider alternative hybrid options for interviews, such as an online format if the candidate lives far from company's location.
- By taking a candidate on a tour of your company they get to see the work environment, and just as important, they will also note the diversity of your company's workforce.

4) Initial onboarding and training

Informality was the approach at Tremendous Transport. There was a training process in place, pairing a new person with a mentor, but over the years they saw that this wasn't enough to be effective given the new composition of their workforce. ABC Shipping thought it through beforehand. They offered a comprehensive training program as well as a mentor assessment and training protocol, which allowed them to successfully onboard new apprentices with many different backgrounds.

Here are some additional strategies for creating or enhancing a more effective and fulsome training process:

- Seek to understand and communicate your workplace environment and culture to your new hire.
- Explain team behaviours and common practices to help the new hire better understand the workplace.
- Outline all the safe work policies and practices. Provide emergency contact information and talk about any safety concerns that the applicant may have.⁵

- Ensure the new hire has proper fitting personal protective equipment.⁶
- Understand different cultural standards and practices that may impact employee behaviour at the workplace and explain your policies for employee absences and how these are to be communicated. Being sensitive to any cultural differences will help you facilitate effective workplace communication, which is crucial for creating a positive apprentice and journey person mentor relationship.
- Avoiding confrontation or making negative comments about others can prevent employees from speaking up, which we saw in the case of Tremendous Transport. Ensure your employees understand how to voice their concerns in a manner in which they feel comfortable. You don't want a culture of silence in the workplace.
- Ensure you communicate with your employees about your rules for taking time off. It is commonplace that employees may want time off to participate in various cultural and traditional events, hunting expeditions and multiple-day funerals, for example. Employees should be encouraged to specify the days off that will be required in advance. Your company can implement Cultural Day Leaves to accommodate these requests.
- Outline your expectations. Once hired, apprentices and tradespeople must understand the rules and expectations from the beginning.
- Many companies have hired an Indigenous liaison coordinator to facilitate workplace communication. Others have hired onsite job coaches to make sure that employees have the information and support that they need in the workplace. The employee has someone to talk to about their problems and the coach can help resolve any issues of misinterpretation and act as a mediator if workplace conflicts arise.
- Another strategy to facilitate productive mentoring relationships is to educate journey persons about Indigenous cultures, learning styles and teaching methods. This will support better connections with their apprentices.
- Prepare your new hires for success as they navigate the apprenticeship process. Explain all technical training requirements clearly and upfront.

- Offer constructive assessments, academic upgrading and support for examinations so the apprentice is able to complete their technical training and pass the multiple-choice certification examination. Offer support throughout the life cycle of the apprenticeship to avoid the possibility of apprentice isolation and frustration.
- Target the training to meet specific needs by assessing the candidate's skills to understand their strengths and weaknesses.
- Offer opportunities for improvement. In one company, for example, individuals who are not ready to enter an apprenticeship but who are interested in the trades are able to work in an entry-level position for a year. During this time, they receive support, including time in the classroom to develop their mathematical and English skills. This employee may become a future apprentice candidate.
- Make the training accessible. Provide access to an adult educator onsite or tutors to provide help with math and reading. Apprentices or tradespeople may not be able to travel for upgrading courses so the training should be accessible onsite.
- Give employees the opportunity to obtain their General Equivalency Diploma onsite by allowing them time to study in their schedule.
- Ensure the support is structured and systematic, especially for apprentice technical training and preparation for examinations. One company we interviewed requires apprentices to spend time working with a workplace educator every month.
- Prior to training new staff members, offer mentorship training as well as inclusive workplace training to existing staff to equip them with the tools necessary to train new team members. Stakeholders in a recent focus group held by CAF-FCA suggested doing this on a regular basis so that no one goes without the training and everyone receives refreshers.
- Create a formal onboarding program with criteria for selecting mentors who will be appropriate for the new hires. A mentor may not be aware of the impact of their own attitudes and biases, making it important to consider how these can be mitigated.
- Create safe spaces for new apprentices or hires to ask questions about their experiences in the workplace. Participants in the focus group recommended having scheduled check-ins where new staff members are encouraged to bring their questions forward. ABC Shipping implemented this strategy and say that it works very well for them.
- Communicate policies clearly. Write in plain, clear language that is accessible to all.
- If possible, create multiple options for training and try to choose the most appropriate venue for the type of learning. If, for example, a staff member is a tactile learner or is not learning in their primary language, training in-person may be helpful as they can be shown the processes and given a chance to practice.
- Create informal opportunities for interaction during mentorship. Where possible, allow new staff members to train with different people within the organization or company.
- Implement regular and ongoing communication that rewards progress and provides helpful and constructive feedback. Apprentices in the focus group noted that ongoing feedback that helped them to improve was one of the most important determinants of their success and longevity in a workplace.
- Celebrate diversity. Employers who contributed to this guide do this in a number of ways. This includes company emails that celebrate cultural holidays, days off for various cultural holidays, posters on bulletin boards that showcase important events and mealtimes that feature cuisine from countries and cultures represented within the company.
- Solicit feedback from new employees as they move through the training process. This will enhance their experience and will ensure they are learning in the ways that work best for them.

