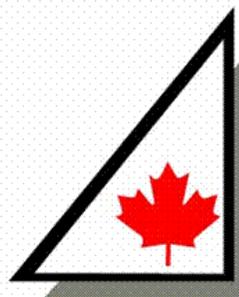


Final Partnership Project Report to Canadian Apprenticeship Forum



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**CANADIAN COALITION OF WOMEN
IN ENGINEERING, SCIENCE,
TRADES AND TECHNOLOGY**

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**Winsett
Centre**

Canadian Centre for Women in
Science, Engineering, Trades and Technology

Executive Summary

In March, 2011, the Canadian Coalition for Women in Engineering, Science, Trades and Technology (CCWESTT) entered into an agreement with Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF) to advance some common objectives. The contract was defined in a task assignment document titled “Employer Engagement Phase II: Promoting the CAF-FCA Employer Toolkit”. The statement of work outlined in the contract was to engage employers in a discussion about the value of hiring and retaining female apprentices, and to promote the CAF-FCA Employer Toolkit.

The original scope of the project consisted of CCWESTT delivering two workshops in Barrie, Ontario through its ‘operational’ arm, the WinSETT Centre which CCWESTT established in late 2009. Specifically these workshops were to be delivered to employers who would be recruited by the Barrie Career Centre - an office of Georgian College, and the Barrie Homebuilders Association. CCWESTT had been in previous discussion with both organizations, who indicated their commitment to the initiative.

Ultimately there were three workshops delivered, all of them through Georgian College. The foundation of the workshop is a handbook produced by CCWESTT - *A Checklist of Strategies: Welcoming Women into Science, Engineering, Trades and Technology Workplaces*. The CAF-FCA Employer Toolkit was also used in the delivery, with particular emphasis on ROTI and Hiring Female Apprentices. Combining the resources of both organizations proved to be a winning formula, as judged by the comments and questions of the participants.

On April 27, 2011, five local employers attended a three-hour workshop delivered by Valerie Overend, the Trades Consultant for CCWESTT and the WinSETT Centre, and a team of women that Valerie has been mentoring. Valerie is an experienced facilitator and a Red Seal Carpenter. The workshops were customized for owners and managers of companies with apprenticeable trades positions who were recruited by the staff at Barrie Career Centre. These participants were invited from their pool of employers who provide student work placements and who hire graduates.

The objectives of the workshop were to help participants to:

- Better understand the dynamics of their own workplaces regarding relationships between men and women,
- Practice using the *Checklist of Strategies* handbook to identify specific issues in their workplaces, and
- Stimulate ideas to improve working relationships.

Subsequent to the successful Georgian College delivery on April 27, CCWESTT/WinSETT held a lively brainstorming session with one of the College Deans and a Program Manager to discuss some future initiatives. We concluded that we would pursue a solid opportunity for mutual benefit. CCWESTT /WinSETT would deliver workshops to their Employment Consultants and they could use the acquired information to broaden the effectiveness of their efforts to find positions for female graduates in skilled trades programs. In exchange, the Employment Consultants would be able to network with their employers as envoys for our work, potentially obtaining requests for future workshop deliveries in the region.

On November 25, two separate workshops were held at Georgian College for twenty-eight Employment Consultants. The original objectives of the workshop remained and another was added: to practice using the *Checklist of Strategies* handbook to identify specific issues in employer workplaces. The participants were able to look at their own workplaces to understand first-hand the effects of policies and practices. They could then more easily apply this knowledge to systems in other workplaces.

The workshops on November 25 were conducted by Mary Ferguson and Joanna Belajac. Mary is an experienced facilitator who specializes in training design and delivery and who authored the first edition of the *Checklist of Strategies*. Joanna is an apprentice carpenter/cabinetmaker and founder of Simcoe County Women in Trades (SCWIT), a member organization of CCWESTT. They will continue to work with Georgian College conducting follow-up activities in the region. Furthermore, as the first facilitation team trained to deliver the workshops, they will continue to work with Valerie to finalize and assist in delivery of the Facilitator Orientation program for the *Checklist of Strategies* project.

With regards to the original tasks itemized in the contract, the proposed delivery to the Barrie and Region Homebuilders Association did not materialize. In spite of CCWESTT/WinSETT efforts to work with the local office to develop print information and even to deliver a presentation at their monthly dinner meeting, they could not recruit enough members to attend a workshop in the spring. There were other attempts to involve Homebuilders from other nearby regions, but none resulted in delivery of a workshop. Delays were communicated through emails and phone calls so that CAF was always apprised of the situation and agreed to contract amendments.

Report on Georgian College Employer Network Workshop

On April 27, 2011, a WinSETT Facilitation Team delivered a workshop to representatives from five local businesses. The workshop was hosted by Georgian College at their downtown campus and ran from 9:00 to 12:00 noon. Georgian staff were responsible for recruiting the employers and supplied the meeting room, refreshments and travel mugs for all participants and facilitators.

