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# Working with Labour Shortages: *Contractor Perspective*

Apprenticeship Summit  
Skills and Labour Shortages  
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# *What is being experienced in today's construction labour market?*

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## Demographics:

- The overall workforce is aging.
- As operational requirements diminish this creates an environment where employers poach from one another, and owners poach from contractors and the trade unions for skills.

# *What is being experienced in today's construction labour market?*

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## Supervision:

- Skills shortages affect supervision and local supervision development.
- Impact of reliance on travel cards.
- Where is the local talent being trained to come through the ranks to take the supervisory jobs in the future?
- When there is a shortage of local supervision there is also a shortage of training taking place in the local area.

# *What is being experienced in today's construction labour market?*

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## Turnover:

- On major projects employers experience high turnover when manning their projects.
- When there is a lot of work, trades like to jump from job to job.
- Apprenticeship ratios are not fully utilized.
- All journeypersons are working before apprentices get on the job.
- When apprentices get on the major projects there is no proper mentoring taking place to assist in their field experience and development.
- Cost of turnover is huge to the buyer of the construction services.
- When shortages reach a point where employers must recruit offshore the cost increases exponentially.

# *What barriers to meeting labour requirements do contractors observe?*

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## Mobility:

- Waiting for other jobs to finish up to get tradespeople.
- The time lag has been up to five (5) months to fill the call.
- Relying on retirees at ages of 68 + because there are no trades available.
- Labour disruptions due to bumping of travel cards in favour of local tradespeople.

# *What barriers to meeting labour requirements do contractors observe?*

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## Availability of Apprentices

- Accurate information on the number of apprentices in the system in the respective provinces.
- Affects coordination efforts to move them to meet demand.
- The work picture is very different from area to area.

# *What barriers to meeting labour requirements do contractors observe?*

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## Skills (Qualifications):

- Accurate information on what skill sets reside in the respective provinces.
- This has major effect on incoming trades dispatched to a project.
- Contractors also do not know what they actually need until the last minute, and are not very specific on their requirements.
- “Just get the bodies to the areas that need the trades!!”

# *What barriers to meeting labour requirements do contractors observe?*

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## Accommodation:

- Coordinating housing, restaurants, entertainment and finding rooms for travellers coming into the area requiring the manpower to execute the project to its completion.

# *What needs to happen to match supply to demand?*

## Cost of Mobility:

- Must create an incentive to get trades to go to projects.
- Cannot get trades to move unless overtime and/or premium time is offered.
- Client is not getting the best value for the money paid.
- During shutdowns more people are required and additional overtime must be offered to complete the project
- Governments have not facilitated mobility by providing funding for transportation, or forcing the unemployed trades to take the work so they get off E.I.
- In western Canada bussing and camps are a huge cost to the owner to accommodate trades.
- If trades were available, projects would come in at a lower cost.

# *What needs to happen to match supply to demand?*

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## Training:

- There is a need for a coordinated training plan.
- When the employers or the industry realize a deficiency we react to set up training plans to meet the need at that particular time.
- Need a database on training requirements in the industry.
- Need incentives to train people for any position.
- The construction industry should be proactive on training of the trades and supervisors.

# *What needs to happen to match supply to demand?*

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## Pre-Apprenticeship:

- Need to look at this very seriously and assist new entrants into the trades.
- Need to look at helpers' classifications for lesser skilled functions to assist in manning up projects.
- The industry should assist the apprenticeship system across the country.
- The larger contractors do not assist in supporting the development of apprenticeship in Canada, and it is left to the smaller contractors in the local areas to do all the field training.



**THANK YOU**