

Industry Human Resources Strategic Plan Status Update

October 2016

Background

In 2005, the BCTA Board of Directors struck a Human Resources Committee to provide direction for BCTA to help its members and the industry address a significant projected human resources shortage of professional truck drivers¹ and other key occupations in the industry. At the time, it was expected that across Canada, 37,300 new professional drivers would be needed annually, at least 4,500 of those in BC.² BCTA members identified finding qualified professional drivers as their greatest business challenge.

The shortage is fuelled by economic growth (i.e., increased demand) and an aging work force, as well as high turnover (i.e., low supply). It is exacerbated by several factors, including skills shortages in industries with a similar workforce, such as construction.

In February 2006, BCTA applied for and was granted funding under Service Canada's Labour Market Partnerships Program to establish the BC Trucking Human Resources Planning Committee under a one-year agreement with Service Canada, BCTA, and Teamsters Canada (Local 31) to develop a three-to-five-year strategic human resources plan for the industry (Phase I).

In August 2006, the Committee initiated three major research projects to obtain a thorough understanding of trucking HR challenges, namely: an environmental scan of truck driver training programs, standards and systems and best practices across Canada and selected U.S. states; a trucking industry career communications and marketing plan; and a review of commercial driver licensing testing and standards in B.C., including a comparison with other jurisdictions.

Among other things, the findings of these projects indicated that the trucking industry faces several challenges that inhibit its ability to attract human resources, as follows:

- Negative image
- Undesirable working conditions
- Lack of systematic industry career map
- Lack of coordinated, comprehensive strategy to attract and recruit new drivers
- Increasing driver attrition from turnover
- Increasing competition from other industries
- Lack of appropriate provincial occupational training and licensing standards

¹ While reference is made throughout this document to "truck" drivers, this term is being used generically to mean professional drivers generally, including those required to drive passenger buses.

² A Conference Board of Canada study "Understanding the Truck Driver Supply and Demand Gap and Its Implications for the Canadian Economy" released in 2013 confirmed these projections for 2020 and beyond. A copy of the study can be accessed at: <http://www.drivershortage.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Understanding-the-Truck-Driver-Supply-and-Demand-Gap.pdf>.

- Training costs are significant financial barrier for employers
- Fragmented, uncoordinated provincial truck driver training delivery system
- Changing provincial and federal regulatory requirements
- Lack of good labour market and human resources information

Drawing from the recommendations of the three reports, the Committee developed a Human Resources Strategic Plan to help the industry improve its image, promote clear career paths, attract and recruit new workers, retain new and existing workers, develop and implement an effective driver training model, and improve driver licensing standards.

Trucking Industry Human Resources Strategic Plan Areas of Focus

There are five areas of focus. Examples of activities to support each of the strategies are identified under each item as an “Action.”

Communications and Promotion³

1. **Educate the industry:** Raise awareness about human resources challenges, industrial sector competition for human resources, and the need to adapt in order to attract and retain workers.

Action: Worked with the national Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Driver Shortage to raise awareness about the driver shortage (www.drivershortage.ca), including commissioning the Conference Board of Canada to prepare a report entitled *Understanding the Truck Driver Supply and Demand Gap and Its Implications For the Canadian Economy* (March 2013).

Action: With the Canadian Trucking Alliance, developed an industry retirement savings program managed and offered by Standard Life, to help association members to better provide access to an important retention tool.

Action: Provide a comprehensive members-only group benefits program at competitive rates. Many smaller BCTA members would either be ineligible for or unable to participate at these rates unless part of a larger group.

Action: Supporting Trucking HR Canada’s “Describe & Deliver” campaign to boost the skill level rating for the truck drivers under the National Occupational Classification – where the job is currently defined as “unskilled.” BCTA is encouraging members to use the comprehensive National Occupational Standard, developed by Trucking HR Canada with industry input in 2015, as a base for job descriptions, as well as other supporting Describe & Deliver materials for creating job descriptions and ads.

2. **Educate potential recruits and influencers of recruits:** Raise awareness about the diverse and rewarding career opportunities in the trucking industry, as well as the importance of the industry to the economy.

³ There are additional promotional activities associated with individual strategies.

Action: Created a portable BCTA display booth for members to use at career fairs, to ensure a professional presence for companies that may not have their own promotional resources.

Action: Produced flyers for non-traditional labour pools, including women and youth, to promote truck driving careers at career fairs and industry events. Flyers featured quotes from workers in the industry about their jobs, career paths and opportunities.

Action: Worked with the national Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Driver Shortage to raise awareness about the driver shortage (www.drivershortage.ca), including career opportunities.

