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Facts for a Solid Foundation: Essential Intelligence for Planning the Future Workforce

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**The Vocational and Rehabilitation Research
Institute**
for

Workforce
2010 *Developing a responsive and sustainable
workforce to support children, youth
and adults with disabilities.*

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Meeting the needs of
persons with disabilities
and the community at
large since 1969

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Introduction

The vision of WORKFORCE 2010 is to have a responsive and sustainable workforce to support persons with disabilities in Alberta. Developing a comprehensive and effective human resource strategy for the future of our profession requires:

- clearly recognizing the changing demographics, needs and expectations of our consumers
- having a thorough knowledge of the labour market in which we operate, including national and provincial social and economic trends
- understanding the roles and qualifications needed in the workforce of the future
- learning and adopting innovative and effective human resource principles practiced by the most exemplary and sought-after employers in the labour market

Facts for A Solid Foundation presents some of this essential intelligence needed to develop an effective and sustainable human resource plan for the rehabilitation sector of the future. The material is organized as follows:

- a glance at national and provincial demographics, including age and gender breakdown and general support needs of Canadians with disabilities
- an overview of the labour market and areas where skill shortages are anticipated
- general characteristics of not-for-profit employers, compensation practices and work arrangements
- reasons why people leave workplaces, including generational differences in values and workplace motivators
- characteristics and practices of exemplary workplaces
- issues specific to the rehabilitation sector, and some solutions that have been identified

POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS OF CANADA AND ALBERTA

What are the general demographic trends in Canada?

Canadian population 15–64 years old in 2003 and projections for 2011 (in '000s)

	15–29 years		30–39 years		40–59 years		60–64 years		TOTAL	
	2003	2011	2003	2011	2003	2011	2003	2011	2003	2011
Male	3,282	3,410	2,372	2,314	4,609	5,006	685	720	10,947	11,449
Female	3,146	3,270	2,338	2,257	4,645	5,002	712	776	10,841	11,305
Total	6,428	6,680	4,710	4,571	9,254	10,008	1,397	1,496	21,788	22,754
% of TOTAL	29.5%	29.3%	21.6%	20.0%	42.4%	43.9%	6.4%	6.5%	100%	

- From 2003 to 2011, there is expected to be an increase in the population 40 years and older, and a slight decrease in the proportion of people under 40.
- The fastest growing groups in the Canadian workforce are women, visible minorities, Aboriginal people and people with disabilities.
- In the next 12 years, there will be a dramatic growth in the number of workers between 55 and 69 years old as baby boomers age.
- By 2011, immigration will account for all net labour force growth in Canada.
- Among OECD countries, Canada has the highest proportion of adults that have completed post-secondary education.

What are the general demographic trends in Alberta?

- Alberta's population for 2004 is estimated to be just over 3 million, growing at the rate of 1.3% per year primarily due to immigration.
- Of immigrants to Alberta who are 15 years and older, just over half (51%) have either university degrees or have completed some university education.
- Alberta has a higher percentage of people with post-secondary education than most of the other provinces and territories.
- In 2001, just over 20% of Albertans were 45-64 years old.
- An aging population and continued migration to Alberta will result in a need for greater investment in public services, especially health care and education. As well, there will be a greater need for childcare, personal care and eldercare services.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND GENERAL SUPPORT NEEDS

What are the demographics of Canadians with developmental disabilities?

People with developmental disabilities in Canada by age and sex

	5-9	10-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65-74	75 +	TOTAL
Male	16,380	15,530	15,420	22,270	28,340	1,850	5,910	105,700
Female	5,650	8,610	10,590	16,010	16,430	2,160	1,160	60,610
Total	22,040	24,140	26,010	38,280	44,770	4,010	7,070	166,320
% of TOTAL	13.3%	14.5%	15.6%	23.0%	26.9%	2.4%	4.3%	100%

- There are just over 166,000 people with developmental disabilities in Canada (i.e., about 0.7% of the total population); of these, 46,000 are children aged 14 and younger, and 120,000 are people aged 15 and over (2001 data excluding Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut).
- Of people aged 15 and over with a developmental disability, there are about 74,000 men (62%) and 46,000 (38%) women.
- Of children aged 14 and younger with a developmental disability, about 32,000 (70%) are males and 14,000 (30%) are females.
- At all age levels there is a greater proportion of males than females with developmental disabilities. As well, as more people transition from children's to adult services, there is expected to be an even greater increase in the proportion of males needing adult services.

What are the demographics of Albertans with developmental disabilities?

