



Year In Review

August 2021

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Have your seat at the (digital) table. Register for our roundtable discussions.



Work Matters is a 3 step project developed to help local businesses bridge **the skilled labour gap**

We're looking for HR staff, managers, CEOs, and business owners in the **Health Care, Manufacturing and Transportation** industries

Adapted to work **remotely and safely** in this unprecedented time



1



Roundtable Discussions

Small group discussions to delve deeper into your HR capacity to meet today's **workforce challenges**

Let's work together to prioritize HR and recruitment issues, then find the **best practices** and solutions

2



Future of Work Summits

Two summits that build and deliver the knowledge and practices you need to **modernize and grow**

Learn from other businesses, as well as professional consultants and community partners

Learn to find **the right fit** instead of being stuck in a cycle of quick fixes

3



Industry Showcases

One day digital event to **show off your business** and industry to job seekers and students

Connect with community partners and **job seekers**, collect resumes and hold on the spot interviews

Reach out to the next generation to **stir up interest** in your industry



Delivered by:



Funded by:



Introduction

Work Matters is an *Employment Ontario* funded Ontario Labour Market Partnership (OLMP) project that was designed to implement a two-part approach to working with three important growing sectors, each experiencing skills shortages that were impacting sustainability and growth: Manufacturing, Transportation and Health Care in Lanark and Renfrew Counties.

Our intent was to use a form of strategic labour force planning, that focused on sector-specific roundtables that would provide valuable grass roots opportunities to listen to what employers were experiencing and what they needed to succeed.

Our second objective was to focus on working with employers to develop solutions in their recruitment and HR deficiencies by modernizing ways to improve capacity and staff sustainability. This includes a holistic approach to improving their recruitment processes; upgrading staff onboarding; sourcing training options and implementing mentoring processes. Hiring practices need to adjust to meet current demands in the marketplace. We designed the Summit and Showcase formats to help in this aspect.

As we began this project, COVID-19 became the paramount focus of the province, employers,

community partners and the public. This had a significant impact on how we were to deliver the project, our approach, and timelines. We needed to pivot to virtual environments that drove the need for more roundtables, the necessary research, learning and modification of platforms to successfully deliver this project in a COVID-19 pandemic environment, creating a pre-survey to allow the roundtable format to work and the extra time and effort to engage employers amid COVID-19. In our discussions with community partners, it was clear we needed to create a brand for this project to gain traction resulting in time being spent to create the retail project name Work Matters and the creation of the www.work-matters.ca website along with social media accounts for Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. These activities were not anticipated during conception of the project but were required to get attention during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We believe this change in delivery allowed for a more fulsome and collaborative approach. Work Matters is having a positive impact in our communities that will be detailed further in this report.

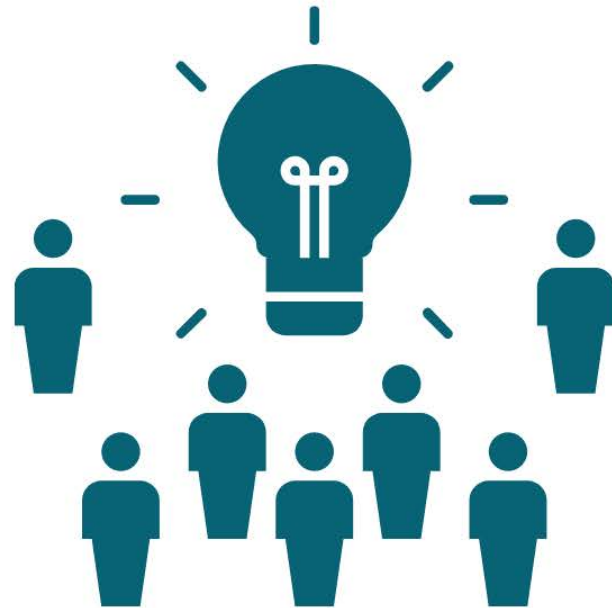


I Introduction - *Continued*

While data is important, this was not a data-driven project. Rather it is a successful attempt at bringing like-minded business people into direct conversations to find ways to improve and solve staffing, retention and workforce practices. This was a collaborative exercise.

Many of these business operators had never spoken directly before with others even in their own sector and in so doing found that they all had common cause. This is a unique experience as you will see from comments in this report that it was a positive and helpful effort.

As an added comment, we at Work Matters were pleasantly surprised at the number of businesses and organizations outside of our immediate Lanark and Renfrew district who reached out to us in various ways all wanting to participate.



Program Promotion

A variety of methods were used to promote the Work Matters project in Lanark and Renfrew Counties to engage employers and community partners.

- Designed Work Matters website for information, registration, and best practices toolkit.



- Social media channels were developed to promote all aspects of the Work Matters project including roundtables, summits and showcases.



- Local radio stations to promote summits and showcases with 30-second commercials.



