

Right People Right Place Right Time

Saskatchewan's Labour Market Strategy

*The Saskatchewan Labour Market Commission's
Labour Market Strategy for Saskatchewan
May 27, 2009*

What is a Labour Market?

The labour market is similar to any other market in that the forces of supply and demand jointly determine price (the wage rate) and quantity (the number of people employed). The market is balanced when there is neither excess supply of nor demand for labour.

The Theory of Rational Expectations

Businesses, individuals and institutions base expectations and make decisions regarding markets with the information that is available at the time. When new, relevant information becomes available, expectations are updated and decisions are made accordingly. The labour market acts on the same principle: timely access to comprehensive, accurate, and unbiased information allows the market to operate efficiently. Markets can become artificially imbalanced or fail when there is a lack of quality information available to the consumer.

What is a Labour Market Strategy?

A Labour Market Strategy leads the thinking and provides information and direction regarding overall labour market dynamics. It addresses the challenges with respect to what to deliver to stakeholders over a 5-10 year timeframe, and what pathways need to be developed to create sustainable growth and prosperity.

What is Saskatchewan's Labour Market Strategy?

Provincial economic sustainability requires the development, retention, and attraction of a highly skilled and educated labour force to a point of full employment. A strong system of communication that coordinates information and brings people together ensures that industry (businesses and labour), governments, and public and private institutions spend time and money wisely. Augmented by an education and training system that is responsive and adaptive to the needs of the industry, all members of the labour market will work together to improve the standard of living for all citizens of Saskatchewan.

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Executive Summary

- Saskatchewan is at a critical point in its history. Rapid economic growth in 2007 and 2008, combined with population out-migration over the past decade, has reduced the unemployment rate to 4.1 per cent in 2008, one of the lowest in Canada. The province is experiencing labour shortages for the first time, which limits the ability to grow and prosper.
- During 2007 and 2008, the Saskatchewan economy attracted over 20,000 individuals, yet businesses still reported labour shortages. Shortages are occurring prior to the retirement of Saskatchewan's 171,500 working baby boomers over the next two decades.
- Saskatchewan has low population growth, participation rates, and educational attainment. If the province remains along this historic path, it will not have enough people to sustain and grow the economy.
- Because of the difficulties in projecting the performance of the economy, SaskLMC has opted to use historic growth figures as a planning scenario. Using historic growth, Saskatchewan's labour force would require an additional 120,000 workers by 2020, or 10,000 workers per year on average.
- Saskatchewan's "Boom, Bust, and Echo" demographics indicate that Saskatchewan will face a steady (at best) or possibly declining labour supply. An economy can grow only when it has an adequate supply of labour.
- As the number of retirees increase, not only will there be a decrease in the number of workers available, there will also be an experience deficit, especially in regards to management expertise.
- Not only will highly knowledgeable workers be needed to replace baby boomers, a majority of new jobs are expected to require some form of post-secondary education.
- There is no single answer to meeting Saskatchewan's future labour demand; it must come from many different sources.
- The addition of 120,000 workers by 2020, or 10,000 workers per year, while aggressive, is necessary. In general, to ensure adequacy of labour supply, the following would need to occur:
 - Increasing employment levels of First Nations and Métis to that of non-aboriginals
 - Increasing the number of older workers in the economy in the short term,
 - Promoting a more accommodating workplace to increase participation of under-represented groups (women, older workers, and those reporting a disability),
 - Sustaining positive net interprovincial migration, and
 - Increasing settlement of highly skilled and experienced immigrants to the province.
- An essential part of building Saskatchewan's future labour force will be increasing participation rates of the provincial population, particularly under-represented groups. The province's Aboriginal people represent the single largest group that is not fully participating in the province's labour force. Focussing on under-represented groups of the provincial population makes sense as these individuals are already here, want to work and are likely to stay here.

- Increasing educational attainment levels is essential to increasing participation rates and address future labour demand. According to the Canadian Council on Learning over 70 per cent of newly created jobs will require some form of post-secondary education, and over 90 per cent of newly created jobs will require a high school education. Education also drives productivity gains, which can play an integral role in alleviating the increased demand for labour in the future.
- While Saskatchewan is experiencing “Boom, Bust and Echo” demographics, many of the leading nations worldwide are experiencing similar demographics. Labour is highly mobile in today’s environment. This high degree of mobility means that there will be widespread national and international competition for the highly skilled jobs of the future.
- Barriers to entry into the labour market such as lower education levels, prejudice, family commitments and other socio-economic issues must be addressed. Accommodating the challenges these groups face will take time, and as labour shortages are occurring now, national and international labour will be necessary to attract experienced talent and support highly skilled labour supply needs in the province.
- Positive interprovincial migration is necessary to accommodate future labour demand. Labour is most mobile within Canada, and it is easier to attract domestic sources in the short-term than to pursue international sources. Attracting foreigners to Saskatchewan for work will be a necessity to meet future labour demands. Not only will new jobs require skilled workers, a retiring population will leave a talent deficit. There will be a shortage of highly skilled and experienced individuals in the province, which creates the need for immigration.
- Increased population will put pressures on infrastructure and services. Adding over 120,000 workers and their families would cause the provincial population to approach 1.3 Million. Assuming our retirees remain in Saskatchewan, the addition 120,000 new workers would be like adding a city of 200,000-300,000 people to the province when you consider that spouses and family would likely migrate with the new workers. Saskatchewan’s largest cities of Regina and Saskatoon could well exceed populations of 300,000 and 350,000, respectively, placing increased pressure on the infrastructure and services in these communities and other communities in the province.
- The Saskatchewan Labour Market Strategy is guided by three high level themes, aimed at creating a labour market that supports sustainable economic growth and a prosperous Saskatchewan. Achieving the strategy requires concentrating efforts on labour market forecasting and information, development of the provincial workforce and workplace, and the retention and attraction of people. The three themes guiding the strategy are:
 - Focus on Information and Communication;
 - Focus on Workforce and Workplace Enhancement; and
 - Focus on Retention and Attraction of Highly Skilled Individuals.
- The strategy should not be viewed as a list of separate activities, but as a series of inter-connected steps, each with a key role to play in shaping the future of the province.
- The recommended set of themes, objectives and strategic initiatives work to ensure sustainable economic growth in the province, create a well-educated workforce that is representative of the population, improve the level of competitiveness of businesses, and promote and enhance the quality of life for all current and future residents of Saskatchewan.

1. Introduction

Saskatchewan has a multitude of natural resources: potash, uranium, oil, gas, diamonds, forests, and agricultural land which all drive the growth of the province. A diversified economy with a well established manufacturing and service sector, research and development facilities, a solid infrastructure and competitive tax system make the province an attractive place to live and do business. Currently, the Saskatchewan economy is considered one of the strongest in North America.

Saskatchewan, however, is at a critical point in its history. After experiencing a net loss of 46,000 people¹ due to interprovincial migration over the past decade, the rapid provincial economic growth in 2007 and 2008 has driven the unemployment rate to 4.1 per cent in 2008², one of the lowest in Canada. The province is experiencing labour shortages for the first time, which limits the ability to grow and prosper.

In the fall of 2008, a breakdown in international financial markets resulted in a worldwide recession. This economic slowdown should not lull people into a false sense of labour market security. Labour shortages are indeed coming and they will be general and widespread. While the province is not immune to the effects of the economic crisis, it is undeniable that labour demand will continue to rise in the future because:

- The recession will end,
- Long-run demand for Saskatchewan's commodities and manufactured goods and services will rise, and
- A large portion of the provincial workforce will retire in the near future with insufficient replacements for many of these workers.

Saskatchewan's Labour Market Imbalance

Saskatchewan's history of economic growth has been one where there were always more people than jobs available. Interprovincial migration over the past twenty years is a perfect example of excess supply: more individuals left Saskatchewan in search of opportunities than moved to the province. Over the past two years, however, the surplus of available labour has declined significantly. While more people are moving to Saskatchewan than are leaving, rapid growth has driven unemployment rates to historic lows, wage rates continue to rise to compete for labour, and businesses report difficulties finding people to fill positions. Demand for labour is exceeding supply. The Saskatchewan labour market is becoming out of balance.

The downturn in the global economy has, in the short term, relieved some of the pressures facing the labour market. Saskatchewan is, however, at a tipping point. Over the next decade, it will face substantial and widespread labour shortages. There will be more jobs than people. These jobs will require significant amounts of training and experience, as seventy per cent of new jobs will require post-secondary education³, and retiring baby boomers will create a talent gap that will not easily be filled by a significantly smaller Generation X population group.

Effects on Growth and Prosperity

Saskatchewan's labour shortages could limit the economy's ability to sustain and grow, which ultimately would affect the standard of living for its citizens. SaskTrend Monitor's report *Labour Market Issues in Saskatchewan: A Situational Analysis* indicates that, as one possible planning

scenario, the provincial economy could create an additional 120,000 jobs by the year 2020 at historic levels of growth.

Saskatchewan is facing a number of significant challenges to future growth and prosperity due to:

- An increasingly competitive global landscape;
- An aging population;
- Expected strong economic growth and a tightening labour market;
- Increased urbanization causing regional labour and skill shortages in many rural communities;
- Rising education requirements for a majority of jobs and a working age population that is one of the lowest of all provinces in terms of post-secondary educational attainment;
- Low high school graduation rates and post-secondary transition rates; and
- Uncertainty regarding recovery of the global economy from the current worldwide recession.

Over the next decade, labour and skill shortages will be significant and must be addressed. Saskatchewan has a choice of positioning itself for sustainable growth or dealing with the adverse consequences of general labour shortages including foregone economic prosperity.

Labour shortages are felt in every part of the economy; no one is immune. Labour shortages will:

- Create project delays or cancellations,
- Escalate costs as wages rise in the competition for labour,
- Decrease competitiveness due to rising costs,
- Reduce productivity as hiring standards decline,
- Cause downsizing or business closures,
- Increase taxes or borrowing necessary to offset increased infrastructure project costs,
- Increase costs that will create inflation.

Industry (where industry is defined as business and labour) and government need to focus on the changing economic environment yet cannot lose sight of the impending labour shortages. There is still time to address these challenges. Ignoring them is not an option, as the supply of labour affects the ability to achieve growth strategies, as well as Saskatchewan's capacity to sustain itself economically.

Several factors affect Saskatchewan's current and projected future labour market demand and supply challenges. It is arguably the largest constraint to sustained future development in Saskatchewan. An economy can grow only when it has an adequate supply of labour.