- In Alberta, there are 11,550 people aged 15 and over with developmental disabilities (2001 data).
- From 2002-03 to 2003-04, the number of consumers served by PDD rose from 8,484 to 8,696, an increase of 2.5%. Factors contributing to this increase include: general growth in Alberta's population and aging parents no longer being able to provide the level of support they have previously provided to children with developmental disabilities.
- Over the same time period, PDD's average monthly cost per person rose by 5.3%. The increasingly complex needs of individuals with developmental disabilities as they age was one of the factors contributing to this increase.
- According to the most recent data available, there are about 3,500 children with a primary diagnosis of a developmental disability who receive support through Alberta Child and Family Services (ACFS); approximately 49% of their current client base.
- Approximately 31% of the children with developmental disabilities receiving ACFS services have a primary diagnosis of Autism or Atypical Autism.

- Of the children receiving ACFS services, about 23% are 5 years or younger, just over 45% are 6 to 11 years old and about 32% are 12 years or older. If all those children who are 12 years or older qualify for PDD services, we can expect to have an influx of as many as 1,120 people into the PDD system over the next 6 years. In other words, this would be a 12.9% increase over the current number of consumers, at an average rate of 2.1% per year over the 6 years from children's services alone (all other factors being constant).

Are Canadians with disabilities (not limited to developmental disabilities) and their families receiving the support that they need?

- Canada has 3.4 million people with disabilities aged 15 and over.
- Two-thirds of Canada's disabled population (ages 15 and over) report receiving all the assistance they need with daily activities. Of the remaining one-third individuals with the most severe disabilities report having the highest amount of unmet needs.
- The majority of individuals with disabilities (ages 15 and over) who require assistance with everyday activities receive this assistance from (in rank order): family members, friends and neighbours, agencies and other sources.
- The more severe the disability the more likely it is that assistance with everyday activities will be provided by family members residing with the individual.
- Reasons individuals cite for not receiving adequate help are: a lack of financial resources, family and friends are not available, the individual has no insurance coverage, or the person does not know how to access help
- One-quarter of children with disabilities require assistance with everyday activities (primarily with personal care), and assistance is most often provided by the mother.
- Approximately one-fifth of parents caring for a child with disabilities require some assistance with household responsibilities. One-third of these parents report that they receive all of the support that they need. Assistance is most often provided by family members, friends or neighbours.
- 44% of parents caring for children with disabilities also receive help from government organizations or agencies (the majority of these families care for children with severe disabilities).
- Among factors contributing to parents not receiving adequate assistance are: cost, family and friends are not available, services and programs are not available, the family is not certain where to access assistance.

What are the support needs of Albertans with developmental disabilities?

- As the demographic makeup of individuals with developmental disabilities in Alberta changes there will be a corresponding change in their support needs and in the types of training that workers will need to have. With an increasingly aging

population, services will have to be responsive to the changing needs of seniors with developmental disabilities (e.g., more emphasis on recreational than vocational programs).

- Similarly, other groups such as individuals with developmental disabilities from First Nations communities and Métis Settlements, and new Canadians will need to have appropriate supports provided.
- More attention also needs to be devoted to exploring the support needs of individuals with profound or complex disabilities as well as those with a dual diagnosis.
- As well, greater attention needs to be spent on supports for families, particularly those whose children are transitioning into adult services.

AN OVERVIEW OF ALBERTA'S LABOUR MARKET

- In 2003, employment in Alberta grew by 2.9%—one of the highest employment growths in the country.
- Alberta continues to have one of the lowest unemployment rates in Canada (5.1%) and in 2003 was the province with the highest percentage of the working age population employed.
- Jobs in health care and social service sectors grew by 2,800 positions from 2002 to 2003. In 2003, teachers, social service workers, and professional and assisting occupations in health services had an unemployment rate of less than a 3%—indicating a skill shortage.
- The industrial sector in Alberta is expected to have an annual employment growth of 3.2% up to the year 2006.
- It is expected that nearly one-fifth of all new jobs will go to university graduates. Middle and senior management occupations will likely grow and will probably account for 10% of new employment.

In what areas are skill shortages expected?

- In the coming years, labour force shortages are expected to become particularly acute due to the sizable portion of the workforce that will be approaching retirement age.
- Alberta is expected to have one of the highest levels of labour shortage concerns in the country. While all sectors will be vulnerable to the increased numbers of retirees, community service and health care are expected to be the most affected. Skill shortages will be most apparent in management and health occupations.
- Among other factors, skill shortages seem tied to both deficiencies in post-secondary education/training in the west and cultural biases. Over the past decade, many young people have gravitated towards leading edge careers in

information and communications technology (parental expectations may play a significant role in steering young students into these occupations).

How are skill shortages being experienced in the rehabilitation sector?