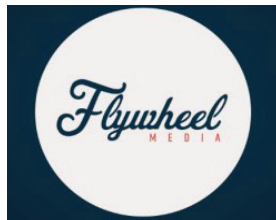
(Country 92.3)

- Project staff created an employer database to reach out to employers and community partners by email and cold calling inviting them to participate in the project.
- Developed and implemented a postcard recruiting campaign for employers to participate in roundtable discussions.
- Project staff reached out to training providers, school boards and post-secondary colleges to get engagement and participation for the Work Matters project. Created flyers to support communication to students.

- Reached out to existing *Employment Ontario* service providers and provincially funded OLMP and Skills Advance Ontario (SAO) projects to promote Work Matters project and get referrals and engagement.
- Sent out press releases to Lanark County and Renfrew County media outlets including newspaper, online news, radio and television. Inside [Ottawa Valley \(EMC newspaper\) & Pembroke Observer](#).
- Interviewed with myFM 107.7 regarding Work Matters project and they posted online a portion of the interview online. [Find the link here.](#)

Program Promotion

- Developed partnerships with various video production companies to help create and deliver Employer Spotlights and Day in the Life videos for Lanark and Renfrew Counties.



- Joined Economic Development Alliance to develop partnerships and promote project.

- Retained Swoop Media graphic recording artist to synthesize roundtable discussions and Spring 2021 Summit then used these recordings through social media channels and website.



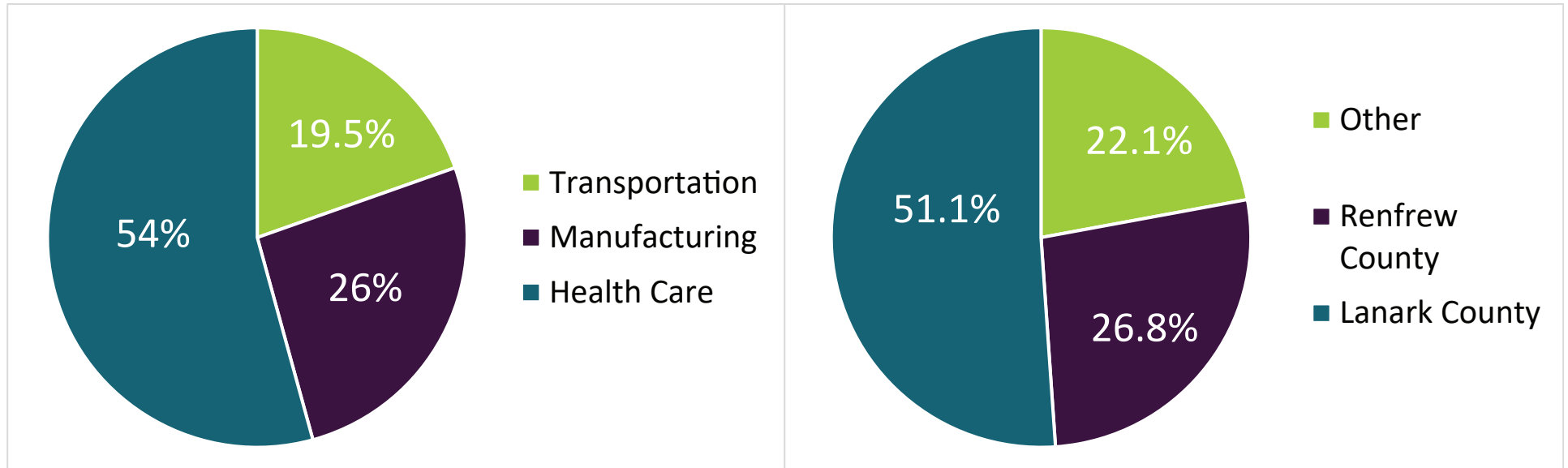
- Encouraged employers and community partners to follow our social media channels. Community partners shared our posts with their employers.
- Utilized Eventbrite to promote both Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 Summit and the Transportation Showcase in February 2021.

- Reached out to newcomer services in Toronto and Ottawa to inform them about the Showcases to entice secondary migration to areas.

- Utilized partnerships to try to engage The Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nations in the Work Matters project and encourage their voice at the table. We are still working on developing this relationship for their participation.