2. The Demand for Workers

There are two factors that will affect future provincial labour demand:

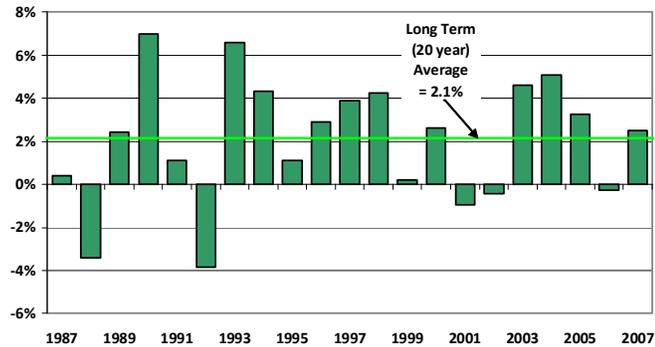
- Economic growth
- Productivity

Economic Growth and the Quantity Gap

Saskatchewan has grown significantly over the past twenty years, with gross domestic product (GDP), the value of total output of an economy, increasing by more than fifty per cent. While some years had strong and positive growth, other years had negative growth. Using an annual growth rate of 2.5 per cent, slightly above the long term average of 2.1 per cent, employment would grow by 5,000 to 8,000 per year, depending on gains due to labour productivity.

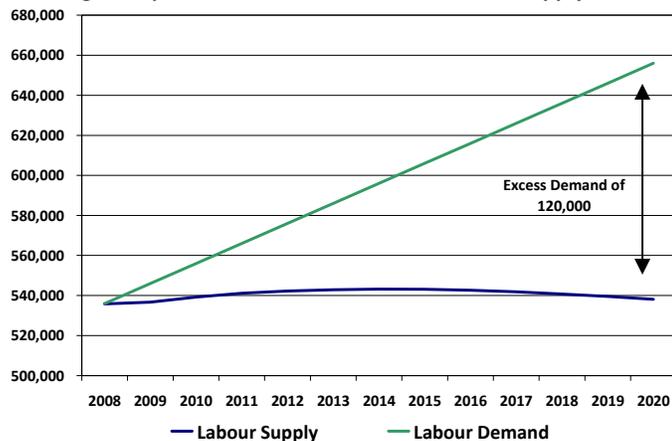
As a guide for planning, the Saskatchewan Labour Market Commission found it prudent to plan for demand to grow by 10,000 per year.⁴

Figure 1 | GDP Growth Rates, Saskatchewan



Using this estimate, Saskatchewan's labour force would require an additional 120,000 workers by 2020, or 10,000 workers per year on average. Higher than average growth would demand more workers and lower growth would reduce projected demand. However, if the provincial labour supply grows along its historic path, demand would not be met, regardless of the scenario.

Figure 2 | Saskatchewan Labour Demand and Supply Scenario



It must be noted that actual labour demand in Saskatchewan has not been measured, and the Saskatchewan Labour Market Commission assumes that labour demand is currently equal to employment. This implies that future demand for labour would occur while the province is near full employment. Without surplus labour, business attraction and expansion could be challenging, and Saskatchewan could experience reduced demand for labour, and reduced annual GDP growth.

Productivity and the Quality Gap

A shift in the demographics of Saskatchewan's labour force is rapidly approaching. While managing additional demand of 120,000 workers is a challenge in itself, an additional point of concern for the Saskatchewan labour market is the fact that shortages are occurring prior to the retirement of Saskatchewan's 170,500 working baby boomers over the next two decades.

Comparatively, there are 18,900 fewer people working in Saskatchewan’s Generation X age group, the individuals most likely to replace the baby boomers.

A retiring baby boom generation will affect the province inasmuch as

- Decreasing the labour pool – less people available for work,
- Decreasing the talent pool – a lack of experienced workers, and
- Increasing demand for specific services – i.e. healthcare.

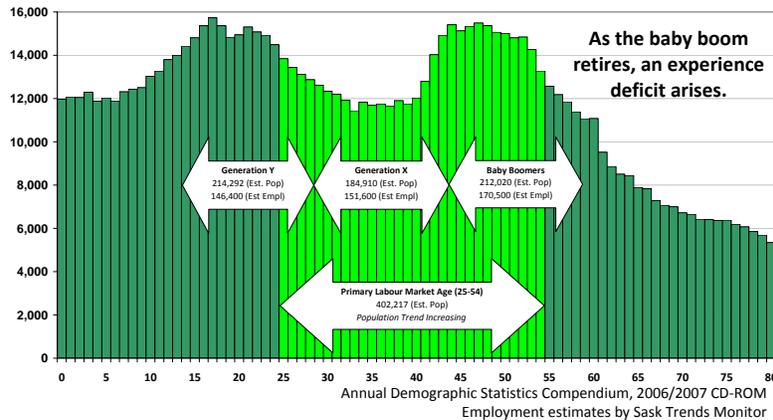
Table 1 | Saskatchewan Age Group Populations - 2007

Age Group	Born	Population	Employed
Baby Boomers	1949 – 1963	212,024	170,500
Generation X	1964 – 1978	184,910	151,600
Generation Y	1979 – 1993	218,573	146,400

Annual Demographic Statistics Compendium, 2006/2007 CD-ROM
Employment estimates by SaskTrends Monitor

Saskatchewan is something of an anomaly compared to other provinces in Canada; the echo (Generation Y) is comparable in size to the baby boom generation; most regions have a smaller echo generation demographic. This is due to a relatively young First Nation and Métis population. This, however, does not completely solve the challenges of the “Boom, Bust and Echo” demographic shift.⁵

Figure 3 | Saskatchewan Population by Age Group - 2007



Even though the baby boom generation will retire, this generation will demand goods and services, and in some cases, increase demand (i.e. healthcare) for a longer time than previous generations. Goods and services will also be required for additional wage earners in the economy (Generation Y). This will also increase demand for labour in the long term.

As the number of retirees increase, not only will there be a decrease in the number of workers available, there will also be an experience deficit, especially in regards to management expertise. Population size is not a sufficient condition to ensure sustainability; it is not possible to simply replace a retiring worker with thirty years experience with an individual with little or no experience at all. It is necessary to have the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time. Saskatchewan faces a significant talent challenge.

The skill sets of workers needed in the future varies. Innovation and commercialization of new technologies continually changes the types of work being done in the province. Not only will highly knowledgeable workers be needed to replace baby boomers, most new jobs are expected to require some form of post-secondary education.

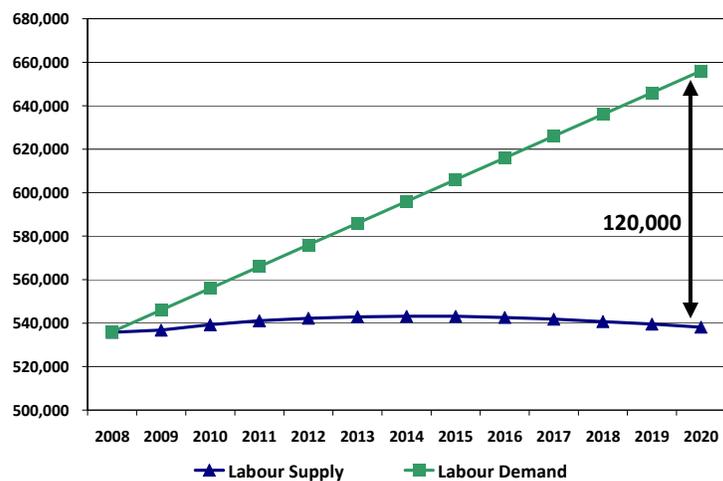
Labour shortages are due to a lack of people, participation, or education. Shortages restrict growth and puts sustainability at risk. This is not the future that the people of Saskatchewan desire. It is a reality, however, that Saskatchewan faces.

3. Supplying Saskatchewan's Future Labour Demand

If Saskatchewan remains along the historic path of low population growth and poor educational attainment, the province will not have enough people to sustain and grow the economy. During 2007 and 2008, the Saskatchewan economy attracted over 20,000 individuals, yet businesses still reported labour shortages.

Therefore, the addition of 120,000 workers by 2020, or 10,000 workers per year, while aggressive, is necessary.⁶ New approaches are needed to meet future labour demand. It will require significant increases in provincial participation rates and educational attainment, and substantial national and international migration.

Figure 4 | Saskatchewan Labour Force - Supply Trend, Projected Demand



The following is one possible supply scenario; it is not a target. This scenario calls for aggressive growth in each labour source at levels well beyond historic averages. The actual supply can be made up using different supply sources. If, for example, First Nations people are able to take up more opportunities than identified in this planning scenario, it should be strongly encouraged and supported.

In general, the following objectives of any strategy would require:

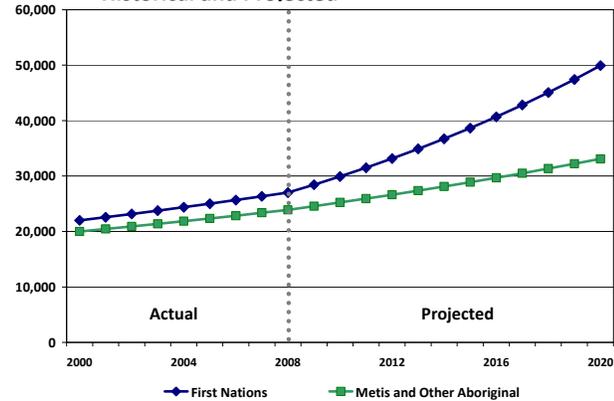
- Increasing the employment rate of First Nations and Métis,
- A marked increase in the number of older workers in the economy,
- An enhanced workplace that increases participation of under-represented groups (women, older workers, and those reporting a disability),
- Sustained positive net interprovincial migration, and
- Increased settlement of highly skilled immigrants to the province.

The reality is that there is no single answer to meeting Saskatchewan's future labour supply; it must come from many different sources.

Increase Participation Rates

An essential part of building Saskatchewan’s future labour force will be increasing participation rates of the provincial population. There are certain segments of the population that are experiencing large gaps in participation rates versus the average. These under-represented groups include First Nations, Métis, youth, women, older workers, and those reporting a disability. Increasing participation rates for these groups is essential.

Figure 5 | First Nations and Métis Participation – Historical and Projected



The province’s Aboriginal people represent the single most important group that is not fully participating in the province’s labour force. The challenge of improving labour force participation for the province’s Aboriginal population will be significant. Saskatchewan has the lowest level of Aboriginal labour force participation in Canada, and there is a substantial employment gap between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people.

Over time, increasing the labour force participation rate for Saskatchewan’s Aboriginal population is a definite possibility. As a comparison, participation rates for the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population in the cities of Calgary and Vancouver are equivalent.⁷ A strong economy can address many issues. Increasing participation rates of First Nations and Métis to the participation rates of non-Aboriginal would add an additional 20,000 potential workers in the provincial labour force.

Table 2 | Saskatchewan Labour Force Characteristics – 2006 Census

	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal		
		First Nations	Métis	Total
Employed	452,805	20,490	21,605	42,095
Unemployed	20,015	6,785	2,600	9,390
Not in Labour Force	202,115	28,335	11,480	39,815
Total Population 15 and older	674,935	55,610	35,685	91,295
Participation Rates				
Saskatoon CMA	71%	54%	73%	63%
Regina CMA	72%	55%	74%	65%
Saskatchewan	70%	49%	68%	56%
Employment Rate 2006	67%	37%	61%	46%
Employment Rate 2001	66%	33%	56%	42%

CMA – Census Metropolitan Area
Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census 97-559-XCB2006019 and 97-559-XCB2006027

The return on investment of Saskatchewan closing the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employment would be substantial. Conservative estimates have indicated that employment parity for Aboriginal people would result in savings to Social Services, Justice, Corrections and other programs and services at over \$500 million annually.⁸ There is a significant public cost-benefit advantage to be gained through investments to reduce barriers for more effective labour force participation for Aboriginal people. It also presents a very compelling case for federal-provincial collaboration, as both levels of government would share cost savings.