- Alberta Association for Rehabilitation Centres (AARC) estimates that there is an annual requirement for approximately 2,000 new staff per year. Approximately 80% of these positions are direct service staff.
- In Alberta, community-based rehabilitation services employ about 8,290 people and have almost 32% average staff turnover per year; smaller agencies tend to have higher turnover, while government-operated rehabilitation services which employ about 1,480 individuals report the lowest turnover at 10% (2002 data).
- Two major factors have influenced skill shortages in the direct support workforce.
 - First, de-institutionalization has increased the demand for staff who provide supports to people with disabilities in the community.
 - Second, tight labour market and markedly low wages for direct support staff make these jobs unattractive to potential recruits. Agencies are forced to hire relatively unskilled, undereducated and inexperienced workers because of the skill shortages.
- In general, high turnover rates are attributed to low wages, lack of benefits, discrepancies between community-based employees and staff in government services, inadequate funding for budgets and difficulty recruiting staff with adequate skills and training.

What potential solutions has the Alberta Government identified in response to skill shortages in the province?

- Three key strategies identified by the Alberta government to meet the labour market needs in the province are:
 - increase the skill and knowledge level of Albertans
 - increase the mobility of labour in Canada, and
 - increase the number of immigrants to Alberta
- There are several potential labour sources that continue to face barriers to full participation in the labour market: aboriginals, youth, older workers, persons with disabilities, and immigrants.
- Older workers can become part of the solution to the skill shortage problem through emphasizing the advantages and potential economic impact of their extended labour force participation. In 2003, workers 45 and older filled 55% of new jobs in Alberta while 28% of new jobs were filled by youth 15-24 years old and 17% were filled by people 25-44 years old.
- The Alberta government is developing a comprehensive approach to help integrate skilled immigrants into Alberta's labour force. The goal is to help recognize foreign credentials and build the skills and qualifications of Albertans

who have been trained overseas. However, most immigrants to Alberta intend to work in the Natural & Applied Sciences occupations, with only 8.3% intending to work in Health, and only 2.6% intending to work in Social Sciences (areas which have been identified as having acute skill shortages).

LABOUR MARKET SPECIFICS FOR THE NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTOR

What are the general characteristics of not-for-profit employers and how do they compare to for-profit employers?

- The not-for-profit sector is human resource intensive; it accounts for a significant share of employment in Canada, providing jobs for almost 900,000 individuals. It is this sector that is at most risk to the skill shortages that are already prevalent and that are expected to accelerate over the coming decade.
- Contrary to popular belief, the not-for-profit sector relies on a highly educated workforce: In 1999, 58% of employees had completed a post-secondary certificate, diploma or university degree, compared to 44% of the for-profit sector. Three-quarters of the employees are women (many of whom have post-secondary credentials), and, compared to women in the for-profit sector, are more likely to work part-time.
- Younger workers are underrepresented in the not-for-profit sector. Organizations in this sector have the furthest to go in recruiting a new generation of employees to replace those now in their 40s and 50s. The ability of the sector to attract immigrants also warrants consideration as the not-for-profit sector tends to fall slightly below the for-profit sector in this area.
- Despite some fundamental differences in the nature of not-for-profit and for-profit organizations, differences in the business strategies they use are not strikingly large. The three top business strategies being used by not-for-profit employers are: increasing employee skills, improving product/service quality, and increasing employee involvement/participation.
- The biggest competitors to the not-for-profit sector are quasi-public organizations such as schools, universities/colleges and hospitals (also known as “quasi-non-governmental organizations” or “quangos”).

How are employees in the not-for-profit sector compensated?

- Overall, median earnings of not-for-profit employees are about \$2.00 to \$4.00 lower than for their counterparts in the for-profit sector. Earnings are highest for employees in the quangos, which are also the biggest competitors with the not-for-profit sector for labour.
- Employees in the not-for-profit sector are more likely to report being dissatisfied with their pay and benefits; dissatisfaction is even higher among professional occupations (32%) and full-time employees (34.4%).

- Unpaid overtime is prevalent in the not-for-profit although not unique to the sector; 85% of overtime hours are unpaid. As well, one in twenty hours worked by paid employees in the sector is donated labour.
- Only 9% of not-for-profit organizations have a merit pay system in place, compared to 17% of for-profit enterprises; figures for incentive pay are 17% and 31% respectively. Variable pay plans (pay systems linked to individual performance) are used in 40% of for-profit organizations surveyed, compared to 23% of organizations in the not-for-profit or quango sectors.
- Two key factors affecting compensation in not-for-profits are the size of the agency's budget and the size of the community in which the organization is located. Agencies with larger budgets tend to be located in medium-sized and larger municipalities. Smaller organizations are also much less likely to offer benefits of training, and have fewer opportunities for advancement though research suggest that both small and large establishments in the not-for-profit sector are more likely than their for-profit counterparts to provide staff training.
- A minority of not-for-profit employers offer benefits; larger places are more likely to offer benefits, but the vast majority of not-for-profit workplaces are small (fewer than 10 paid employees). The quango sector ranks far ahead of the not-for-profit and for-profit sectors with respect to the percentage of employees who have access to employee benefits, e.g., more quango employers offer employee assistance programs, 33% of quango employees report that their employer provides fitness and recreation services, and 20% report access to employer assistance with childcare.