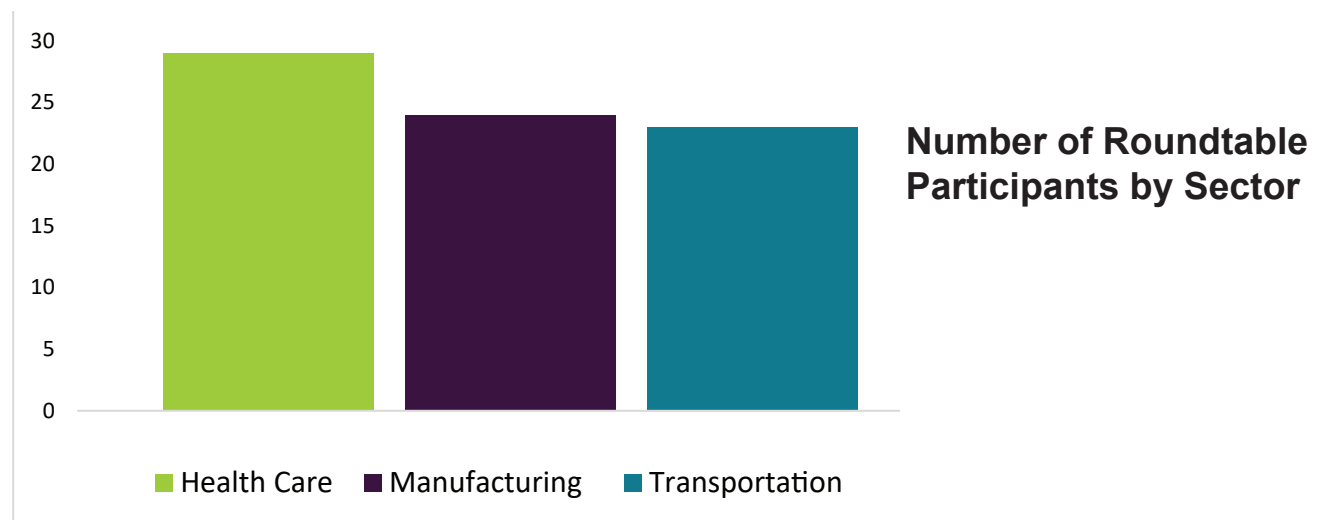
Roundtable Statistics



Roundtable Pre-Survey Participants by Sector

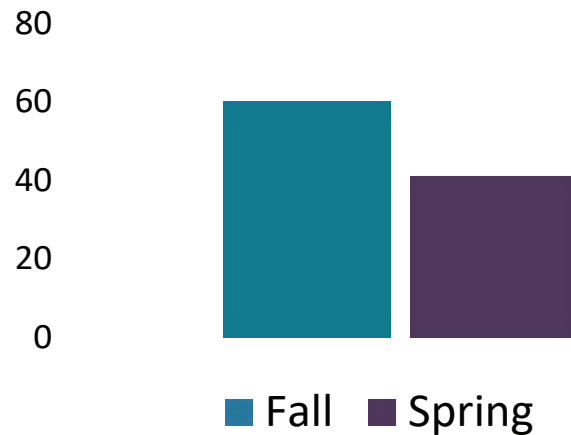
Number of Roundtable Participants by County

Pre-Survey was sent out to participants to gauge best practices and challenges prior to the roundtable discussions.