Focussing on under-represented groups of the provincial population makes sense as these individuals are already here, want to work and are likely to stay. Unfortunately, many face barriers to entry into the labour market such as lower education levels, prejudice, family commitments and other social issues. Accommodating the challenges these groups face will take time, but once achieved, will make the province stronger and more competitive. Since labour shortages are occurring now, and even full participation will not meet projected labour demand, interprovincial migration and immigration will be absolutely necessary to meet the labour supply needs within the province.

Increase Education Attainment Levels

Increasing educational attainment levels is essential to increase participation rates and address future labour demand. The provincial economy requires a training system which has sufficient capacity and operates efficiently for citizens and immigrants to remain competitive internationally through life-long learning.

Education plays a significant part in career outcomes. As shown in Figure 7, higher levels of education increase the likelihood of

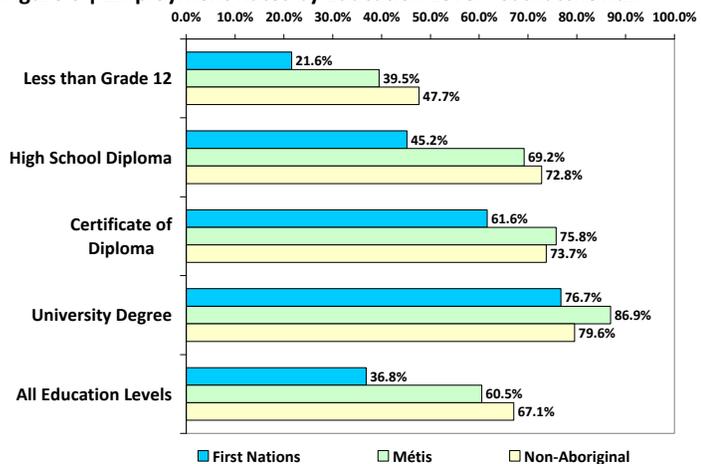
participation and employment in the workforce, especially for Saskatchewan’s First Nation and Métis people. It should be noted, however, that these figures show that something beyond education is affecting employment rates; otherwise the employment rates would be similar for each level of education. In other words, there is a reason (other than education levels) that First Nation people with a grade twelve diplomas are not employed at the same rate as non-Aboriginal people with the same education (73%) rather than at the lower rate (45%).⁹

According to the Canadian Council on Learning over 70 per cent of newly created jobs will require some form of post-secondary education, and over 90 per cent of newly created jobs will require a high school education. Education also drives productivity gains, which can play an integral role in alleviating the increased demand for labour in the future.

Saskatchewan’s “Boom, Bust and Echo” demographics show that the peak of the “Echo” generation population has exited high school and are entering the workforce. Unfortunately, enrolment in Saskatchewan’s high school and post-secondary institutions has been declining. The province requires a well educated labour force to remain internationally competitive.

A well educated local population that business can draw upon decreases reliance on the unpredictable patterns and waiting time of migration and immigration.

Figure 6 | Employment Rates by Education Level - Saskatchewan



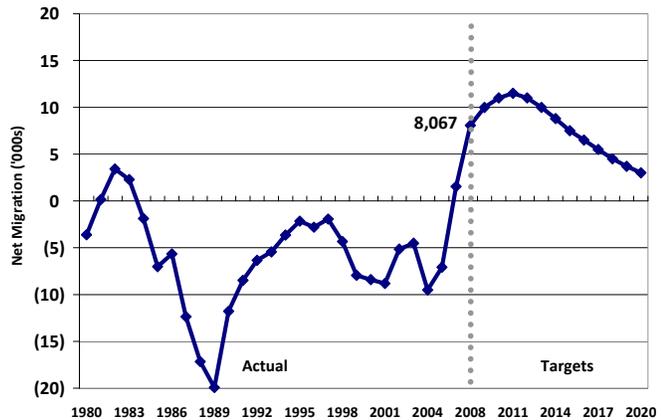
Maintain Positive Net Interprovincial Migration

Because of the relative ease by which people can move across borders in Canada, the supply of labour for the Saskatchewan economy is at least national, if not international, in scope. Until recently, Saskatchewan has experienced continual interprovincial out-migration. Many residents have been searching for and finding opportunities outside of Saskatchewan for the majority of the past twenty years.

While Saskatchewan will have to look outside its borders to grow its labour force it cannot forget about labour market retention. The province continues to face out-migration of its youth population, and many of these people are highly skilled and educated.

Positive interprovincial migration is necessary to accommodate future labour demand. Relying solely on the provincial population will be insufficient for projected growth, even after eliminating the participation gap. Provincially, there is no “natural” growth in the labour force on the horizons.¹⁰ High rates of unemployment in the Atlantic Provinces and Ontario suggest that there is a pool of potential workers available in eastern Canada.

Figure 7 | Net Migration – Historical and Projected



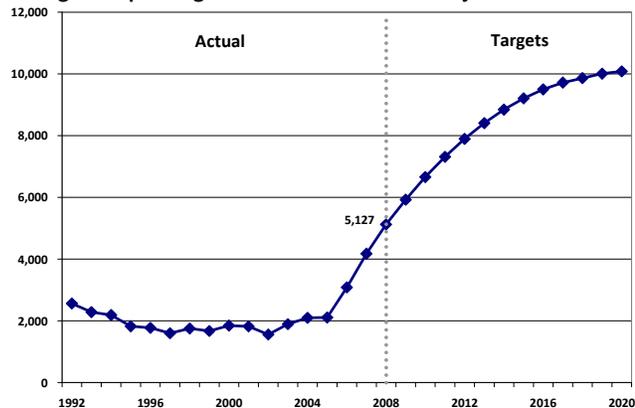
Increase Immigration

Attracting foreigners to Saskatchewan for work will be a necessity to meet future labour demands. Not only will new jobs require skilled workers, a retiring population will leave a talent deficit. There will be a shortage of highly skilled and experienced individuals in the province, which creates the need for immigration.

As shown in Figure 8, the necessary targets for increased immigration are well above the historic rate of growth.¹¹

Targeting highly skilled workers in particular is essential to address the new types of labour demand.

Figure 8 | Immigration – Historical and Projected



Saskatchewan faces fierce competition in the immigration field. Birth rates in the industrialized countries are declining and populations are aging. Many countries are facing inverted population pyramids (many old, few young) and “Boom, Bust and Echo” demographics. Competition for highly qualified and experienced personnel will be severe.

Conclusion

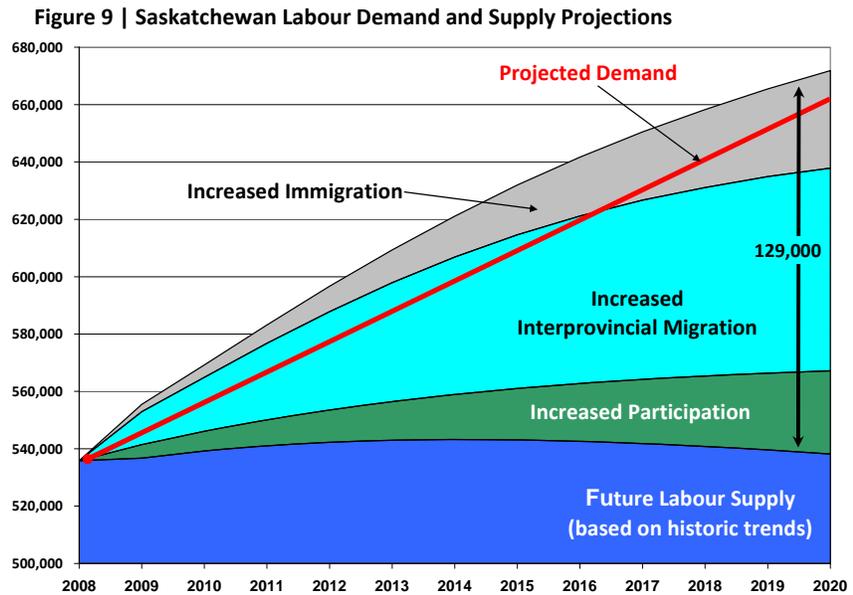
There is no doubt that all sources of available labour mentioned above are needed to supply future demand. Furthermore, while these targets may seem aggressive, they are not necessarily implausible or impossible to achieve.

In this scenario, the Saskatchewan labour force would grow by approximately 120,000 workers by 2020, and slightly exceed projected demand.

Surplus labour could be absorbed if the province exceeded historic growth rates.

These steps, however, will only satisfy the labour needs of the province for a limited time. It is necessary to put the right mechanisms in place to address future requirements. As a majority of the baby boom retires over the next twenty years, Saskatchewan will continue to face similar challenges to labour market imbalances that are faced today.

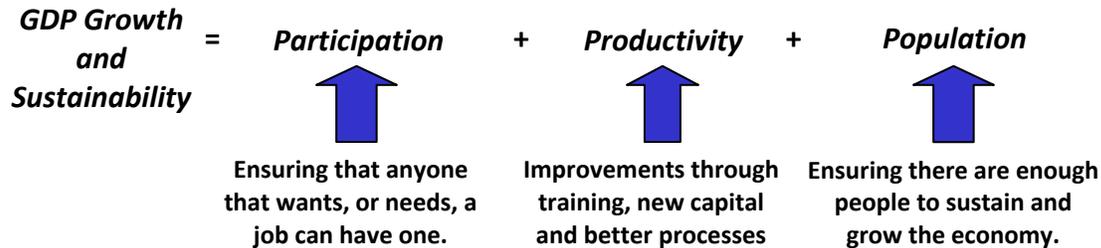
Accomplishing these goals is necessary to meet the demands of business in Saskatchewan, as well as creating an environment that will attract investment. Otherwise, the province's economic prosperity is at risk.



4. The Strategy

While Saskatchewan is rich with natural resources, has a solid infrastructure, and advanced technology, these assets alone do not create prosperity.

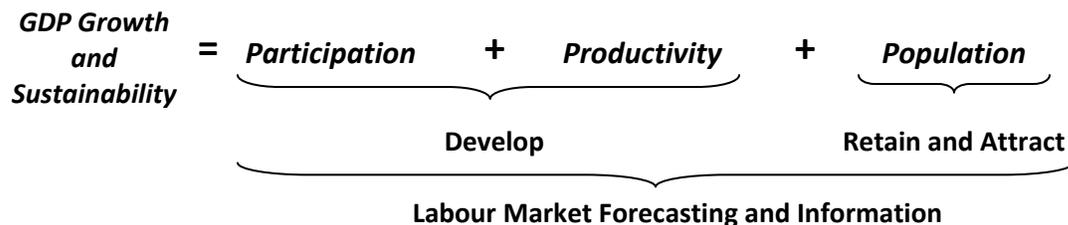
Sustainability and growth are dependent on people, their knowledge and abilities.