What types of work arrangements are common in the not-for-profit sector?

- Temporary employment is prevalent in not-for-profit, health, education and social services.
- Higher proportions of both men and women in the not-for-profit sector have more flexible work arrangements than workers in the for-profit sector. Close to half the employees in the not-for-profit sector are able to work flexible hours. Individuals' needs for flexibility vary throughout their working lives; this raises the question of whether some individuals seek work in not-for-profit especially in the years where they have the heaviest family responsibilities.
- A quarter (25%) of not-for-profit employees worked on a part-time basis in 1999 (less than 30 hours a week), compared to about 20% of employees in the quango sector, and close to double the rate of part-time employment in the for-profit sector. Most part-timers are satisfied with the number of hours they get, but a considerable share feel underemployed (i.e., they work fewer hours than they would prefer).
- The direct support workforce in the rehabilitation field is relatively younger than in other not-for-profits; rehabilitation agencies have minimal representation from workers who are older than 55 years. As well, unlike other not-for-profits where the majority of employees tend to be highly educated, the recent trend in

rehabilitation services is toward an increase in the number of direct service staff who have fewer skills and qualifications.

FACTORS IMPACTING WORKFORCE MOTIVATION AND RETENTION

The Performance Pyramid Model

- In the Performance Pyramid Model, there are five levels of workforce need (comparable to Maslow's hierarchy of needs) each of which must be met as a precursor to the next:
 - (i) Safety/Security
 - (ii) Rewards
 - (iii) Affiliation
 - (iv) Growth
 - (v) Work/Life Harmony
- Thus, according to the Performance Pyramid Model, compensation and benefits are the fundamental foundation that must be in place before higher needs become commitment drivers. Organizations must make the effort to at least meet employee expectations at each level in the hierarchy. As a benchmark, it is useful to consider that one in four employees have large deficits on five or more job characteristics; these people are employed in low quality jobs, and it shows in the low job satisfaction reported by these workers.
- A closer look inside many workplaces reveals deeply rooted barriers to skill use and learning; these range from narrow job designs that limit workers' use of their knowledge, command-and-control management systems that do not involve workers in decision-making or in the change process, and organizational cultures that do not truly value learning.
- It is the interaction between superiors and subordinates that creates an environment that motivates and retains employees. The individual supervisor has a great deal of influence over how elements at every level of the Performance Pyramid are experienced by the workgroup. 'Developmental leadership' refers to the daily actions of managers that either build or weaken workforce commitment.

Why do people leave jobs?

- Perceptions of opportunities for advancement and growth are among top drivers of retention; however, less than half of managers and employees feel their bosses provide them with adequate counselling regarding their career development.
- The top reason employees resign is because they don't get along with their boss. A key retention strategy is to remove marginal managers; replace them with managers who can craft a compelling game plan and communicate and execute it effectively.

- More than half the employees in a recent survey felt that their companies routinely tolerated poor performance; this may explain why people walk out the door. Employees who make strong contributions are typically resentful when others are not required to carry their weight.
- The biggest gaps in job quality are career advancement, choice over schedules, benefits and pay, employer commitment, job security, work-life balance, job autonomy and training. Growing numbers of workers feel stretched to the limit, stressed out and struggling to balance work and family responsibilities—all of which detracts from their job performance. Chances are, if one worker experiences a big gap in job quality, so do that person's co-workers.

What factors will motivate the workforce of the future?

- The future workforce is going to consist of a diverse group of people, each with its own set of core values and motivators:
 - large numbers of baby-boomers who were born roughly between 1946 and 1966 and are currently 38 to 58 years old
 - members of Generation X who were born between 1967 and 1976, and are about 28 to 37 years old
 - members of Generation Y who were born between 1977 and 1994, constituting those who are currently about 27 years old and younger
 - as well, the future workforce is likely to have a far more culturally and ethnically diverse population than ever before witnessed in the Canada
- Most current workplaces have systems and structures that are a result of the values and expectations of baby-boomers and the generation preceding them; as well, most Canadian workplaces are based on the relatively homogeneous values of a Euro-centric culture. To successfully incorporate the younger generations and diverse ethnic cultures, employers will need to understand the different set of motivators and values that younger generations hold, as well as become culturally competent.
- Core values held by today's youth are education, finances, lifestyle and security. Young employees value friendly and helpful co-workers, good pay, and training that enables them to do their job effectively. Employers face greater challenges gaining the commitment of younger employees than they do with older generations. Young employees value chances for career advancement and good job security. Unlike older workers, when these expectations are not met, young workers are not likely to stay.

Generation X

- GenXers are equipped with the knowledge that there are no guarantees and they don't expect to stay with any organization forever. They believe that security comes from transferability of skills rather than corporate loyalty and as such one of their top goals is to build a portfolio of marketable skills. They are loyal to

projects, teams and bosses rather than organizations and if they don't get what they need, they are prepared to move on.