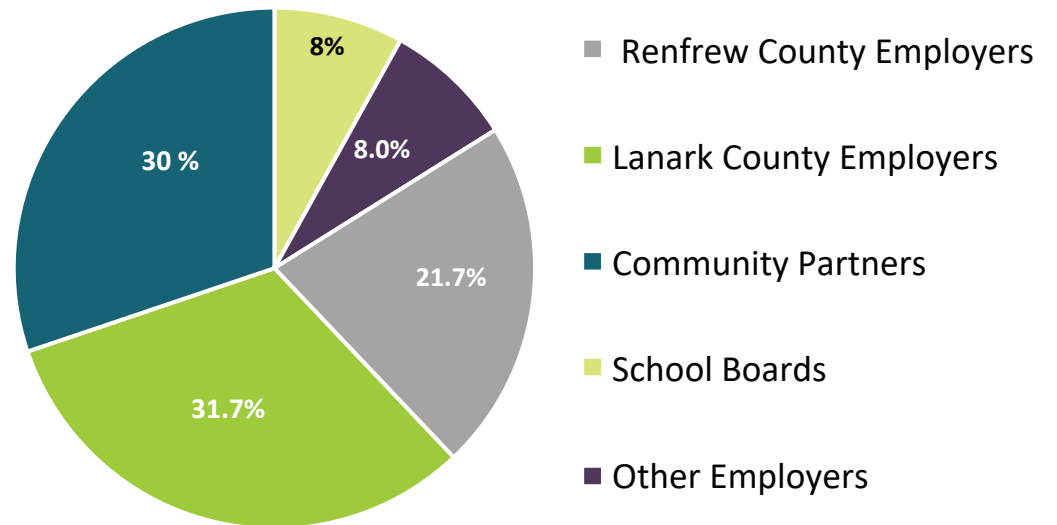


Summit Statistics

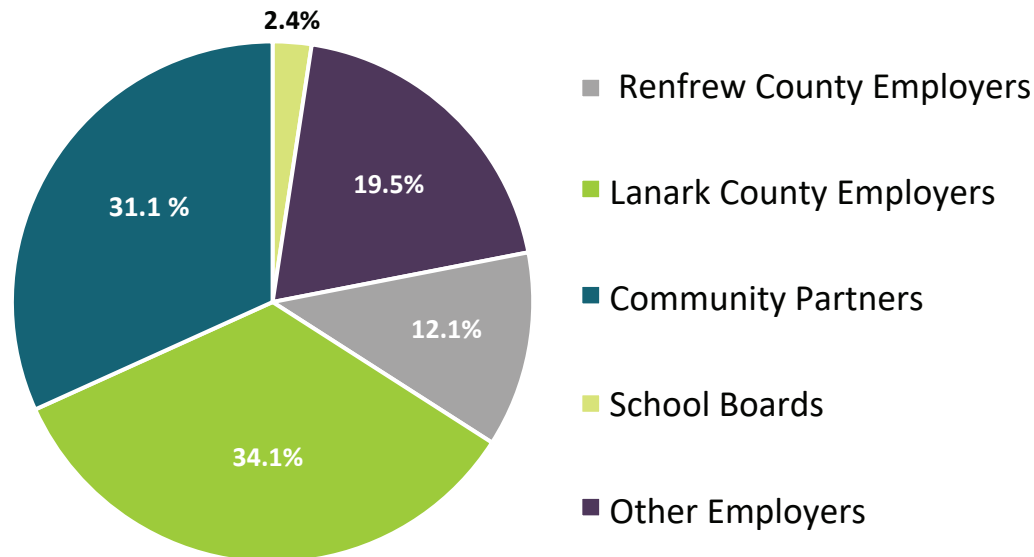
Participant by Season



Fall Summit Participant by Type



Spring Summit Participant by Type

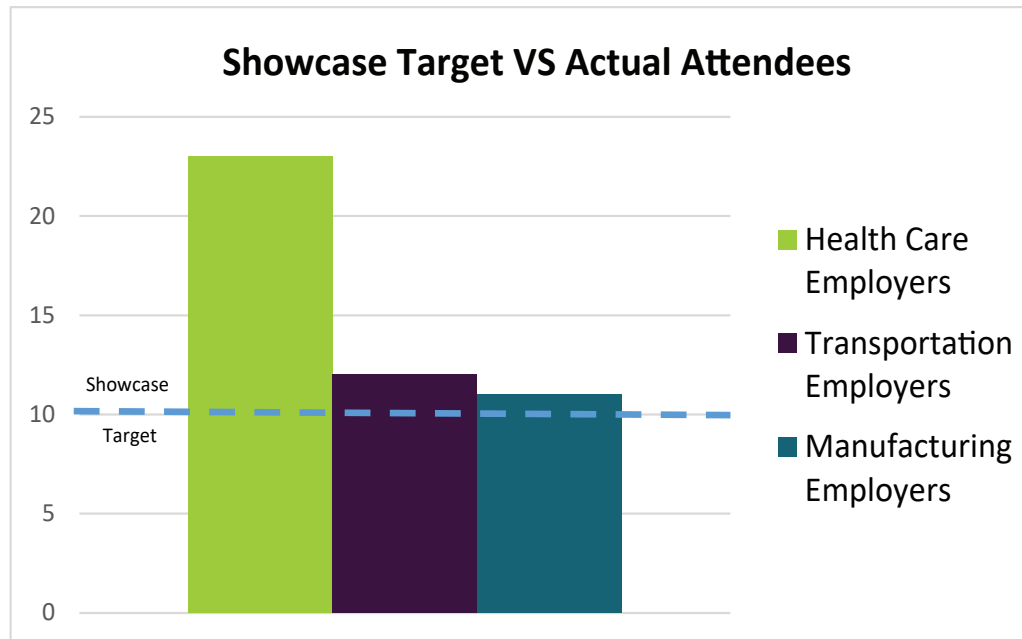


||| Showcase Statistics



Health Care Showcase

23 employers with over 70 jobs. However, we were unable to verify job seeker numbers, as tracking was not enabled. Lesson learned was to install a visitor statistics plugin that could track this. This was not available for health care showcase, but used for the Manufacturing and Transportation.



Manufacturing Showcase

11 employers, 23 jobs for multiple positions, 944 visitors with over 2000 page views. Showcase videos had 1940 views during the month of March 2021.



Transportation Showcase

12 employers, with 4 employers posting 16 active jobs, 1400 people accessed site with over 1250 page views. Showcase videos had 1475 views over a one-week period. Some employers were there for career education and others were looking for employees.

IV Workforce Development Challenges

Through the roundtable discussions the following workforce development challenges were identified per sector.

Roundtable Final Report

All industries have been significantly impacted by COVID-19 as this was the most common concern discussed during the roundtables. Concerns around mental health related to the pandemic were also a significant barrier for employers.



In conversations with employers and community partners it was identified that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) struggle with understanding the new generation of workers (millennials, Gen Zs) and that they don't have current leadership development programming to educate their supervisors, managers, and executives on how to attract these workers or retain them. Employers have a limited awareness of how to become an employer of choice. This is directly related to leadership development and branding strategies training programs that would help to recruit this growing labour market pool of candidates.