Valerie Overend took the lead facilitation role with Mary Ferguson taking the lead on two of the five scripted sections from the agenda. Joanna Belajac provided backup information about local resources. The collaborative delivery provided an opportunity for development of a local facilitation team for Simcoe County.

The participating companies included an automotive manufacturing business with 99 employees, a food and agricultural tool and die company with 6 employees, two plumbing service contractors with 14 and 4 employees respectively, and an ultra high precision machine shop with 17 employees. One participant was an HR Manager and the other four were owners. Two were women.

The workshop agenda is attached. We began with introductions and expectations. All of the participants were committed to increasing women in trades positions in their workforces, some for the first time.

A short summary of discussion highlights for each section follows:

Regarding **external recruitment**, all employers had specific recruitment strategies and two had links to sourcing women through employment programs. We discussed those and other local links to access

female applicants and Joanna invited each of the employers to contact her directly (via email) if they were recruiting for specific positions. Employers also requested that SCWIT could direct qualified women to apply to their companies as they came across them.

On the topic of **selection interviews**, all but one company stated that they had women on their interview panels, a good practise in itself. We discussed the fact that women interview differently than men and gave some examples of women “underselling” their skills and abilities – not so for men generally. Behavioural interviewing techniques were discussed in a positive light, as was the inclusion of a question about hobbies and interests for entry-level positions.

The topic of **the role of existing personnel in orientation** engaged all participants fully. All had examples of difficult situations where they were tasked to intervene between a female employee and other employees or contract workers. We had a lot of discussion about tangible outcomes since Bill 168 was introduced in Ontario. Preventing Workplace Violence and Workplace Harassment is an Ontario Government Bill that was effective on June 15, 2010.

This topic also prompted a discussion about return on training investment for apprentices and other entry-level positions, which was revisited during the presentation on the CAF Toolkit.

Mary facilitated discussion regarding **the role of supervisory perceptions and actions** as they relate to retention. A lot of emphasis seems to be placed on “overprotecting” women from doing heavy work or giving them guidance where they might not need it, therefore singling them out inadvertently. At the same time, supervisors seem to be unprepared to deal with many of the interpersonal situations that arise between men and women, choosing not to intervene.

At this point in the agenda, time was short and Valerie overviewed a few common sticking points related to **career development** and encouraged employers to support mentorships and networking opportunities for tradeswomen.

Valerie walked the participants through the **CAF Employer Toolkit** beginning with an introduction that linked the product to ROTI, illustrated on the final page of the toolkit. Mary’s reference to ROTI in Orientation provided a perfect segue way into the topic that the employers picked up on immediately. All participants received a copy of the Toolkit and several took more than one copy with them. The Career Centre took 20 copies for their employer display rack.

The workshop ended with an invitation for employers to take the *Checklist of Strategies* back to their workplaces and complete the entire handbook. Upon completion, they were asked to send their responses to either Mary or Valerie and, after review, we would arrange for a phone call with each of them to discuss some next steps that their company may want to take in tandem with CCWESTT. Participants also completed a written evaluation of the workshop itself.

Report on Georgian College Employment Consultants Workshop

Two *Checklist of Strategies* workshops were held on 25 November for employment consultants from Georgian College as well as others invited from select organizations in the region. The workshops were hosted by Georgian College.

Mary Ferguson and Joanna Belajac co-facilitated both morning and afternoon sessions. Mary and Joanna, supported by Valerie Overend, organized the workshops' agenda. A stenographer was hired to take notes of the comments during the session, both by participants and facilitators. This data will be used to inform aspects of the Facilitator Orientation sessions.

Fourteen people attended each of the morning and afternoon sessions, with only one of the participants being male. Fifteen of the participants were Georgian College employment consultants – from both the Barrie and Orillia campuses. The remaining thirteen people came from five other career and employment organizations including YMCA Employment Service in Midland, Barrie Employment Services College Boreal, Barrie Career Centre, Focus Community Development Corporation, and Northern Lights Canada.

Each participant received a folder with information about CCWESTT, the WinSETT Centre and CAF. In addition, they received a copy of the PowerPoint presentation, the *Checklist of Strategies* handbook, a workbook for completion during the workshop, 10 copies of the CAF Employer Tool Kit and 10 copies of a *Checklist of Strategies* promotional flyer for distribution to employers.

During the workshop, participants were guided to discuss several of the topics in the *Checklist of Strategies* handbook. They worked with partners to share information and advice before rejoining the large group. Some key ideas follow.

Recruitment through marketing uncovered difficulties with legal issues related to advertising positions specifically for women. Most participants agreed that ads often served to eliminate women from applying, and discussion centred on ways to present ads that would be appealing or welcoming to women and men alike. Other discussion lamented the tendency of employers to include maximum technical qualifications and neglecting to emphasize other workplace values. These ads are promoting expectations that are likely not realistic and women tend to self-screen if they don't match or exceed all qualifications, whether realistic or not.