5) Implement a mentoring program

- Everyone benefits when they have an opportunity to share their experiences. This is especially important for apprentices in the workplace. Being able to share their experiences with a mentor or role model can help them feel supported. When, for example, women in the mining industry were surveyed they reported their career advancement was especially difficult in technical occupations, skilled trades and senior leadership roles. They reported that having female executive role models helped them.⁷
- Employers we interviewed stated that they often encourage their tradespeople who are women to connect with peers through various women's groups. These groups allow women to share their experiences and can have a positive effect on their capacity to deal with the realities of male-dominated workplaces.

6) Structuring a mentorship program

The employers who were interviewed for this guide, along with participants in the focus group, recommend the following strategic actions when structuring a mentorship program:

- Solicit applications (or voluntary participation) in becoming a mentor from existing employees who would like to train a new person.
- Assess mentors for their dedication to the mentorship process. Ask them about their intentions for becoming a mentor. Invite them to tell you about their skills and relevant experiences in training other staff.
- Provide adequate training for those who become mentors. Mentorship training programs are available across Canada and in multiple formats, including online and in-person. In the case of ABC Shipping, they worked with a local training organization to create their own customized program.

- Ensure that each mentor is equipped with an understanding of the company's safety standards, inclusion practices and workplace expectations.
- Create defined metrics for accountability. Ensure there are shared expectations of the mentor-mentee relationship. Decide how progress will be tracked, and that an evaluation of the mentorship experience will be carried out for each mentor and mentee.
- Ensure that there is a mechanism in place for dealing with concerns and resolving any conflict that might arise.
- Look for ways to enhance the mentorship process by inviting guest speakers or connecting women with other women from outside their organization, such as a professional organization or associations dedicated to assisting women in the trades.

7) Support mentoring and positive role model relationships

- Designate mentors specifically for equity-priority groups.
- We learned from one company about the value of engaging a site elder. A site elder is not a human resource staff member but an Indigenous elder hired by the company to provide support to Indigenous apprentices and staff. In order for them to be effective, a site elder must have a clear mandate and role that is distinct from human resources staff.
- Have mentors come to a site for one week to provide apprentice supports.
- Promote positive role models.

Retention

Effective training, mentoring and an enriched workplace experience are valuable in themselves, and they are also ingredients for retention. It is discouraging for a business to invest in training if successful apprentices decide to move to a different company after successful certification. You saw how in the case of Tremendous Transport the company had not adequately prepared the men in their environment to be allies of women entering into their company. Consequently, the new team members had a negative experience and retention was impacted. In order to reduce such negative impacts, a company could implement some of the strategies identified below. As we saw in ABC Shipping, by successfully implementing some of these actions the company experienced much more positive outcomes.

1) Review existing policies and procedures

A workplace culture that supports the participation of women thrives when:

- Policies and procedure are carefully reviewed to identify any potential or unintended bias.
- Women in the workplace are invited to talk about their experience in the workplace and their needs.
- Effective gender-sensitivity training is provided to all.⁸

2) Outline expectations

Once hired, apprentices and tradespeople must understand the rules and expectations from the beginning.

3) Create a positive work environment

A welcoming work environment will attract new talent and improve the bottom line.⁹

The presence of diverse backgrounds, cultures and perspectives on worksites can result in a more respectful and professional work environment overall, where the tone and level of communication is professional and appropriate. According to feedback from both managers and workers, this kind of work environment suits men, women, and gender diverse workers alike.¹⁰

Men are important allies in any effort to promote gender diversity. Men can help build a more collegial, non-confrontational environment. Men have a role to play in minimizing any backlash against efforts to include women in the workplace. One study found that efforts to influence men are most effective when they are facilitated by other men who champion women's advancement.¹¹

4) Listen! Then accommodate employees

Listening to your employees and making appropriate accommodations based on the needs they have to complete their work effectively will aid retention and enhance productivity. These efforts work equally well for all employees, regardless of gender. However, these efforts are particularly effective when seeking to develop a workplace that is more inclusive.