It was identified that our rural areas are struggling with out-migration of youth and limited secondary migration of the working age population including newcomers. We will need to do ongoing work with our community partners to develop strategies to encourage secondary migration into our rural areas and encourage local youth to stay in their communities.

Health Care

- Unsustainable funding formula for long-term care homes and absence of funding for retirement homes and community care.
- Lack of expedited personal support worker (PSW) programming, and current programs are not preparing students adequately for the industry.
- Roadblocks – collective agreements not adapting to the needs of today's workers needs i.e. flexibility.
- COVID-19 impacting availability of workers due to one-site rule.
- Need to regulate PSWs to ensure standard across the industry.



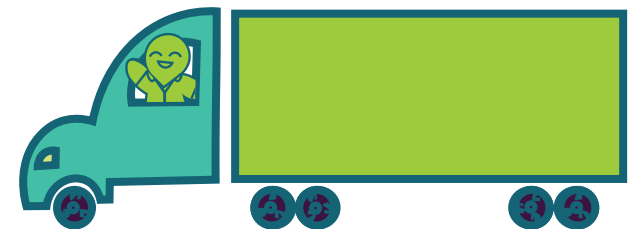
Manufacturing

- Lack of training options in rural areas – i.e. apprenticeship post-secondary training availability locally
- Trades in high schools – absence of trades-focused programming in high schools has been detrimental to the industry.
- Foreign students being trained in post-secondary schools are either going back to their home country or to cities and avoiding rural areas.



Transportation

- Insurance rules are restricting new hires at astronomical rates small and medium sized business cannot afford. Large employers can self-insure to get recent graduates, but this is not practical for SMEs..
- Trades in high schools – absence of trades-focused programming in high schools has been detrimental to the industry.
- Limited awareness about potential careers in transportation industry resulting in lack of applicants. Need public awareness campaigns to fill local area needs.



V Community Partners

Many partnerships were developed and sustained throughout the first year of the Work Matters project. All partners have committed to developing local solutions to help address these challenges.

Employer-Focused Community Partners (non-Employment Ontario funded)



Employment Ontario Funded Partners

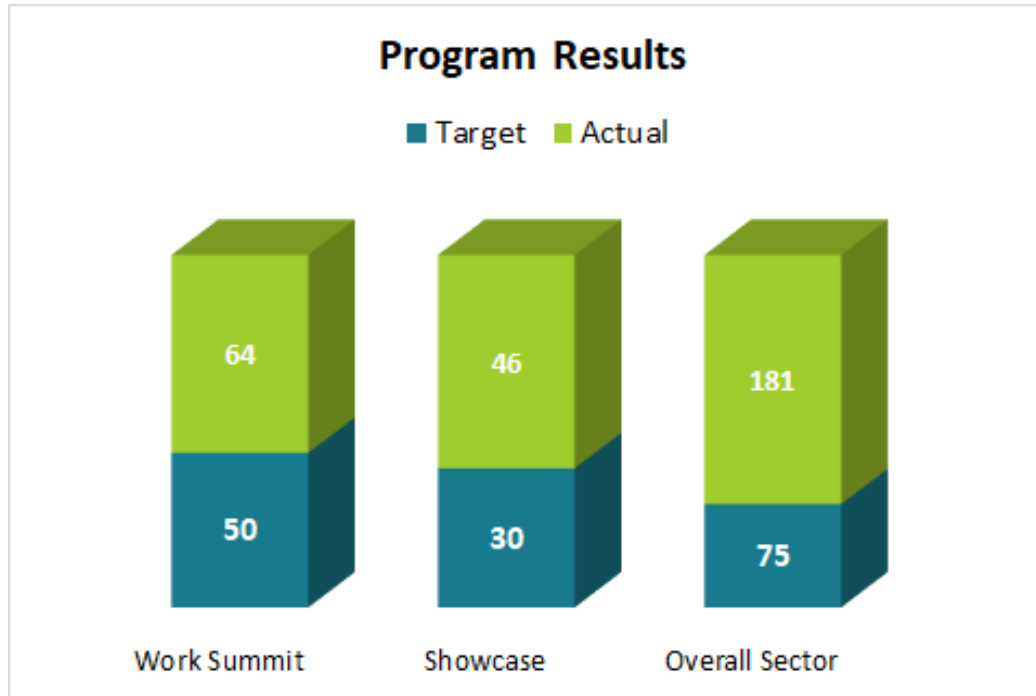


School Boards



VI Program Evaluation Results

The Roundtable Report, which was not a specified deliverable for this project. It was created to summarize the feedback from the roundtables. This resulted in project staff, employers and other stakeholders understanding, in real data, the improvements to recruitment and staff retention that are needed in each sector. [You can read the Roundtable Report here.](#)



Our goal was to have the following:
25 employers per sector participating overall
10 employers per showcase
50 employers attend the Future of Work Summits

We exceeded those targets as follows:

In total there were 64 Manufacturing employers, 36 Transportation employers and 81 Health Care employers that participated throughout the first year. The showcases exceeded the 10 employers per event. We successfully attracted 64 employers to our Future of Work Summits plus community partners that included *Employment Ontario* service providers, school boards, economic development, chambers of commerce etc. This speaks to the recognition by all sectors involved in the value of this collaborative project. The project consistently heard praise about the opportunity for these peer discussions and practical local solutions.