- GenXers value flexible work arrangements, continuous skill development and a balance between work and personal life. They are independent, deal with change remarkably well and are very creative. GenXers are not adverse to hard work; however, they place a premium on personal time and value a life-friendly work culture.
- GenXers view command-and-authority based cultures with disdain as they want to be valued immediately for the skills they bring to the workplace, and to be active participants in decision-making. They can't be micro-managed, rather they expect freedom combined with frequent, honest feedback. They also expect to have choices at work. They are attracted to organizations that offer a broad range of possible career moves rather than a career ladder with logical steps.
- It has been predicted that Gen X employees - having experienced the world before and during the technological revolution – will play an increasingly significant role as a link between the baby boomers and the young people just entering the world of work (Generation Y)

Generation Y

- Generation Y is a very techno-savvy generation, with a more global perspective and an expanded definition of diversity than previous generations. GenY enters the work-force brimming with self-confidence and a sense of entitlement; they may have unrealistic expectations about how much they can take on. GenY is easily bored with mundane tasks and they prefer to change activities often. They are also very interested in being part of a team.
- GenY is developing a reputation for idealism and social consciousness; they build on that idealism by stressing the opportunity to really make a difference.

Knowledge workers

- Knowledge workers is the term used to describe those employees who use knowledge to add value to the business process; they are the creators, manipulators and purveyors of the stream of information that makes up the post-industrial, post-service global economy.
- Knowledge workers are what set the leading organizations apart from the rest. They are the critical elements that facilitate double loop learning, un-learning and re-learning that enable an organization to understand, respond to and excel under rapidly changing conditions.
- Knowledge workers hold university degrees, value continuous learning (formal and informal) and are motivated by challenging work.
- Traditional employment contracts may no longer be effective in retaining knowledge workers; loyalty tends to be guided toward the occupation as opposed to the organization.

- Knowledge workers need to have an overall understanding of the business of their organization and how their work fits within it. Such understanding is necessary for their active involvement in the organizational learning processes.
- Favoured retention strategies for knowledge workers focus on practices which include: the freedom to act independently, financial rewards based on recognition of achievements and fostering growth, purpose and excitement through challenging work, Other practices include a willingness to share gains, effective communications, respecting the dignity of the individual, providing enabling resources (such as new technology) and enabling employees to acquire skills to increase their employability in both internal and external labour markets.

How will changing demographics impact employers?

- There is an increasing number of baby boomers entering retirement. The public sector will feel the demographic crunch first, as it has a relatively high proportion of university-educated workers; the not-for-profit sector is in a similar position.
- In the past, healthcare and not-for-profit services have run on the backs of dedicated people willing to work extra hours and put client needs above their own. As GenX and GenY move into the workforce, they will pose real challenges; current patterns will have to change. To recruit skilled, high potential GenX and GenY workers, employers will need to highlight paid training, skill development, career growth and mentoring opportunities.
- Half-day Fridays/four-day holiday weekends, social activities, health club memberships, car or clothing allowances, vacation bonuses, overtime meal allowance and assistance with student loan re-payment, continuous training, merit-based promotions as well as stock options and profit sharing are all recommended strategies for the recruitment of younger workers.
- Offer choices. While different, Gen X and Gen Y have some similarities; both will demand a more innovative workplace, with flexible hours, state-of-the-art resources, cooperative scheduling, and supervisors who listen. These workers expect many choices, along with the freedom to pursue them.
- Both Gen X and Gen Y want to build a portfolio of skills and are committed to career development. Offer training opportunities; ask them what matters to them, and really listen to their answers; emphasize career growth, paid training and skill development.
- Gen X and Gen Y demand a relationship-intensive environment with a lot of one-on-one communication and timely feedback on their performance. Gen X and Gen Y also expect that everyone in the office will make adaptations for the good of the team.
- Irrespective of generational differences, people in the workforce today value involvement in decision-making, flexibility, an employer who respects the need

for balancing family life and work, access to technology, safe workplaces and the opportunity for continuous development and learning.

- Some specific recruitment and retention strategies that have been recommended by the Alberta government include:
 - Improved work benefits and rewards (e.g., improved medical and retirement plans; stock purchase plans or profit sharing schemes; signing, performance or referral bonuses; paid professional fees/membership).
 - Offering to find employment for spouses of potential recruits, especially in rural areas.
 - Improved workplace features (e.g., a challenging work environment, high-speed internet access, on-site daycare, access to fitness facilities and employment security).
 - Flexible work arrangements, such as working from home and options to balance family and work commitments.
 - Commitment to professional development of employees (e.g., apprenticeships, mentoring programs and on-the-job training).