Labour shortages create uncertainty in the marketplace. Industry and governments can not plan for the future when the availability of one of the most important assets to production is in question. Uncertainty creates indecision that impacts the growth of Saskatchewan. A path to prosperity requires addressing labour market challenges immediately.

Strategic planning is the process of defining where the province wants to go and how to get there. The following recommended set of themes, objectives and strategic initiatives ensure sustainable economic growth in the province, create a well-educated workforce that is representative of the population, improve the level of competitiveness of businesses, and promote and enhance the quality of life for all current and future residents of Saskatchewan. The recommendations are the result of targeted consultation and research on the current state of Saskatchewan's labour market, and critical review by industry, government, and other institutional leaders. It is the responsibility of all parties to act on these strategies for full effectiveness.

The Saskatchewan Labour Market Strategy is guided by three high level themes, aimed at creating a labour market that supports sustainable economic growth and a prosperous Saskatchewan. These themes represent the overall vision and desired outcomes for the province, one where industry, government and post-secondary institutions play an integral role in the future success of Saskatchewan. Fulfilling the strategy requires concentrated efforts on labour market forecasting and information, development of the provincial workforce and workplace, and retention and attraction of people.



The strategy should not be viewed as a list of separate activities, but as a series of inter-connected steps, each with a key role to play in shaping the future of the province. Furthermore, these themes overlap in scope, implying that achievement in one area can also assist in the achievement of another.

Theme 1 – Focus on Information and Communication

Good decisions are made with good information. Comprehensive, transparent information that is readily available and tailored to the relevant audience is the lubricant that keeps the economy working smoothly. Problems arise and market failures occur when people make economic decisions without complete information. The labour market is no exception to this principle.

High quality labour market forecasting and information is an essential element to the success of this strategy. A key principle guiding this strategy is that individuals, businesses, governments, and institutions require high quality, timely and accessible labour market information which leads to solutions for their particular labour market needs. It is important that those who use and provide labour market information be involved in its design, collection, and management.

The communication of this labour market information is essential. It has to be available to the consumer. It must be both relevant and accessible. This is true for individuals, industry, or governments. It is critical that information meets the needs of all participants in the labour market. Furthermore, the development and distribution of information must be transparent; claims must be justified. This will support an efficient market.

The establishment of valuable networks where people can engage and interact is critical as well. Rather than undertaking unsupported actions, duplicating efforts and competing with one another, efficient networks enable discussion, integration, and the sharing of ideas to ensure that decisions are collaborative and activities are coordinated. This strengthens the province, making it an inviting place for business and individuals.

Ultimately, focussing efforts on the gathering, analysing and providing information through a comprehensive interactive communication strategy will enhance current Labour Market Forecasting and Information in the province. It must be a dynamic entity that helps achieve the following objectives:

- Government
 - Cost effective infrastructure investment
 - Competitive regulatory environment
 - Efficient design and delivery of education, training and employment services
- Industry
 - Access an immediate supply of labour
 - Provide labour demand information for the province
 - Define needs for training programs, infrastructure and regulations
- Education and training institutions
 - Allocate resources to meet needs of provincial labour demands
 - Respond to immediate training demands for the province
- Individuals
 - Make the best career and employment decisions
 - Take advantage of opportunities in Saskatchewan

Objectives

- 1A. Timely, relevant, accessible and transparent information
- 1B. Enhanced communication and collaboration

Objective 1A - Timely, relevant, accessible and transparent information

The development of labour market information should be driven by the users who need to make informed decisions. Individuals, industry, and public and private institutions generally solve their own problems, and require access to quality information.

Any information, either quantitative (i.e. statistics) or qualitative (i.e. informed opinions), that describes the supply of or demand for labour is technically labour market information. For instance, with the right information:

- Employers would know where to find the employees they need, and how much they need to pay to entice them to work for their organization or to keep existing employees from leaving,
- Employees could locate job opportunities and determine what the wage rate is for their occupation,
- Students would know what they need to study in order to get the job of their dreams;
- Governments can make sure the educational infrastructure is in place to meet the demand, and
- Post-secondary institutions would know which courses to offer to meet future labour market needs.

A recent survey of Saskatchewan employers indicates that “there is a need for a broad base of human resource tools; from screening and interview techniques to human rights awareness concerns... they want to have access to a shopping list of human resource tools.”¹²

Saskatchewan is in reasonable shape with respect to its Labour Market Information (LMI). It does, however, have gaps that need to be filled. The main issue regarding LMI is one of accessibility and ease of use. This affects the ability of private and public institutions to accurately plan for the labour market needs of the future.

The role that information plays in labour force development cannot be stressed enough. A lack of information, or poorly developed or disseminated information, has created labour market challenges in Saskatchewan. Anecdotal information is not sufficient; evidence-based decisions must be made to eliminate structural deficiencies that plague the provincial economy.

There is a high degree of interest by various industry sectors to develop labour supply and demand projections. To date, the Construction Sector Council, the Petroleum Human Resource Council, and the Saskatchewan Mining Association are completing or have completed work in this area. Other sectors have also expressed interest, including health care, agriculture, manufacturing, and environmental services.

It is important for some form of central coordination and support to the various sectors wishing to develop their own projections. This will encourage the use of consistent methodologies, thereby ensuring greater ability to compare, contrast, and synthesize the various sector projections. Industry driven sector projections will provide the more accurate occupational projections which will in turn drive training supply and other decisions.

Strategic Initiatives

- 1A.1 Fill in the gaps in Saskatchewan’s labour market information system.**
 - 1A.1.1 Collect on-reserve labour force information.
 - 1A.1.2 Conduct research into the employment and retirement intentions of the baby boomer generation.
 - 1A.1.3 Complete a comprehensive wage survey (currently being undertaken by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment, and Labour).
 - 1A.1.4 Collect information on vacancy rates by industry and occupation.
 - 1A.1.5 Conduct labour demand analysis on the major capital projects proposed over the next decade in Saskatchewan.
 - 1A.1.6 Conduct a survey focussing on the intentions of Saskatchewan’s post-secondary students prior to graduation
- 1A.2 Enhance currently available Labour Market Forecasting and Information (LMFI) to ensure it meets user needs, and is more transparent, accessible, useable and timely.**
 - 1A.2.1 Provide first-rate information to industry on labour force issues and human resources best practices, opportunities, programs, and tools.
 - 1A.2.2 Enhance the quality and delivery of information available to individuals regarding career, education and training opportunities, as well as resources and tools available to support career and educational decisions.
 - 1A.2.3 Develop sector supply and demand projections by occupation for each industry sector such as the ones developed by the Construction Sector Council, the Petroleum Human Resources Council, and the Saskatchewan Mining Association to assist government and educational institutions to plan for program delivery.
 - 1A.2.4 Develop regional labour market planning capabilities through the new Enterprise Regions based on a model similar to Northern Saskatchewan’s highly successful Northern Labour Market Committee.
- 1A.3. Task Enterprise Saskatchewan with the delegation of tracking the implementation and results of the strategic initiatives outlined in this paper, and report on the state of the Saskatchewan labour market.**
 - 1A.3.1 Benchmark the strategy using labour market metrics such as participation rates, employment rates, employment growth, income levels, education levels, migration and population rates by age, gender, and ethnicity, and compare them to national levels.
 - 1A.3.2 Gauge the effectiveness of the Government of Saskatchewan’s investment in training by tracking enrolment, graduation, accreditation, accessibility and affordability.

Objective 1B - Enhance Communication and Collaboration

Information, especially current, strategic information, is a valuable tool for decision making. It is meant to be shared, therefore, access is essential. Today's world has many avenues for communicating information. From personal interaction to print to the internet, all mediums can and must be utilized to ensure choices are made with concrete facts. There has never been another point in history where knowledge is so readily available; people can communicate ideas around the world instantaneously. There are challenges facing the province regarding the communication of information, which, once addressed, will improve the efficiency of the labour market.

Accessibility of Information

The key action for furthering the effectiveness of provincial labour market information is to disseminate it successfully. The development of labour market information should be driven, in large part, by the people and institutions (public and private) that need the information to enable informed decision-making. It should be transparent and accessible to a wide range of users. Information, especially strategic information, is meant to be shared.

While a great deal of information is available, it is not necessarily easily accessed. A multitude of websites lead users to various places on the internet; some have valid information while others do not. It is essential that one clear message about the Saskatchewan labour market, its opportunities and programs, is presented in an unbiased manner. It is therefore necessary to create a centralized information system that anyone in Saskatchewan or looking to work in the province can access.

While the internet is an ideal place for labour market information, it can not be the sole portal for the province. Other entities such as the Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Centres must be key information providers to industry, government and post-secondary institutions regarding the labour market. Furthermore, having people "in the field" gathers valuable data that can not be collected in any other fashion.

Saskatchewan should strive to develop the best Labour Market Forecasting and Information in Canada. While this is a lofty goal, it is also a desired one in a competitive sense. Saskatchewan will continue to face direct competition for skilled labour from other provinces such as Alberta and British Columbia. By having better labour market information for industry and institutions, it will improve Saskatchewan's competitive advantage and there will be a better chance developing an internationally competitive labour force, and attracting the "right workers" with the "right skills" from other provinces and countries.

Career Counselling

While there are a multitude of opportunities in the province, a lack of information and career counselling in provincial high schools presents a major barrier to students in pursuing career paths in Saskatchewan. Career counselling needs to be expanded considerably. Career education is taught to only 28.9 per cent of the students in Saskatchewan's high school system.¹³

A significant challenge in the province's K-12 school system is engagement with the labour market. There are a large number of young people, aged 15 to 24, that are either unemployed

or underemployed. They are often stuck in low paying jobs and trying to figure out a career path for themselves. Saskatchewan's school system is only providing a limited amount of career counselling in high schools. A significant number of Grade 12 graduates do not go on to post-secondary education directly after graduation. This represents a large pool of labour that is under-utilized.

There is a mismatch with current labour demands which often require post-secondary education or some matching skill base. Currently, the K-12 school system largely focuses on a more traditional approach to education that signals a career path to university, yet a majority of future labour demand in Saskatchewan will require a technical school education. It is not common knowledge that graduate surveys show that journeypersons had little or no student debt, were more likely to be employed, and were more satisfied with their jobs than university graduates. They also made more money than university graduates.¹⁴

One program that addresses this gap and is already working is the Saskatchewan Youth Apprenticeship (SYA) Program. The SYA, an initiative of the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission, raises awareness of apprenticeship among Saskatchewan high school students by helping young people discover career options in the skilled trades. SYA enhances student career development by exploring the world of opportunities skilled trades can offer Saskatchewan youth.