Project Benefits

- ❑ The Work Matters project has been a catalyst in breaking down silos, listening to employer voices and advancing grassroots workforce development solutions while fostering a real movement for collaboration amongst community partners especially economic development, municipalities, immigration strategists and employers.
- ❑ We have been able to introduce new technologies such as a virtual recruiting/career information platform and helped navigate employers through this process.
- ❑ We have been able to form a Healthcare Advisory Group for Lanark and Renfrew Counties that has been integral in the development of the Pathway2PSW project.
- ❑ We have brought leading experts in the fields of managing the generational gap in the workplace, becoming an employer of choice, creating welcoming communities, and integrating advanced technologies into the workplace.
- ❑ We have created a Best Practices HR Toolkit that will be continually updated as the project progresses.
- ❑ Community partners have communicated that the Work Matters project has been crucial to ongoing workforce development efforts, informing ongoing research, community coordination and program response design, providing valuable insights and local intelligence that will be critical in effective community development strategies.



VII Survey Results & Testimonials

Head Office:

Box 340, 146 Hwy # 15
Smiths Falls, ON K7A 4T2

June 4, 2021

Good afternoon Jayne and Shelley



I wanted to thank you for your work this past year on the Work Matters project. As discussed, in our rural community we do struggle to properly staff some positions in our company, and these types of initiatives help deal with some of the HR challenges of recruiting and retention.

The Transportation Roundtable in September of last year was a good forum to share our struggles, and best practices with our industry peers, as well as a great opportunity to pick up best practices from our industry colleagues. The participants represented a very good cross section of our regional transportation industry.

The "Future of Work Summit" in November of 2020 was a very informative, and worthwhile event.

Each of the speakers, David Coletto, Chela Breckon and Stephen Beamish brought a unique perspective on understanding the current work force and building a culture to both attract talent and increase retention. I benefited from being on the employer panel at the lunch hour breakout session. Again, I had the opportunity to share about the culture at our company and learn best practices from the colleagues at the table.

A big thank you for allowing us to be the Lanark County -Transportation employer Ambassador for the video series.

The video showcasing our company and culture and opportunities within our company was very professionally prepared. We are using this in our recruiting efforts.

The "Day in the life of" video, showcasing one of our transport drivers helps to show the benefits of living and working in our rural community. We know it is the best place to live and work, and these videos help us tell that story

Again, thanks for all you did to promote our community and company

Best regards

Terry Wills

President wills Transfer Limited

"Logistics Experience That Works"

www.willstransfer.com



"The Work Matters project continues to effectively engage with employers across a variety of sectors gathering valuable local intelligence that will be instrumental in developing a regional workforce development strategy that will be critical for a post-pandemic economic recovery."

Matt LeMay

(Inaugural) Filmmaker in Residence

Canadian Geographic & Community Development Consultant

www.lemaymedia.ca



"As the Regional Economic Development leader for Lanark County, it's important to us to partner with organizations that share our commitment to growing the economy, creating jobs, and addressing local workforce challenges. It is our experience that we will only achieve this through a partnership that is open and ambitious and projects that are action-based. For this reason, we have continued to participate in the Work-Matters project actively."

The Work-Matters project has influenced the H.R. practices of participating businesses, such as implementing new recruitment strategies to recognize better and evaluate the skills of all job seekers. Information collected through the roundtables directly impacts the development and updating of training programs Valley Heartland facilitates and has informed our workforce attraction marketing strategies."

Amber Coville, Business Development + Program Officer

Valley Heartland

Testimonials

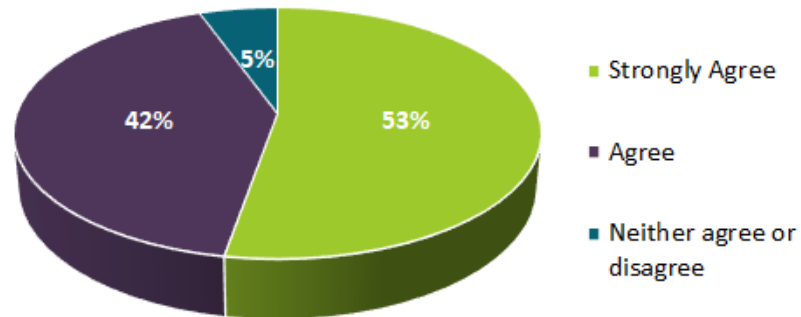
- *"This session was very engaging, and I have come away with many key points that will change our current practices."*
- *"Lots of great topics. The breakout rooms demonstrated somewhat the fact that people are working in silos and don't always know about programs and services that can benefit them."*
- *"The speakers did a great job! Thank you for generating these conversations and sharing insights which apply to our respective industries."*
- *"Loved the session about unconscious bias!"*
- *"It was all great, but I really enjoyed David's presentation on the generational gap in a workplace."*
- *"It was a great day!"*
- *"Keep up the great work! Well done!!!"*