Attraction, Recruitment and Retention

3. **Target industry:** Identify and promote progressive, innovative workplace practices and specific attraction, recruitment and retention strategies among trucking companies and affiliated companies.

Action: Worked with the Asia Pacific Gateway Skills Table to promote and present HR Essentials Workshops in a number of BC communities to assist small and mid-size companies understand best practices for finding and retaining employees. Based on *Your Guide to Human Resources: Practical Tips and Tools for the Trucking Industry* from the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council.

Action: Promote HRwire.ca, a website created by the Asia Pacific Gateway Skills Table, to assist employers with their workforce needs, especially small to mid-size companies that may not have human resources staff or skills. These resources include:

- [Successful Interviewing](#): three-part video workshop to train staff who will be interviewing job candidates.
- [Developing Supervisory Skills: Toolkit](#): a video workshop, strategies & practical recommendations, and a copy of the *Supervisory Skills Development Resource Guide* to help identify and fill supervisory skills gaps within a company.

HRwire.ca includes a section devoted to the trucking industry. (HRWire.ca, including Successful Interviewing, was taken offline temporarily in August 2016. In the meantime, BCTA has made the *Supervisory Skills Development Resource Guide* available on bctrucking.com from a link on [our HR page for employers](#).)

Action: With financial support from the Immigrant Employment Council of BC, created [Trucking Employers' Guide: Successful Ways to Find and Keep your Workforce](#) in consultation with a group of motor carriers and their employees, outlining what's worked for them, with links to dozens of related resources and articles.

Action: With financial support from the Immigrant Employment Council of BC, developed and pilot tested an Immigrant Driver Readiness – Industry Validation and Engagement assessment tool to verify the skills and qualifications of professional drivers who have gained driving experience in their home countries. We extended a Phase 2 pilot to entry-level and skilled drivers with training and experience in Canada, to provide a benchmark for

validating the results of each IDRIVE component and are now working to finalize individual tools for use by industry employers.

Action: Partnered with CarriersEdge, Crestcom International, and the Humphrey Group to provide training opportunities so that trucking companies can develop and nurture talent.

Action: Redesigned bctrucking.com HR pages for Employers and Career Seekers to expand resources available and make them more accessible for website visitors.

4. **Target potential recruits:** Develop and promote trucking industry career maps.

Action: Entered into an agreement with School District #73 to create and support a Commercial Driver Training Program for secondary school students. The program is designed to produce employment-ready, entry-level professional drivers. Delivery of the inaugural program awaits a strategy for allowing program graduates to obtain a Class 1 or 3 commercial licence at age 18.

Action: With financial support from the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training, developing a blueprint of the Commercial Driver Training Program, including marketing materials, guidance on creating an Employer Advisory Committee, and course outline, for other school districts and high schools, to be completed once the CDT program has been delivered.

Action: With financial support from the Flemming Sondergaard Legacy Fund, produced and distributed trucking industry occupational career path information originally produced by the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council to high school guidance counsellors and career counsellors in BC.

Truck Driver Training & Financing

5. Agree on/select and promote the adoption of a **minimum pre-licensing training standard** for truck drivers in B.C.

Action: Developed a comprehensive industry professional driver training standard and submitted it to the Industry Training Authority, which provisionally approved it. Pilot tested the training standard in 2010. The standard was eliminated due to budget cuts at ITA in 2011, and ITA subsequently declined to adopt it.

Current Status: In 2016, Ontario announced it would support a mandatory training standard in that province. Although the BC government and ITA have indicated previously that BC is unlikely to mandate a training program, development of a program in Ontario could lead to a policy change.

6. Work with public and private trainers and the Industry Training Authority to develop a **coherent truck driver training delivery system**.

7. Evaluate the success of **post-licensing certification programs** that have been recently established in Ontario and Alberta with a view to deciding whether to develop and promote a voluntary post-licensing training certification program for carriers in BC.

Status: Will consider a challenge option for the professional driver training standard certification for experienced drivers if BC decides to follow Ontario's lead on a commercial driver training standard and adopt a professional driver training standard or equivalent.

8. Identify, promote and advocate a variety of enhanced truck driver training **financing** mechanisms. (Depending on the evaluation in Step 7, this may include financing mechanisms for a post-licensing certification program.)

Commercial Driver Licensing

9. Recommend specific improvements to the commercial driver licensing **testing standard** and **testing process**.

Status: In progress

Strategic Plan Oversight & Renewal

10. Establish mechanism(s) through which BCTA obtains **advice and feedback** from stakeholders on the implementation of the long term HR Plan.

Status: BCTA's HR Committee provides oversight.