After a pilot project in 2005 with 2 high schools and 49 students, interest in the SYA Program has continued to grow since it was first offered province-wide in the 2006-07 school term. As of March 31, 2009, there were 200 schools and 4,022 students participating in the program. Since the program's inception, 5,422 students in grades 10 – 12 have registered and a total of 1,046 high school graduates have received SYA certificates. Of these, 106 have registered as Saskatchewan apprentices.

Beyond the challenges faced by youth, workers, either voluntarily or involuntarily, are likely to change careers several times during their lives. These people need information to guide their decisions. Information gathering occurs in various ways.

- Career and employment service agencies
- Job advertisements
- Word of mouth
- The internet

Career and employment service agencies, either public or private, play a vital role in addressing labour supply challenges through the provision of information. Individuals require information on student loans, job postings, immigration information, and career counselling to name a few. Businesses need help finding employees, resolving labour disputes, or assistance at recruitment fairs. At the same time, government and educational and training institutions need information on programs and services to provide. These agencies must provide information toolkits and act as a service organization for all members of the labour market.

The Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Centres are important Saskatchewan labour market assets. The labour market of the future will require these Centres to work much more closely with employers (either directly or through the new Enterprise Regions), to intervene with job seekers in providing the information and skills they need to secure employment, to work with those historically under-represented in the labour force, and to provide information to high school students regarding career planning.

The Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Centres are in the midst of re-positioning to meet the changing needs of the labour market. As an example, they are working much more closely with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and First Nations regarding the use of social assistance for First Nation clients as an active measure in labour force development. The Centres have a vision of the changing labour market and their role in providing services to it. This re-orientation and re-focussing of the Centres need to be supported and encouraged.

Word of mouth is the most traditional way of gathering employment information. Many jobs are never posted in the newspaper. Recently, social networking websites such as Facebook® are becoming increasingly important part of how people interact. With over 200 million users worldwide, Facebook® is the second most popular website in Canada (behind Google.ca) and the fourth most popular website in the world.¹⁵ The internet has changed the way people communicate. Therefore, organizing labour market information on the internet would increase efficiency in the labour market.

Labour Supply and Demand Matching

A great deal of employee recruitment occurs in the provincial post-secondary institutions. Unfortunately, the businesses that are often working hardest at attracting these workers are not based in Saskatchewan. This may be a contributing factor to the low level of post-secondary graduates in the Saskatchewan labour force, as well as a significant number of youth who seek career opportunities in other jurisdictions after graduation.

Improving provincial graduate retention begins with Saskatchewan based business taking a proactive role in student lives, from providing internships to tuition reimbursements, or simply recruiting during the school year, before the student graduates. Many graduates have secured employment prior to leaving school. Post-secondary institutions have a role informing business about the opportunities available to interact with students.

First Nation and Métis Labour Supply and Demand Matching

Aboriginal people, especially Aboriginal youth, are facing significant labour force attachment barriers.¹⁶ Often employers do not know how or where to find Aboriginal workers. On the other hand, Aboriginal workers often do not know where or how to access employment opportunities. In some instances it is necessary to connect potential Aboriginal workers with support services such as work-based skills training or adult basic education, job coaching and career path advice.

The provincial government's Aboriginal Employment Development Program (AEDP) is achieving success in preparing workplaces for Aboriginal people through representative workforce development agreements with employers. The AEDP has close to 100 partnership agreements with employers involving almost 4,000 Aboriginal workers. Similarly, Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services work primarily with labour supply in helping individuals learn where the jobs are, what types of work they want to do, how to improve their skills and employment prospects, and to link them to employers.

There are also many best practices of employers such as the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority (SIGA) and Cameco that have achieved dramatic success in employing Aboriginal people. Many projects such as the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT)

Industrial Career Centres and Job Horizons have established effective links in matching Aboriginal labour supply with employers.

The next decade represents the best opportunity that Saskatchewan has ever had to fully incorporate Aboriginal people into the labour market. There are currently a number of programs and services and providers who are active in this area. Despite significant investment in effort, progress on this front has been slow and incremental.

Generally speaking, as Aboriginal people attain higher levels of education, they are employed at similar rates as non-Aboriginal people. However, it will take time for Aboriginal education levels to rise. There is a more immediate need to address the estimated 20,000 Aboriginal people who are currently not fully participating in the province's labour force due to various barriers such as racism, education and skill levels.

Given the sheer size and scale of this challenge, there is a need to create a dedicated entity in the form of an Aboriginal Careers Corporation (ACC) that would coordinate and directly focus on engaging demand and supply development of the province's Aboriginal labour force. It would have a similar governance model to Saskatchewan's highly successful and respected Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trades and Certification Commission.

The ACC would be dedicated to getting Aboriginal people into the labour force and would be the basis for its performance and accountability. A business plan would need to be developed for the creation of this new entity, which would also include consultation with and buy-in from key stakeholders.

First Nation and Métis Labour Supply Chain Management

Well-educated Aboriginal people are employed at similar rates as non-Aboriginal people. There are, however, a number of less-educated Aboriginal people employed in entry level positions. There is a strong case to be made for upskilling these individuals to accelerate their advancement on a career path. This population has already obtained many of the workplace essential skills they need to be successful in employment. If they were upskilled and they advanced, this would create entry level opportunities for those who are currently unemployed. This is a broader view of supply chain management. For example, the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority (SIGA) employs many First Nations people, a good number in entry level positions. An arrangement should be sought with SIGA that would encourage their staff to upskill and to advance in their occupation or in higher value occupations. This would create opportunities to backfill these positions with new entry level First Nations people. Clearly, such an arrangement would have to be satisfactory to all the parties and it could not adversely affect their business operations.

Strategic Initiatives

1B.1 Build upon current communications strategies to establish a significant online presence to improve access to Saskatchewan Labour Market Forecasting and Information.

i) Role of Industry

- a) Coordinate efforts (i.e. industry association) that will centralize the needs of individual sectors, and publish this information online.

- b) Promote industry association engagement through individual corporate communications strategies
 - ii) Role of Government
 - a) Create a single internet portal that provides quick, user-friendly access to appropriate information and/or websites for users (individuals, business, post-secondary institutions)
 - b) Ensure information is timely and relevant to the user
 - iii) Role of Post-Secondary Institutions
 - a) Work with government and industry to promote the use of Saskatchewan labour market information to students and faculty
- 1B.2 Rebrand and refocus Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Service Centres**
 - i) Role of Industry
 - a) Work with Centres to provide information to government and post-secondary institutions for anticipated skill needs and labour market demands
 - ii) Role of Government
 - a) Focus the efforts of the Centres on the development of people and their skills
 - i. Become more involved in providing career planning information to primary and secondary schools
 - ii. Become more involved with the new Enterprise Regions to assist their efforts in dealing with labour market issues
 - iii. Provide more service with respect to labour market information gathering and distribution
 - iii) Role of Post-Secondary Institutions
 - a) Continue to consult with industry regarding critical skills and occupational demand
- 1B.3 Develop a plan identifying the interventions needed, the costs, and the time required for nearing parity between the Aboriginal population and the non-Aboriginal population**
 - 1B.3.1 Create an effective mechanism to match First Nations and Métis labour supply to demand that is overseen by an industry-led board of directors, with a governance model similar to the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission. Examine the feasibility and pilot an Aboriginal Career Corporation
 - 1B.3.2 Conduct a strategic analysis of labour market programs to assess what is working well and what other initiatives need to be undertaken to near employment parity
 - 1B.3.3 Develop a strategy to upskill Aboriginal employees in entry level positions to assist with their career advancement and to create opportunities for other Aboriginal people to replace them
- 1B.4 Develop mechanisms to increase communication between business and potential employees with the goal of labour supply and demand matching**
 - 1B.4.1 Encourage local businesses to communicate with provincial post-secondary students
 - 1B.4.1.1 Recruit students prior to graduation.
 - 1B.4.1.2 Develop mentorship programs for business succession.
 - 1B.4.1.3 Tuition assistance in exchange for return-of-service agreements.

Theme 2 - Focus on Workforce and Workplace Enhancement

People are one of the most important assets for industry, and long-term growth depends upon developing and utilizing the talent that resides within provincial borders. A workforce that is representative of the population and is well educated enhances the ability of the province to prosper. As a result, Saskatchewan's labour market strategy must centre its attention on improving both labour market participation levels for the provincial population and access to quality education.

From 2002 to 2008, Saskatchewan has increased its labour force participation rate from 66.8 per cent to 69.7 per cent, exceeding the Canadian average of 67.8 per cent. Comparatively, Saskatchewan's participation rate is still well below Alberta's rate of 74.7 per cent.¹⁷ In Saskatchewan, however, there remains significant portions of the provincial working-age population (15 years and over) that are underrepresented in the provincial labour force. This includes First Nations, Métis, youth, older workers, those reporting a disability, and women.

Saskatchewan will not achieve the full development of its provincial labour supply without addressing the barriers facing these groups. From a lack of education to prejudice, there are a multitude of reasons for lower participation rates for certain segments of the population. Keep in mind that closing the employment gap quickly, while desirable, is simply not possible. It will take time and ambition. Education and workplace accommodation will help ensure anyone in Saskatchewan that wants or needs a job can get one.

In 2008, the proportion of Saskatchewan's employed labour force with a post-secondary education was the second lowest in Canada.¹⁸ The link between education and societal success, both financial and socially, is unequivocal. A high quality education and training system is essential in building a successful economy and a healthy society. Individuals with a post-secondary education have higher voter registration, are more likely to make a charitable contribution and have better health.¹⁹ In 2005, 67 per cent of Canadians with a post-secondary education reported being in excellent to good health versus 43 per cent of those without a high school diploma.²⁰

It is fundamental that the province creates an environment that promotes the development of Saskatchewan's population. Not only will it increase provincial participation rates, it will position the province well for the future. Saskatchewan's labour force, education system and workplaces must be internationally competitive in order to retain and attract people and businesses.

By providing a high standard of education and skills training along with an accommodating workplace, the province will develop a workforce and workplace that is able to create prosperity and achieve a higher standard of living for all citizens – the ultimate goal of any society.

Objectives

- 2A. Develop a Skilled and Educated Workforce that is Internationally Competitive
- 2B. Prepare the Saskatchewan Workplace for Change
- 2C. Enhance Workplace Productivity

Objective 2A - Develop a Skilled and Educated Workforce that is Internationally Competitive

Today's economy requires a skilled, educated and dynamic workforce. Saskatchewan's population must be prepared to adapt to changing demands and to apply their skills, knowledge and capabilities to future opportunities. An efficient education and training system is essential for the provincial economy to maintain and increase comparative advantage. Additionally, life-long learning is crucial for individuals to remain competitive in today's global economy. Challenges must be addressed to improve education and skill training outcomes in Saskatchewan.

Primary and Secondary Education

Saskatchewan needs to address the overall effectiveness of its education and training system in relationship to the province's present and future labour force demands. There appears to be a broad mismatch between labour supply and demand.