CHARACTERISTICS AND PRACTICES OF EXEMPLARY WORKPLACES

What are the basic characteristics of employers of choice?

- Employers of choice (EOCs) must provide the basic requirements for employees to succeed in their positions, i.e., training, proper equipment, job-related information, job authority, internal teamwork and cooperation and safe and healthy working conditions.
- In general, Canadians rank personal and social aspects of work ahead of economic aspects (i.e., pay, benefits and security). However, EOCs provide fair and equitable compensation and competitive benefits (e.g., day-care facilities, elder-care resources, flexible work schedules, fitness centers, product discounts, above-market standard vacation days, home loan assistance, regular social events and the opportunity to work from home).
- EOCs are often flatter organizations with just three or four levels thus reducing status differences that may act as barriers diminishing some people's contributions.
- High-performance workplaces foster a "robust" relationship between the use of flexible work organization practices (such as teams, multi-skilling, reduced hierarchy, downward delegation of responsibility) and increased training.
- The EOC's understanding of the employee extends beyond knowledge of simple demographics to more complex information, such as family composition and life style, personal values, and broad career goals.

Employers of choice employ managers of choice

- An organization cannot become an EOC unless it has managers of choice (MOCs). Although a manager's education and technical skills play a role, what makes an exemplary manager is people management skills (i.e., the ability to motivate employees to give discretionary effort such as spending extra time with a customer or making additional phone calls).
- Exemplary managers consistently excel in five fundamental competencies: talent scouting, relationship building, trust building, skill building and organization brand building.
- MOCs collaborate with employees on relevant decisions and show appreciation for reports' efforts (never taking credit for the accomplishment), support their professional development and concern for their personal lives. They also avoid favoritism in hiring and promotion. Managers must "walk the talk".

Employers of choice from an employee's perspective

- Four dimensions of employment relationships define a good job: trust, commitment, communication and influence.
- People seek jobs based on characteristics including: recruiting and retention procedures, interesting work that provides a sense of accomplishment, good co-worker communications, consideration of the work/family balance, and value for diversity.
- Employees are more committed to workplaces that:
 - engage in actualizing practices (i.e., practices that aim to ensure that employees use their skills and gifts at work)
 - provide competitive benefits
 - reward and recognize performance
 - conduct employee surveys
 - encourage self-directed teams
 - have effective systems for information sharing throughout the organization
 - support ongoing learning and skill development
 - emphasize a flexible use of skills
 - involve employees in decision making and
 - promote a healthy and family-friendly work environment
- EOCs maximize the use of existing talent. Surveys find that 25% of workers report their education, skills and experience are not used in their job. EOCs update their skills and management inventories regularly; failure to do so can lead to present employees being overlooked for job openings, and in turn, looking elsewhere for jobs.

Employers of choice as learning organizations

- There is a quantum leap from traditional on-the-job training and classroom education to workplaces organized around the principles of continuous learning, knowledge and innovation.
- Learning organizations focus on creating systems that enable and reward double-loop learning. Four sets of workplace factors are crucial to active learning: human resource management practices; work organization and job design; workplace culture and leadership; and overall business strategy.
- Individuals with high-level technical skills often lack management skills, which are more likely acquired through experience; this underscores the importance of workplaces as sites for on-going learning.
- There needs to be a marked departure from the short-term focus most current workplace training programs provide. Emphasis needs to be placed on more open and flexible systems that provide opportunities to obtain education throughout one's adult life; it means a variety of formal and informal learning activities to build on foundations.
- Adequate and timely information sharing by managers is crucial in learning organizations. Knowledge workers are a key component to translating information into a business advantage.

Employers of choice in the not-for-profit sector

- The three top strategies being used by not-for-profit employers to become EOCs are: increasing employee skills, improving product/service quality, and increasing employee involvement/participation.
- Innovative compensation packages (often recommended to become EOCs) pose a problem for not-for-profits because of financial uncertainty and an organizational culture that questions the use of bonuses for employees.
- For job seekers assessing whether not-for-profit organizations are EOCs, earnings are likely to be a serious drawback, as limited revenues and financial uncertainty may place a low ceiling on the wage and benefit packages not-for-profit organizations are able to offer, workers may also find themselves shouldering heavier workloads and working longer hours.

CHALLENGES AND SPECIFIC SOLUTIONS FOR THE REHABILITATION SECTOR

- Job satisfaction and empowerment are particularly important in the delivery of human services. Rehabilitation workers may not be able to nurture a sense of empowerment in the clients they serve if these workers are trying to practice rehabilitation in a disempowering, unsatisfying, authoritarian work environment.

- Like other human services, the rehabilitation sector is already facing a skill shortage which is expected to become even more acute over the next decade. It is critical to examine ways of attracting hitherto underutilized labour sources.