When the topic of the **interview process in selection** of applicants was introduced, discussion focussed on the difficulties for women to even get an interview in the first place. Employers most often know from the name on a resume that a woman is applying and often do not respond. Women with generic names stand a better chance of getting a call-back for an interview but when the employer discovers they are not men, their resumes often find their way to the back burner.

On the topic of **orientation and the role of existing personnel**, some participants raised issues about broader roles and where the responsibility lies in adapting the workplace for women. There was some debate about women's need to adapt but most concluded that all players have an obligation to adapt to change – women, male employees and owners/managers.

Overall, orientation was considered to be a weak practice and, even when orientation exists, the personnel who deliver the training tend to reflect their own attitudes. It is clear that employers need to prepare the personnel responsible for orientation by providing better education about integrating women into their workplaces.

When women don't receive proper orientation, they need to forge their own way and are then required to be "agents of change" when they ought to be focussing on their own transition as a new hire. This debate prompted the facilitators to revise the subsequent agenda and shift the "Training" topic to that of "Mental Health".

A short discussion about the effects of **supervisory perceptions and actions** on **retention** emphasized the tendency of supervisors to behave in one of two ways. Some tend to be blind to gender differences, not acknowledging difficulties in male to female relationships. This serves to make a woman invisible and minimizes her chances of acceptance. Others are all too aware of differences and seem to think that means they should be overprotecting female employees. The effect of singling out a woman and causing her further isolation damages her possibilities for gaining acceptance with a crew.

Harassment and mental health as they relate to **health and safety** were substituted into the workshop, when it became obvious that they were raised frequently, particularly during discussion related to Orientation. Personal harassment, improper orientation and other factors cluster to create difficult mental health situations for tradeswomen. Participants agreed that they had received some form of workplace education on the topic, now mandatory through Bill 168, but it was minimal, at best and in a distance mode. Some were hard-pressed to remember the training. Most participants were barely cognizant of the situation of "lone" tradeswomen and the impact of isolation on her productivity.

Ten copies of the **CAF Employer Toolkit** were handed out to each participant for use in their work with employers. Extra copies were left with Georgian College for future use. The Toolkit was reviewed with special emphasis on Section 4 relating to female apprentices. As well, there was discussion generated about the ROTI table on the back cover and the obvious links to be made when hiring female apprentices, who tend to be loyal to a company.

The workshop concluded with discussion and guidance around the role the participants would now be playing as Checklist of Strategies ambassadors. They were asked to respond to three questions: What came into focus for you regarding women in trades and technologies? What additional support can you provide to women and employers that you work with? What could your organization do to support you in this work? These generated ideas for each participant to be able to proceed and increase their influence on employers to hire and retain their female graduates of trades programs. They were also informed that they will be asked to participate in follow up surveys to determine the effectiveness of their reach. The first will be conducted in three months time.

Acknowledgements

CCWESTT and the WinSETT Centre gratefully acknowledge the generous grant and staff support of the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, the in kind and institutional staff support of Georgian College, Simcoe County Women in Trades, and the primary funding partners of the WinSETT Centre including Status of Women Canada, Suncor Energy Community Fund and the Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta.

**Welcoming Women into Science, Engineering,
Trades and Technology Workplaces:
A Checklist of Strategies**

GEORGIAN COLLEGE EMPLOYER NETWORK - APRIL 27, 2011

Facilitators: Valerie Overend Mary Ferguson / Joanna Belajac

9:00 Introductions

9:15 Outline agenda

9:30 Checklist of Strategies

9:40 Recruitment

1.2 External Recruitment

10:00 Selection

2.3 Interviews

10:20 BREAK

10:30 Orientation

3.3 Role of Existing Personnel in Orientation

10:50 Retention

4.1 Supervisory Perceptions and Actions

11:10 Career Development

5.4 Mentorships and Networks

11:30 CAF Employer Toolkit

11:45 Next Steps and Evaluation

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**Canadian Centre for Women in
Science, Engineering, Trades and Technology**



**Canadian Apprenticeship Forum
Forum canadien sur l'apprentissage**

**Welcoming Women into Science, Engineering,
Trades and Technology Workplaces:
A Checklist of Strategies**

November 25, 2011

Mary Ferguson / Joanna Belajac

- 9:00** Introductions
- 9:15** Outline agenda
- 9:30** Checklist of Strategies
- 9:40** Recruitment
 - 1.2** Marketing
- 10:00** Selection
 - 2.3** Interviews
- 10:20** BREAK
- 10:30** Orientation
 - 3.3** Role of Existing Personnel in Orientation
- 10:50** Retention
 - 4.1** Supervisory Perceptions and Actions
- 11:10** Health and Safety
 - 7.4** Harassment and Risks to Mental Health
- 11:30** CAF Employer Toolkit
- 11:45** Next Steps and Evaluation



**Canadian Apprenticeship Forum
Forum canadien sur l'apprentissage**