The challenge begins with the kindergarten to grade 12 (K-12) systems, where Saskatchewan's students score below the national average for reading, mathematics and sciences and are last among western provinces.²¹ Furthermore, in 2006, 51 per cent of the province's adult Aboriginal population had completed Grade 12, compared to 72 per cent of the non-Aboriginal population.²² International studies suggest that the returns from investing in human capital are greatest in the years of primary and secondary education.²³

Completion of education poses a challenge in Saskatchewan. Although a high school diploma is not always necessary to secure well-paying jobs within Saskatchewan's strong economy, it remains necessary for entry into the majority of post-secondary education programs. It is also becoming increasingly necessary for long-term employment security in a knowledge-based economy. Seventy per cent of jobs created in the future will require some form of post-secondary education, and ninety per cent will require a high school education. However, less than fifty per cent of the provincial population has any post-secondary training, and approximately seventy percent has a high school education.²⁴

Literacy and Adult Basic Education

While Saskatchewan does compare favourably with respect to literacy, it is still a major challenge when one considers that 40 per cent of the adult population scores below what is required to thrive in a modern society. It is a significant challenge for the province's adult Aboriginal population where 63 per cent of urban Aboriginal people scored below Level 3 compared to 40% for the provincial adult population.²⁵ Level 3 is considered to be the minimum level for successful participation in society.

The ability to improve skills is essential for future competitiveness. This is true not only for people lacking literacy skills or a Grade 12 education, but for experienced workers that could be more productive with additional training. There must be a commitment to life-long learning by the Saskatchewan labour

Table 2 | Literacy Levels in Western Canada

	Levels 1/2	Level 3	Levels 4/5
Yukon	34%	39%	27%
Alberta	39%	40%	21%
British Columbia	40%	37%	23%
Saskatchewan	40%	39%	21%
Northwest Territories	45%	35%	20%
Manitoba	46%	37%	17%
Canada	48%	35%	17%

Source: Saskatchewan Literacy Network

force, industry and government. Being content with current education levels is not an option in an increasingly competitive world.

Poor literacy and a lack of a Grade 12 diploma severely limit labour force participation, even in a strong economy. Low levels of educational attainment by First Nations people have resulted in a “backlog” of First Nations people who are under-trained and under-educated. While there are many First Nation people who are succeeding and thriving in the mainstream system, many First Nations people were not successful in the secondary school system. Improvement in their lives will likely have to address such issues as alcohol and drug problems, family violence, depression, and poverty.

Participation rates for those with literacy challenges are increasing thanks in part to individuals upgrading through Adult Basic Education (ABE). ABE is an umbrella term that refers to a wide range of services, credit, and non-credit programs designed to help adult learners achieve their goals. These goals may include:

- Increasing education and/or and certification levels;
- Gaining prerequisites for further training or employment;
- Enhancing life skills, independence and self-sufficiency; or
- Learning skills in specific areas (such as technological literacy, communication skills, or portfolio development).²⁶

Adult Basic Education (ABE) is becoming increasingly important but it is not sufficient on its own. The answer to the challenges faced by many individuals lies in providing support beyond academics. Life coaching supports individuals on a case-by-case basis, and includes:

- Mentoring and role modeling,
- Service learning,
- Career-pathing, portfolio development, and values definition,
- Experiential learning, and
- Counselling.

Expanding the scope of ABE must recognize that the problems facing many First Nations people are multi-faceted and a cookie cutter approach will not work. It will require substantial commitment from many sources

Saskatchewan’s ABE program is doing well, demonstrated by the fact that over 70 per cent of students successfully complete their programs, 67 per cent pursue further employment-related training and 26 per cent go on to employment. While the current capacity of the province’s ABE system is approximately 6,000 students, waiting times must continue to be reduced.

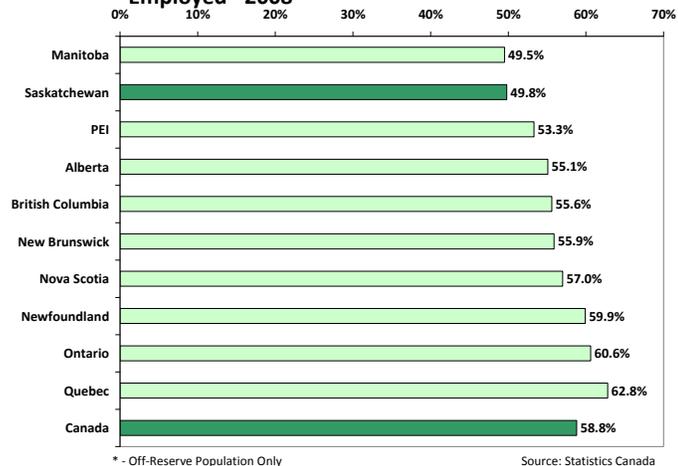
Post-Secondary Education

Provincial post-secondary access has not kept pace with the province’s economic growth. Saskatchewan places near the bottom of all Canadian provinces for post-secondary educational attainment. In terms of post-secondary graduates, Saskatchewan (49.8%) has the second lowest percentage after Manitoba and is well below the national average. Looked at another way, Saskatchewan would need an additional 46,000 employed post-secondary graduates to reach the national average of 58.8 per cent.²⁷

While Saskatchewan’s post-secondary institutions provide a quality education, its structure does not necessarily reflect the needs of the Saskatchewan economy. Current and future demand will require both university and non-university post-secondary educated individuals, yet the capacity to train future labour supply will not necessarily match demand.

Over the last two decades, major investments have been made in the province’s two largest universities, more than doubling building footprints. In the case of non-university institutions such as the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST), the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT), Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI), and the Regional Colleges, only recently has the provincial government invested in capacity expansion. In the case of the SIAST Kelsey Campus located in Saskatoon, there has been little capacity change for decades.

Figure 11 | Post-Secondary Graduates as a Percentage of the Employed* 2008



There are significant capacity issues at all technical institutes in Saskatchewan. There is an increased need for both program and capital funding. While program dollars have recently increased, the infrastructure necessary for additional delivery has not been added. Capacity issues must be addressed, either physical capacity or the return on investment of the current capacity. Otherwise, the province will have to increase reliance of in-migration for a pool of skilled and educated workers.

Issues such as those noted above should be studied in depth and reviewed within the next year, as both the SIAST and the Regional Colleges Acts require that “the Lieutenant Governor in Council shall, at least once in every five years, appoint a committee to review and report on the mandate of SIAST/Regional Colleges... and any other matters concerning this Act that the Lieutenant Governor in Council may specify.” The last review was conducted in 2005.

Experiential Learning

Knowledge and skills are not built solely in the traditional classroom setting. Individuals learn while on the job. Therefore, an expansion of experiential learning in Saskatchewan is vital. This includes co-op programs, mentoring and apprenticeship. Saskatchewan was one of the first jurisdictions in Canada to create an independent commission or authority with an industry-led board of directors to manage apprenticeship and trade certification in the province. The number of apprentices registered with the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission (SATCC) has increased to approximately 8,900 at March 31, 2009 from 5,436 apprentices in 2005. During that same time, 3,334 apprentices completed all requirements for journeyman certification and 807 trade certifiers acquired journeyman certification through alternate means. The Commission is currently registering an average of 246 new apprentices every month. In the 2007-08 fiscal year, an additional 2,853 new apprentices registered with SATCC, which is an increase of 18 per cent over the previous year. Aboriginal

apprentices account for 15.3 per cent of total apprentices. Saskatchewan's model is recognized as one of the best in Canada.

There is a case for both industry and government to promote apprenticeship and other forms of experiential learning such as co-op learning and experience programs. The University of Regina's co-op programs in engineering and business administration are an excellent example. For industry, these programs present an opportunity for early attachment to a future labour supply. Many businesses have found that apprenticeship results in a long term employee relationship. For government, apprenticeship often results in the retention of students who will contribute to the long term development of Saskatchewan communities. Recent investment in Trade and Skill Centres across the province continues to be a very successful youth-industry engagement and retention model.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognizing Prior Learning (RPL) is a relatively new conceptual framework being developed in Saskatchewan.²⁸ RPL expands the labour pool by using tools to identify knowledge, skills and attributes that qualify individuals for employment. Typically, there are three aspects of RPL programming:

- Credit transfer (CT) is defined as the process by which credit is granted towards a credential by one institution, for programs or courses previously completed at a recognized institution;
- Qualification Recognition (QR) practices involve the fair, credible and standardized assessment of credentials to assist employers, educational institutions and professional institutions and professional regulatory bodies in making informed decisions
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a systematic process that assesses and recognizes an individual's knowledge and skills regardless of where or how the learning was acquired.

RPL is useful to support job-seekers with low levels of formal education, for immigrant populations, and for Aboriginal people who may have left formal schooling early.²⁹ It also is beneficial for employee career-pathing where formal education or certification may be lacking, but a strong case can be made for skill development acquired through work experience.

It is necessary to improve the system of RPL in Saskatchewan. Manitoba has promoted and achieved the widespread adoption of RPL on an industry basis, while Saskatchewan has not. Improved engagement by Saskatchewan industry will improve employment outcomes, as well as reduce the number of people that are under-employed due to lack of skill recognition. Strengthening ties between local and international post-secondary institutions regarding credit transfer will also assist in increasing the supply of qualified individuals in the province.

Challenges industry faces includes time and cost to develop prior learning assessment standards, procedures and tools; and the expertise to assess international credentials and qualifications. A recent survey of Saskatchewan businesses indicates that 70 percent of employers would like to have RPL tools and services provided through a website, and would be willing to pay for RPL services to reduce the 'guess-work' and time involved that these processes require.³⁰

Responsiveness, Accessibility and Affordability

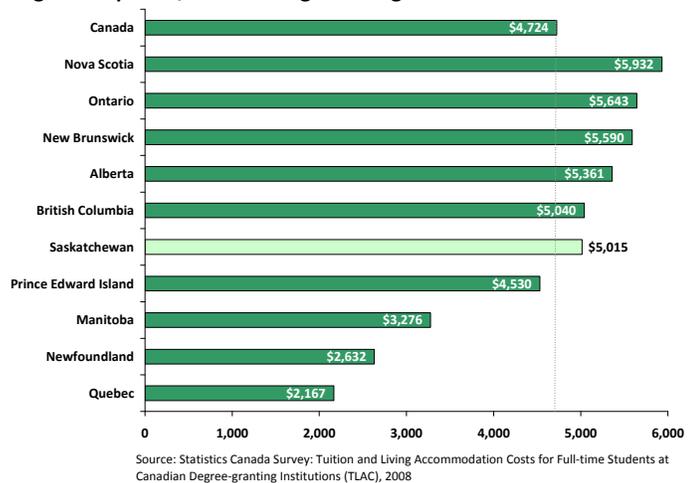
Post-secondary training and education has to be made available throughout the province, not just concentrated in the province's largest cities. The system needs to be responsive to the needs of both learners and industry. This will require greater integration between institutions, programs and services that can meet provincial as well as regional needs. The educational infrastructure is in place in all regions of the province and should be utilized. From regional colleges to high schools, training can be provided at these facilities in a temporary and responsive manner that will adapt to immediate industry demands.