Underutilized labour sources

- Rehabilitation services lag behind for-profit businesses in their ability to attract immigrant workers, yet, immigrants are among the fastest growing groups in the Albertan labour pool.
- The rehabilitation sector is not attracting nearly enough male workers, yet, the proportion of males requiring rehabilitation services surpasses females, and the number is expected to increase even further over the next few years. Inadequate compensation is one of the key reasons why men are not entering the field.
- Older workers can become part of the solution to the skill shortage problem through emphasizing the advantages and potential economic impact of their extended labour force participation. Agencies often have minimal representation from those who are 56 and older. Agencies that have consumers who are of retirement age might benefit from the life experience and community connections of these staff persons. Positions that are part-time, and offer flexibility and social connection might appeal to this population.
- Welfare-to-work and school-to-work programs are among the potential areas in which governments can work with service providers to address labour shortages in direct service work, while responding to people's need for meaningful careers.

What are the reasons why rehabilitation workers choose to stay or leave?

- Service providers identify direct support staff who are part-time, casual/relief, and/or under 30 years of age as most likely to leave.
- Two main factors have been consistently identified as influencing staff satisfaction in the rehabilitation sector: the personal attributes of the staff and the characteristics of the organization in which they work. Personal attributes of staff include dimensions such as age, gender, educational level and tenure. Organizational factors which have been found to influence job satisfaction include dimensions such as employment policies, compensation, autonomy, skill utilization, advancement, co-worker and supervisor support, recognition, and involvement in decision making.
- Major reasons why staff choose to work in the rehabilitation field, and particularly in residential services, are: personal satisfaction, an interest in intellectual disability and the desire to work directly with people rather than in an office.
- Direct support staff indicate that the single most enjoyable and satisfying aspect of their work is interaction with clients. Staff also report that they enjoy the opportunity to work with families; assist colleagues in developing new skills; participate in a team approach to service delivery, and directly advocate for the rights of people with disabilities in "real life" community settings.

- Reasons staff stay in rehabilitation include hours of work and vested interest and time. Staff that are least likely to leave their job are those in full-time positions, management and supervisory positions and longer service employees.

What strategies have been successful for recruiting and retaining rehabilitation workers?

- Successful retention strategies used by rehabilitation agencies include: using realistic job previews, creating effective teams, providing opportunities for workers to network and socialize, training supervisors to effectively guide and support the work of their employees, and providing competency-based training programs for direct service workers, and peer mentoring programs.
- The majority of rehabilitation workers are women. It is important to establish and promote human resource practices that foster the job satisfaction of women. Many women may be mothers, balancing career and family. Family-friendly practices are essential. Policies can be established such that sick time can be used for children's in addition to personal illnesses. Sufficient coverage should be available so that parents can schedule time-off to attend children's special events. Employees with responsibility for aging parents have a similar need.
- Four factors have been identified as making a difference in recruitment and retention outcomes for community residential settings: the length of time a home has been in operation, characteristics of the individuals receiving services, the amount of experience a supervisor has at a home, and compensation. During the first few years of operation, strategies that reduce turnover should be identified and implemented (e.g., recruit individuals with the greatest potential for stability, space the development of new services when labour market factors are favourable, use long-term employees as mentors to new staff, and increase the number of positions that have paid leave time and benefits).
- Because a significant portion of turnover occurs among workers with less than 12 months tenure, interventions to reduce turnover need to focus on new hires.
- According to the Performance Pyramid Model, safety, security and reward needs must be met before higher needs can be satisfied. Compensation practices and strategies must be examined and made effective in order for other recruitment and retention practices to have an impact.

What are the training needs of rehabilitation workers?

- A recent study of training needs in the rehabilitation field has identified a number of practical strategies for enabling and motivating workers to engage in continuous learning and skill development. Specific training needs that have been identified by direct service workers include stress management, communications, team-building, working with diverse stakeholders, problem solving, management and leadership training, advocacy skills, evaluation techniques, etc.

- To be effective, training needs to be individualized and offered over longer periods of time. Preferred training methods (in rank order) include: onsite workshops, job shadowing, conference attendance, paid mentorship with a senior practitioner, college/university classes, job swap opportunities, texts and binder modules, unpaid practicum and on-line learning.
- With a few exceptions, for the most part, training and certification processes vary across organizations. Employees want the training they receive to count toward certification or advancement in the field. The rehabilitation sector needs to examine standardized, portable training and certification for all direct support workers, and to adjust compensation scales for those who obtain additional credentials over time. Organizations should also explore implementing incentive programs such as reimbursing tuition fees, assisting with educational loans, allowing “sabbatical” leaves, etc.
- Future staff training needs will need to include areas that are pertinent to the aging population of consumers, e.g., Alzheimer’s disease, cardiac conditions, mobility deficits, vision and hearing impairments, multiple pharmacological needs and other age-related conditions.
- It is also expected that more young people who have survived pre-mature births, ventilator dependency, and multiple medical conditions will be entering the community care system and will require lifetime care.
- Organizations are also encouraged to provide more information on mental health aspects of behavioural concerns as the need for services to people with dual diagnosis increase.