Some actions to consider:

- Consult with employees and determine controls that will create a more comfortable environment for everyone.
- Implement regular job rotations to minimize the effects of repetitive tasks. This will also reduce the duration and frequency of any physical stress.¹²
- Adjust how much employees are required to lift at one time. Companies in the mining and automotive sectors noted that there was no effect on productivity when these kinds of adjustments were made.¹³

Major cost savings result when managers are focused on improving production and team performance, rather than dealing with employee grievances.¹⁴ Address stereotypes, myths and misogyny by working to eliminate assumptions about a woman's capacity to do the job, to undertake overtime and participate in projects at remote sites. With adequate notice, most women in the workforce are willing to pursue opportunities to advance their careers, even if this involves travel or time away from families.¹⁵

Research and case studies show that company-sponsored parental leave, predictable shift patterns, better access to quality childcare and health programs can be cost-effective. A study in the UK found a positive correlation between above-average labour productivity and a higher number of family-friendly work arrangements.¹⁶

We recommend these additional strategies based on our conversations with employers, apprentices, and other stakeholders:

- Consider offering benefits that address family concerns, such as maternity and parental leave top up, as well as pregnancy benefits – including leave.
- Offer job security with a stable schedule. Ensure reliable pay cheques. Women in our focus group who had children told us that reliable and stable employment is incredibly important to them. They also told us they are often deterred from jobs in the trades because they do not perceive them to be stable enough.
- Create a sense of community by actually hiring more women and more diverse staff members.
- Offer opportunities for women to interact and network with each other.

Leadership opportunities and growth in the organization

In our recent focus group it was noted that women were often unaware of the growth opportunities within their organization. Additionally, some felt that they were overlooked when new job positions became available.

CAF-FCA has created a National Leadership Program to assist women and gender diverse individuals in the trades to gain the skills necessary to move into leadership positions. Their feedback also indicates how moving into leadership roles has been difficult. In some cases, this was impossible. Participants in the leadership program report that being able to advance within their career is important to them and that they would be more likely to refer their friends/acquaintances to the trades if they felt that advancement was not only possible but also available to them.

One of the employers interviewed for this report created a women's leadership program in their organization. The program focused on apprentices who identify as women and it created mentorship, leadership and professional development opportunities within the company. The employer explained how implementing this program dramatically increased the number of referrals they received from existing staff who identify as women. They also noted a significant reduction in turnover and determined this was due to the engagement their employees reported feeling because of the program.



The following strategies also help increase access to leadership positions or opportunities for women and gender diverse individuals:

- Offer informal opportunities to build leadership skills and confidence. This can include informal mentorship relationships with new hires. Consider inviting a worker to lead a small team on a project. Invite them to engage in a team building initiative. Get them involved in committees, for example.
- Create defined pathways to leadership. Explain the criteria for advancing, make it public and clear so that all staff members know what is required to grow within the organization.
- Provide relevant opportunities for professional development.
- Pair newer staff members with a woman or gender diverse individual in a leadership role for informal mentorship opportunities.
- Hold regular check-ins with staff members to understand their goals and to work with them on strategies for achieving those goals.

5. The Future Workforce: Creating Awareness About Skilled Trades Careers

This final section looks ahead at what employers can do to increase the visibility of the skilled trades as a viable and flourishing career opportunity. It contains some actions to consider as you look to grow your own workforce, as well as that of the skilled trades across the country.

To make your apprenticeship program and recruitment strategy successful:

- Create awareness about apprenticeship and skilled trades careers by visiting local high schools.
- Outline educational requirements helps students realize they need to stay in school and obtain a diploma to prepare for an apprenticeship.
- Support shop classes at the local high school and offering “try a trade” opportunities give students (no matter at what grade level) a chance to explore the trades “hands-on.”
- Involve the community in these exploration activities is important. Make them public and promote them well.
- Offer worksite tours or student workplace programs to help employers engage directly with students and community members. Some companies offer incentives to encourage individuals to pursue high school and post-secondary education.
- Remember, not all potential employees are school-aged. Adults should also be engaged in learning about careers in the skilled trades.
- Whenever a company representative talks to adults, they should bring information about job availability, wages, educational requirements and the application process.
- Presentations should include information about the realities of camp life, social issues, money management, employer expectations, time management and realistic career paths within the company. And be sure to make it very clear if the job requires a driver’s licence.



6. Conclusion

Hiring and retaining new and diverse team members into the skilled trades requires a multi-faceted approach with assistance from the local community. We hope this guide contains some ideas and suggestions you could consider incorporating into your own strategies, along with some thoughts on how to engage with Canada's current apprenticeship community. Our hope is for you to come away from this guide with the knowledge that you are not alone and that there are many resources and supports available to help you on this vital journey. CAF-FCA can assist you and can respond to your inquiries about additional supports. We thank you for your commitment to increasing the retention of new recruits within the skilled trades in Canada and for your dedication to creating an inclusive and welcoming space for women and equity-priority groups.

7. Endnotes

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