The province must continue to invest in its post-secondary institutions to meet its current and future needs. Investment does not necessarily have to be all "bricks and mortar". It would include an expansion in co-op programs, industry training initiatives such as apprenticeships, mobile training units, and online education.

According to Millennium Scholarship Foundation (MSF) research, the largest single reason cited for not pursuing a post-secondary education was cost.³¹ Statistics Canada reports that average undergraduate tuition increased 135.4% in Canada from 1990/1991 to 2000/2001, over six times faster than inflation.³² The correlation between the rise in tuition fees and the steady withdrawal of public funding from post-secondary education institutions is direct and has necessitated the drastic increases in tuition and the level of student debt.³³ According to Statistics Canada, Saskatchewan's average undergraduate tuitions are above the national average. It is therefore prudent to review whether affordability is affecting educational outcomes in the province.

A report commissioned by the Government of Saskatchewan in 2007, "Post-Secondary Education Accessibility and Affordability Review" by Warren McCall, MLA, identifies the challenges of affordability and accessibility of post-secondary education in Saskatchewan. The vision and goals set out in the report are relevant to addressing the needs of the provincial labour market as identified in this strategy, and is worthy of further review.

Figure 12 | 2008/2009 Average Undergraduate Tuition - Canada



Aboriginal Governance Capacity

Approximately 25 years ago, the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development was established to conduct research to determine why some native nations were more successful than others. They discovered that the most successful nations practiced something called nation building. The most successful nations:

- Exercise practical control over their own developments,
- Develop effective institutions that operate by good rules,
- Develop institutions that match their cultures and are respected by their communities,

- Develop long term visions and strategies, and
- Have effective leadership.

The Harvard Project has since generalized their research results to include not just economic development but areas of government services including education. They have further generalized their results to include other countries – Canada, Australia, and New Zealand – where indigenous people were colonized. In short, the most successful native nations are the ones that are the best organized, structured, and governed.

Any solutions for Aboriginal communities will involve them taking control of their own development and establishing effective institutions, strategies, and leadership to execute their vision and strategies. The Province of Saskatchewan can support the capacity development of Aboriginal communities. An increase in Aboriginal governance capacity is a requisite to the effective participation of these communities across virtually any area of development.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of Saskatchewan’s post-secondary education system will ultimately determine its future. There is a growing need for the system to function more uniformly, as one system, without fragmentation and competition for resources, in order for the province to make best use of its available infrastructure and capacity.

There are significant benefits from education. For example, a more highly-educated workforce is likely to enhance the pace of technological progress and facilitate greater technology dissemination. Education and personal development is the key to knowledge generation which, in turn, drives innovation and productivity growth. New approaches aimed at increasing completion, and life-long learning overall, are critical to Saskatchewan’s future workforce prosperity.

Strategic Initiatives

- 2A.1 Significantly Improve Education and Skill levels in Saskatchewan’s Labour Force**
- 2A.1.1 Ensure that Saskatchewan’s grade 12 graduates have reading, math and science skills that exceed the national average as a minimum bench mark
 - 2A.1.2 Raise the level of post-secondary graduates in the provincial labour force to exceed the national average as a minimum bench mark.
 - 2A.1.3 Improve engagement between industry, government, education and training institutions to meet the foregoing challenges.
 - 2A.1.4 Develop a training system that is responsive to the needs of both industry and individuals through the use of Labour Market Forecasting and Information
 - 2A.1.4.1 Improve and enhance online education availability
 - 2A.1.4.2 Improve and enhance delivery of trades and skills training across SK
 - 2A.1.5 Improve access to and enhance the scope of Adult Basic Education.
 - 2A.1.6 Determine reasons for non-completion of schooling.
 - 2A.1.7 Improve the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) by industry
 - 2A.1.7.1 Develop and distribute information about RPL to stakeholders
 - 2A.1.7.2 Develop mechanisms to connect those interested in accessing RPL supports and expertise with the providers of that expertise

- 2A.2 Significantly Improve Education, Skill and Employment Outcomes for Aboriginal people**
- 2A.2.1 Determine potential areas of improvement for First Nations and Métis educational and skill outcomes
 - 2A.2.2 Raise the current Grade 12 education completion levels of First Nation and Métis adults to the level of the non-Aboriginal adults
 - 2A.2.3 Improve access to and enhance the scope of Adult Basic Education and substantially improve Aboriginal literacy levels
 - 2A.2.4 Continue to support the development of Aboriginal post-secondary education institutions
 - 2A.2.5 Support First Nations and Métis in Strengthening their Governance Capacity
 - 2A.2.5.1 Conduct a nation building seminar based on the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development in conjunction with First Nation and Métis partners as an inaugural event for this initiative.
 - 2A.2.5.2 Develop a leadership and governance centre of excellence to support the long term capacity of First Nation and Métis.
- 2A.3 Ensure that education and skill training is accessible and affordable for all Saskatchewan citizens at any point in their lifetime.**

Objective 2B - Prepare the Saskatchewan Workplace for Change

Saskatchewan will only be successful in developing its future labour force by recognising that its composition will be different than what it is today. It will have more Aboriginal people, more women, more persons with disabilities, older workers, and more persons of colour. Saskatchewan needs to prepare the workplace for change.

Preparing the workplace environment involves improving workplaces and working arrangements. Such improvements could include:

- Flex-time
- Reduced work hours
- Telecommuting
- Daycare
- Cultural awareness training
- Improved accessibility for disabled workers

Preparing the workplace will address labour demand by increasing participation of under-represented groups. Industry, government and post-secondary institutions play an integral role in creating an internationally competitive workplace.

Strategic Initiative

- 2B.1 Through a partnership with a number of labour market stakeholders to ensure widespread commitment, develop a major workplace enhancement and diversity program. This would include the development of core messages and toolkits regarding representative workforce development and how to achieve workplace diversity.**

Objective 2C – Enhance Workplace Productivity

Creating a workplace that is internationally competitive is a necessity for future growth. Enhancing the workplace environment involves improving workplaces and working arrangements. This includes investment in better capital to help people work smarter, not harder. This also includes investing in process improvements that eliminate waste and allow workers to be more productive. Addressing the specific needs of the work force will improve participation rates in the province.

Improving literacy and work-based essential skills in Saskatchewan's labour force will also enhance productivity as well as profitability. Research undertaken by the Conference Board of Canada indicates that increasing literacy skills in employees results in not only increased productivity, but also improved quality and accuracy which are essential for ISO certification. Statistics Canada indicates that a 1 per cent increase in literacy scores can result in a 2.5 per cent rise in productivity, and a 1.5 per cent gain in GDP. Furthermore, the C.D. Howe Institute found that increasing essential skills at the lower levels in the labour force had a larger impact on economic growth than producing more highly skilled graduates. Industry will need to invest in work-based training to improve productivity and maintain and enhance international competitiveness.

In addition to investments in work-based training, Saskatchewan industry will need to invest in capital and production processes such as lean manufacturing techniques. Improving productivity can be an effective response to dealing with skill shortages by increasing production without the addition of labour.

Achieving the right mix of capital, technology, and new processes is also necessary. While industry must lead this activity, government has a supportive role that focuses on improving market functioning, creating a positive climate for growth through investment, and encouraging innovation and the sharing of knowledge gained through research and development.

Strategic Initiatives

2C.1 Enhance productivity gains for Saskatchewan business.

- 2C.1.1 Promote a regulatory environment that enhances competitiveness and ensures existing and new regulations do not hinder labour force development.
- 2C.1.2 Work with employers to increase commercialization of new research and technology, including improvements to administrative processes and services, production, and delivery activities.
- 2C.1.3 Work with employers and industry associations to ensure small to medium sized companies have access to excellent benchmarking data to assist in their decision making.
- 2C.1.4 Work with employers and industry associations to increase work-based training that incorporates the development of essential skills in the workplace.

Theme 3 - Focus on Retention and Attraction of Highly Skilled Individuals

As the population ages and the global economy become more complex, the ability to retain and attract highly-skilled workers will be essential. Educated workers are more mobile than they have been in previous generations. The challenge for the province is to figure out how to attract these workers, and how to keep them. It is essential, since full participation of all under-represented groups in the province is not enough to meet future labour demand. Furthermore, an effort to retain youth and highly skilled workers is just as if not more important to future growth and sustainability of the province.

Saskatchewan's labour market strategy must deal with both retention and attraction issues. Virtually any competent manager realizes that it is easier and more cost effective to retain a quality workforce over recruiting a new one. Especially in a tight labour market, where both public and private enterprise are competing for talent, Saskatchewan will need to address retention. There has been a long tradition of other jurisdictions 'poaching' talent from Saskatchewan and this trend needs to be reversed in order for the province to realize its economic potential. This is especially true for the province's highly skilled workforce. Saskatchewan already has a higher education and skills deficit in its labour force compared to other provinces.

Based on the situational analysis prepared for the labour market strategy, Saskatchewan will have to look outside its borders for the future growth of its labour force. The provincial population, given its age profile and declining birth rate, will not be able to generate the growth in its labour supply to meet future labour demand. Further, this assumes that the strategy has been successful in increasing participation rates for the province's Aboriginal population, women, those reporting a disability and other visible minorities. As a result Saskatchewan will have to attract workers from other provinces and other countries. In the future, this will place Saskatchewan in an intense competitive environment with other jurisdictions facing similar circumstances.

Demographics are also impacting the province's small to medium-sized business sector. In 2008, 73 per cent of paid employment was in establishments employing fewer than 100 employees.³⁴ Like the rest of the province's labour force, Saskatchewan's entrepreneurs, who are often self-employed, are aging. In 2008, 36 per cent of the self employed were 55 years of age or older compared with 29 per cent in 1998.³⁵ Self-employment counts for 16 per cent of Saskatchewan's employed labour force.³⁶ The Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) estimates that 70 per cent of Saskatchewan's small to medium-sized business owners are planning to exit their businesses over the next decade and only 10 per cent have a formal succession plans. Saskatchewan will need to attract a new generation of entrepreneurs to retain and expand these businesses.

Increasing educational requirements for new jobs is driving the need for skilled labour in Saskatchewan. Having one of the lowest post-secondary educational attainment levels of all provinces in Canada does not position the Saskatchewan well for future growth. Therefore, there is a need to retain experienced workers in the labour force longer, while at the same time, attract skilled migrants to the province to fill job vacancies.

Objectives

- 3A. Market the opportunities Saskatchewan presents
- 3B. Ensure Saskatchewan retains its youth and skilled labour force.
- 3C. Promote the transition of Saskatchewan's small to medium-sized enterprises to a new generation of entrepreneurs.
- 3D. Develop the necessary infrastructure to accommodate a growing labour force.

Objective 3A - Market the opportunities Saskatchewan presents

Relatively robust provincial economic growth and the lack of growth in other economies have given a recent advantage to Saskatchewan in attracting and retaining labour. However, it is unlikely that these conditions will remain. While Saskatchewan's economy may continue to grow, other jurisdictions will eventually begin to grow again. Regardless of economic circumstances, most of the industrialized world - from Alberta, Ontario and Nova Scotia to the northern U.S. and Europe - is still facing the same demographic problems as Saskatchewan,. All these jurisdictions will, at some point, face acute shortages of skilled labour.