"Just a quick note to say thank you for creating the summit for the area. I was impressed with the quality of presenters as well as their presentations. The information was useful in my business (Manufacturing Consultant) as well for my customers. Please thank all the presenters, moderators and all involved in making this Summit so rewarding. "

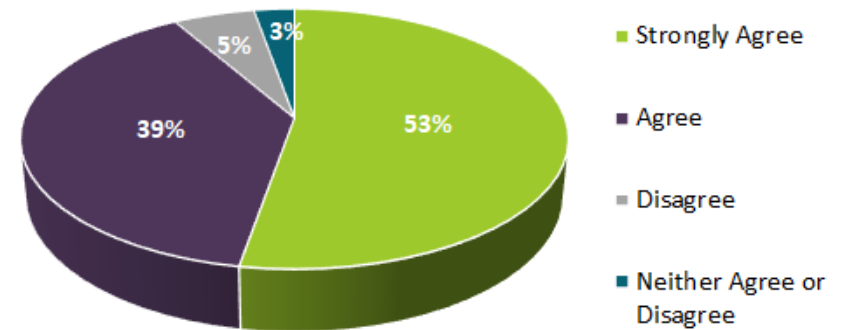
*Ken Lester, Manufacturing Consultant
Lester Consulting*

Fall Summit (Nov 26, 2020 Survey Results & Comments)

Overall I was satisfied with this event

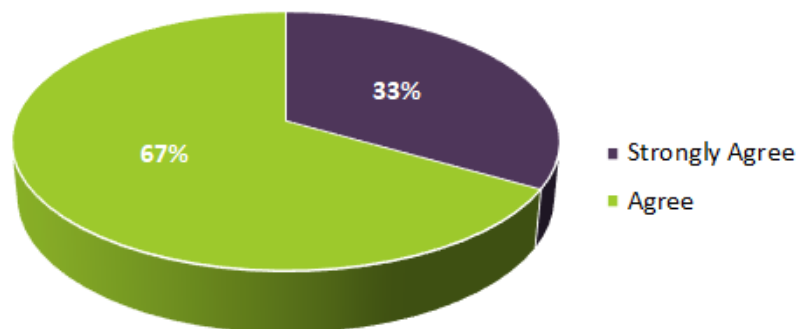


I thought the speaker presentations were informative, engaging and helpful

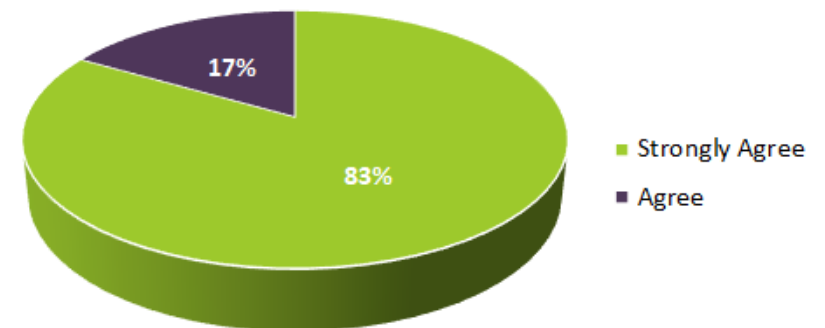


Spring Summit (May 13, 2021 Survey & Feedback)

Overall, I was satisfied with this event



I thought the speaker presentations were informative, engaging and helpful



VIII Lessons Learned

- ❑ COVID-19 had a significant impact on our employers and community partners requiring us to be flexible in our program delivery.
- ❑ Employers require significant support to integrate attraction and retention strategies and incorporate new technologies in their day-to-day operations.
- ❑ Employers are hiring unskilled workers for skilled positions because there are not enough trained workers in the labour market.
- ❑ Employers are open to changing the way they work to attract the new generation of workers, but they don't have the leadership skills or branding know-how to accomplish this.
- ❑ Employers would embrace diversity and inclusion to attract newcomers, indigenous, people with disabilities etc.; however, they need training and support specific to their organization to implement welcoming community strategies that are sustainable.
- ❑ It is extremely beneficial for our rural communities to build connections between employment services, economic development, workforce development and community partners in order to have all parties focused on the same goal and reduce duplication. This effort needs to continue and expand our network of partners.
- ❑ Deliverables in the project were very time intense within a 12-month project, which led to the May 2021 renewal focusing primarily on roundtables and a summit with added job seeker/incumbent worker participation in the roundtables. We believe this will give a more fulsome view of the workforce development challenges and the innovative rural solutions needed to combat these challenges.
- ❑ A lack of knowledge/understanding of local industries and job opportunities causing out-migration; young people leaving area to look for work in cities. Our regions need to develop communication, awareness and branding strategies that encourage secondary migration and youth staying within their communities.