Managers of choice in the rehabilitation field

- Management and leadership training often take second place to the training needs of frontline workers. However, skilled leaders are a critical determinant of successful organizational cultures and the ability of workplaces to have progressive systems and practices. This is particularly so if organizations are to effectively manage and succeed under rapidly changing conditions.
- As noted before, employers of choice need to have managers of choice. Such leaders value ongoing learning, excel at people and knowledge management and are successful at anticipating and taking advantage of change.
- Successful organizations have leadership capacities at all levels. Within the rehabilitation field, critical positions include frontline supervisors, middle management positions (program managers, etc.), and senior executives. Training and ongoing learning are absolutely necessary for these positions since they set the standards and the culture for successful service delivery.
- Frontline supervisors are the first line of leaders in rehabilitation organizations. They need to be competent in the following areas to be effective in their jobs:
 - Enhancing staff relations

- Providing and modeling direct support
 - Facilitating and supporting consumer support networks
 - Planning and monitoring programs
 - Managing personnel
 - Leading training and staff development activities
 - Promoting public relationships
 - Maintaining homes, vehicles and property
 - Protecting health and safety
 - Managing finances
 - Maintaining staff schedules and payroll
 - Coordinating vocational supports
 - Coordinating policies, procedures and rule compliance
 - Performing general office work
- People in middle and top management form the next line of leaders in the organization. Most people currently in these positions are likely to be from the baby-boomer generation, probably exploring career changes or career options that give them more free time for leisure pursuits or other responsibilities such as taking care of elderly parents. Succession planning for these positions is critical, but remains relatively unexplored in not-for-profits.
 - While 96% of corporate CEOs surveyed believe that succession planning is critical for the organization, only 20% feel their planning processes are effective. However, research suggests that organizations in which succession planning is well-implemented inevitably end up in the top 10 percentile of organizations across all industries. Board members and senior executives in the rehabilitation sector cannot afford to ignore these statistics.

How well do CET Standards capture an organization's human resource effectiveness?

- Rehabilitation agencies receiving funding from the Government of Alberta through the Persons with Developmental Disabilities Boards (PDD) are required to undergo the *Creating Excellence Together* (CET) certification process developed and administered by the Alberta Association of Rehabilitation Centres. The Organizational Framework Standards in CET are intended to capture how well the systems and structure of an organization facilitate and support the achievement of desired outcomes for the individuals it serves.
- CET standards that relate to human resource systems and practices are quite basic. The indicators measured are that:
 - human resources are in place to meet the needs of individuals, and strategic planning processes are implemented (Standard 37)
 - there are written policies and procedures which deal with various areas of employment (Standard 38)

- staff roles and responsibilities are clearly documented and understood and there is a review process for roles, responsibilities and employee performance (Standard 39)
- staff receive the training needed to perform their jobs and various training opportunities are offered (Standard 40), and
- the organization has practices that promote employees satisfaction (Standard 41).
- CET does not examine whether the organization offers career paths, how it promotes diversity or the value of lifelong learning in the workplace, whether there are processes for job flexibility and design, and whether its policies and practices are family-friendly. These are just some of the characteristics of employers of choice.
- In comparison to CET, both the Commission of Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and the Council on Accreditation (COA) appear to have more comprehensive human resource management standards. Given the standards currently on paper, COA accredited organizations would be expected to be better prepared for some of the workforce changes that are expected to occur. For example, they encourage the development of knowledge workers through their rigorous educational standards for high-level positions, promotion of culture of learning within organizations, and culturally-aware policies.

FINAL WORDS

As the rehabilitation sector faces the challenge of developing and maintaining a responsive and sustainable workforce to support persons with disabilities in Alberta, human resource issues in this sector can no longer be assumed to be the problem of individual agencies. Government leadership, stakeholder partnerships and inter-agency collaboration are needed for a comprehensive and effective human resource plan for rehabilitation services. The WORKFORCE 2010 initiative is a prime example of the kinds of collaborative undertakings that will be required to prepare for the workplace of the future.

Facts for a Solid Foundation has presented some of the key information that organizations will need to be competitive and responsive in an ever-demanding labour market.

In today's information age, knowledge management skills and intellectual capital are an organization's most valuable assets. We expect industry leaders to use the information provided here as simply a stepping stone in their journey to do their own research and continually assess their own learning. Knowledge managers know that it is increasingly important to "do the right thing" instead of just "doing things right;" they also know that "best practices" of yesterday or today may not necessarily be the "best practices" of tomorrow. Double-loop learning, unlearning and relearning are strategies that leading organizations are embracing. Rehabilitation organizations cannot afford to be exceptions to this trend.

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