IX Best Practices

The Work Matters staff, community partners and employers have identified best practices through research and anecdotal information to address attraction and retention challenges. Creating welcoming workplaces is key to tackling our rural workforce challenges by bringing them to the forefront. Check out our Summits and Toolkit.



<https://work-matters.ca/>

Summit Best Practices:

Our Fall and Spring Summit introduced four best practices that will help employers navigate the changing work force. These presentations planted the seeds to understand the benefits and importance in embracing technologies, diversity and inclusion in the workforce.

1. *Branding: Becoming an Employer of Choice.*
2. *Multi-generational workforce.*
3. *Hiring newcomers through Secondary Migration.*
4. *Advanced Technologies and how to integrate these technologies into their organizations.*

Please watch our YouTube video for more information.



X Successful Outcomes

The Work Matters project has successfully delivered in it's first year – eight employer roundtables, two summits and three showcases that were well attended by employers and gave great insight into possible solutions to our rural attraction and retention challenges.

As a result of the Work Matters project, four key workforce development strategies were identified as indicated in our Roundtable Report on [Page 20](#).

1. *Collaboration towards Workforce Development Strategy for Lanark and Renfrew Counties.*
2. *Inclusion Strategy for Lanark and Renfrew Counties*
3. *Leadership Development and Peer Support*
4. *Personal Support Worker (PSW) training that meets employer needs.*

These four strategies will be addressed through the proposals that the Canadian Career Academy or another community partner have submitted to various government funding agencies, which include:

Pathway2PSW

Pathway2PSW - has been funded by the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD) through their Skills Advance Ontario funding model starting January 2021. This project will recruit, train and place 180 PSWs and 15 Developmental Service Workers through the Canadian Career Academy.



Work Matters – has been extended to address two more sectors – Early Childhood Education and Skilled Trades while continuing to build collaboration with community partners and employers to develop more workforce development strategies.

PSW Express – the Canadian Career Academy has submitted a proposal to MLTSD to develop an immigration strategy that would allow newcomers to be trained and placed with employers in Lanark and Renfrew Counties and beyond. Still waiting for project approval.

Leadership Development and Branding – the Canadian Career Academy has submitted a proposal to MLTSD to build a training program to teach modern workforce leadership and branding skills to supervisors and managers through video-based learning. Still waiting for project approval.

Virtual Job Fair/Recruiting – Valley Heartland has submitted a proposal to be the lead agency helping employers to attract and recruit employees in our regions through virtual job fairs. Still waiting for project approval.

Virtual Reality PSW – a proposal has been submitted to MLTSD to create six virtual reality competency learnings with full 3D virtual reality to be used to help inform potential PSWs what the realities of working in this field are. Currently, there is no full 3D virtual reality for this segment but is needed to get the right people in these positions to serve our communities. Still waiting for project approval.

Retail, Food Service and Tourism Roundtables – Valley Heartland CFDC will be hosting three-sector roundtables in October 2021, an action identified in the 2019 Lanark County Business Retention and Expansion final report.



With Chéla and the Upper Ottawa Valley Chamber of Commerce - submitted a proposal to Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to receive funding to train employers on how to welcome newcomers and create inclusive and diverse workplaces for newcomers to succeed. They will walk alongside employers in this process. Work Matters and CCA have agreed to partner on this initiative. Currently, they are waiting on final approval from IRCC and have successfully made it to the final stage of approval. They should be hearing if they were successful by early September 2021.

XI Conclusion

It has been a very busy year for the Work Matters project. We are proud and humbled by the response of engaged employers and community partners that recognize the impact that we as a community can have on local workforce development challenges. As mentioned above, the Work Matters project has inspired eight project proposals to come forward.



The keys to moving forward will be to continue the conversation and come up with innovative, rural-focused solutions to the attraction and retention challenges that affect local businesses. We will need to:



Address how COVID-19 has impacted our communities and what recovery looks like for our sectors.

Engage job seekers and incumbent workers to participate in these conversations to ensure we are creating fulsome solutions that focus on post-pandemic recovery, economic growth and sustainability.



Complete the recruiting efforts to develop a working group that focuses on workforce development, generates innovative solutions, and looks at the future needs of our communities including rural-focused housing initiatives, transportation, training, sector changes, etc.

Implement any proposals that have been approved in a time sensitive and strategic way to have the most impact while continuing to build partnerships.

The Work Matters staff look forward to working with our employers, community partners, school boards and training partners over the next year. Thank you for all your voices and ideas. Through our partnership we can build the bridges that will promote Lanark and Renfrew Counties as a place to live, work and play!