Immigration has accounted for 60 per cent of the growth in Canada's labour force³⁷, and this will have to increase in the future given demographic conditions. There will be a worldwide competition for skilled immigrants. Traditionally Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver have been the favoured destinations for immigrants to Canada. While Saskatchewan has enjoyed recent success, immigration levels are below those in Manitoba and Alberta and competition will intensify in the future. The Ministry of Advanced Education Employment and Labour has been preparing a comprehensive immigration strategy. This initiative is well founded given the competitive circumstances for both attracting and retaining skilled immigrants. This strategy will be critical if Saskatchewan wants to achieve long term success with immigration

Saskatchewan will have to continue to aggressively promote a Saskatchewan option to attract both skilled labour and investment. If it is going to be successful, it will also have to develop more targeted and effective messaging.

Most successful marketing campaigns have a branding strategy as their focus. This goes to the heart of what an organization is selling. Current provincial campaigns such as attending out-of-province career fairs and targeted campaigns to attract medical positions have been successful. Given that Saskatchewan must sustain its recent migration and immigration successes, their effectiveness would greatly benefit from being part of an overall branding strategy.

Given the competitive nature of both labour and capital markets, the province needs to become more targeted in its marketing efforts. The branding strategy would apply to both labour retention and attraction – a successful attraction strategy will hopefully result in long-term retention. A branding strategy would also address long-standing myths and images. Many people still consider agriculture as the province's principal industry. The Government of Saskatchewan is currently considering a branding strategy.

Strategic Initiative

3A.1 Develop an effective branding strategy for Saskatchewan

Objective 3B - Ensure Saskatchewan retains its youth and skilled labour force

A long-term trend has been the out-migration of Saskatchewan youth. There has been a significant leakage of post-secondary graduates outside the province. In particular Saskatchewan is losing a large number of university graduates. This is a contributing factor to the lower level of post-secondary education levels in the province's labour force.

At the same time, older skilled workers represent a potential pool of skilled labour. They also can be valuable mentors that can transition skills to younger generations of workers. Participation rates of the 55 and older age group have risen over the past decade as these individuals still feel productive and that they can contribute to the economy. Retention of older workers is essential; however, it does have its challenges. Older workers may want reduced hours, more vacation, or have limited physical abilities that affect productivity.

It will be important that Saskatchewan's branding strategy embraces youth as well as older workers in terms of the benefits to staying in Saskatchewan and the quality of life the province has versus other jurisdictions.

Furthermore, industry must work together to take advantage of the opportunity to retain workers when there is a decline in economic activity in a particular sector. Skills are often transferable between industries and workers can be transitioned to other sectors temporarily or permanently. This is especially important for many of Saskatchewan's newest immigrants, as they are vulnerable to deportation if they are laid off.

Strategic Initiatives

3B.1 Develop an older worker retention strategy

3B.2 Develop a youth retention strategy

3B.3 Encourage inter-industry collaboration to retain skilled workers

Objective 3C – Enhance the transition of Saskatchewan's small to medium-sized enterprises to a new generation of entrepreneurs.

Given the size of Saskatchewan's small to medium-sized business sector, it requires consideration in the province's labour market strategy. Comparatively, Saskatchewan has not maintained the same level of self-employment compared to other provinces. From 2001 to 2006, employment generated by self-incorporated Saskatchewan businesses grew by 9.3 per cent compared to 27.2 per cent and 23.6 per cent for Alberta and Manitoba respectively.

The large number of business owners who intend to retire over the next ten years will create an opportunity for Saskatchewan to grow a new group of entrepreneurs who will expand these businesses. It can create opportunities for business succession planning from existing entrepreneurs who are retiring with Aboriginal entrepreneurial development. Saskatchewan's Aboriginal population has a self-employment rate of 5 per cent compared to 17 per cent for the non-Aboriginal labour force.³⁸ There could be excellent opportunities for mentoring new entrepreneurs drawn from the province's emerging Aboriginal business community. Also existing financial institutions, such as the Clarence Campeau Development Fund, prefer financing the acquisition of existing businesses as opposed to new start-ups. There are also opportunities to attract immigrant investors and entrepreneurs who would be interested in acquiring Saskatchewan businesses.

There are organizations in Saskatchewan or Canada that provides the kind of services required to enable successful transitioning of business ownership. This includes providing assistance around succession planning, facilitating mentorship from existing to new ownership, business valuation expertise, linkages to financing for business acquisition and expansion, and matching buyers and sellers.

It is essential that business owners realize the necessity of succession planning, and that services are available to transition businesses. Potentially the Entrepreneurial Foundation of Saskatchewan could fulfil this informative role. The Foundation could bring both integrity and process to successful succession planning for Saskatchewan businesses. There may also be a role for such organizations as the Business Mentorship Institute (BMI) in supporting business succession.

Strategic Initiatives

3C.1 Assemble a group of key stakeholders to create a strategic plan that promotes and facilitates business succession planning to new entrepreneurs.

3D - Develop the necessary infrastructure to accommodate a growing labour force

None of the foregoing objectives and actions will be successful if the province does not have the infrastructure to support a growing labour force. In order to attract and retain individuals, the province must focus on improving infrastructure and amenities. Quality of life for current and future citizens of the province must be maintained and enhanced over the long-term.

Increasing Saskatchewan' population will put pressures on the infrastructure. Adding about 120,000 workers and their families would cause the provincial population to approach 1.3 Million. Saskatchewan's largest cities of Regina and Saskatoon would approach populations of close to 300,000 and 350,000, respectively.

While there is a clear need to attract people to Saskatchewan, to address current and future labour market demand as well as to enable business succession planning for Saskatchewan's retiring entrepreneurs, housing is becoming a major barrier. Vacancy rates in Saskatchewan are very low. A 3 per cent rental vacancy rate is considered to be a benchmark for most cities where there is still an adequate supply of rental housing available at a competitive price. The City of Regina has a current vacancy rate of 1.7 per cent and the City of Saskatoon has a 0.9 per cent vacancy rate.³⁹

Saskatchewan can learn from other jurisdictions. For example, Alberta has a 20 year capital plan for infrastructure that is coordinated by a Ministry of Infrastructure. Saskatchewan is currently in the initial stages developing an infrastructure plan. Such a plan will be critical to accommodate a growing population and in attracting and retaining a provincial labour force.

Strategic Initiatives

3D.1 Create a long term (20 year) provincial infrastructure plan that will prepare Saskatchewan for population growth and changes in demographics. It must be integrated with municipal and other institutional plans, and built in consultation with industry and post-secondary institutions.

3D.2 Create a housing strategy to address the supply of affordable housing.

Appendix A: Summary of Recommended Strategic Initiatives

<i>Theme 1 – Focus on Information and Communication</i>	
1A. Timely, relevant, accessible and transparent information	
1A.1	Fill in the gaps in Saskatchewan's labour market information system.
1A.1.1	Collect on-reserve employment information.
1A.1.2	Conduct research into the employment and retirement intentions of the baby boomer generation.
1A.1.3	Complete a comprehensive wage survey (currently being undertaken by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment, and Labour)
1A.1.4	Collect information on vacancy rates by industry and occupation.
1A.1.5	Conduct labour demand analysis on the major capital projects proposed over the next decade in Saskatchewan.
1A.1.6	Conduct a survey focussing on the intentions of Saskatchewan's post-secondary students prior to graduation
1A.2	Enhance the current Labour Market Forecasting and Information (LMFI) to ensure it meets user needs, and is more transparent, accessible, useable and timely.
1A.2.1	Provide first-rate information to industry on labour force issues and human resources best practices, opportunities, programs, and tools.
1A.2.2	Enhance the quality and delivery of information available to individuals regarding career, education and training opportunities, as well as resources and tools available to support career and educational decisions.
1A.2.3	Develop sector supply and demand projections by occupation for each industry sector such as the ones developed by the Construction Sector Council, the Petroleum Human Resources Council, and the Saskatchewan Mining Association to assist government and educational institutions to plan for program delivery.
1A.2.4	Develop regional labour market planning capabilities through the new Enterprise Regions based on a model similar to Northern Saskatchewan's highly successful Northern Labour Market Committee.
1A.3	Task Enterprise Saskatchewan with the delegation of tracking the implementation and results of the strategic initiatives outlined in this paper, and report on the state of the Saskatchewan labour market.
1A.3.1	Benchmark the strategy using labour market metrics such as participation rates, employment rates, employment growth, income levels, education levels, migration and population rates by age, gender, and ethnicity, and compare them to national levels.
1A.3.2	Gauge the effectiveness of the Government of Saskatchewan's investment in training by tracking enrolment, graduation, accreditation, accessibility and affordability.

Theme 1 – Focus on Information and Communication

1B. Enhanced Communication and Collaboration	
1B.1	Build upon current communications strategies to establish a significant online presence to improve access to Saskatchewan Labour Market Forecasting and Information.
	i) Role of Industry
	a) Coordinate online efforts (i.e. industry association) that will centralize the needs of individual sectors.
	b) Promote industry association engagement through individual corporate communications strategies
	ii) Role of Government
	a) Create a single internet portal that provides quick, user-friendly access to appropriate information and/or websites for users (individuals, business, post-secondary institutions)
	b) Ensure information is timely and relevant to the user
	iii) Role of Post-Secondary Institutions
	a) Work with government and industry to promote the use of Saskatchewan labour market information to students and faculty
1B.2	Rebrand and refocus the Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Service Centres
	i) Role of Industry
	a) Work with Centres to provide information to government and post-secondary institutions for anticipated skill needs and labour market demands;
	ii) Role of Government
	a) Focus the efforts of the Centres on the development of people and their skills
	i. Become more involved in providing career planning information to primary and secondary schools.
	ii. Become more involved with the new Enterprise Regions to assist their efforts in dealing with labour market issues.
	iii. Provide more service with respect to labour market information gathering and distribution.
	iii) Role of Post-Secondary Institutions
	a) Continue to consult with industry regarding critical skills and occupational demand
1B.3	Develop a plan identifying the interventions needed, the costs, and the time required for nearing parity between the Aboriginal population and the non-Aboriginal population.
1B.3.1	Create an effective mechanism to match First Nations and Métis labour supply to demand that is overseen by an industry-led board of directors, similar to the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission. Examine the feasibility and pilot an Aboriginal Career Corporation.
1B.3.2	Conduct a strategic analysis of labour market programs to assess what is working well and what other initiatives need to be undertaken to near employment parity.
1B.3.3	Develop a strategy to upskill Aboriginal employees in entry level positions to assist with their career advancement and to create opportunities for other Aboriginal people to replace them.
1B.4	Develop mechanisms to increase communication between business and potential employees with the goal of labour supply and demand matching
1B.4.1	Encourage local businesses to communicate with provincial post-secondary students
1B.4.1.1	Recruit students prior to graduation.
1B.4.1.2	Develop mentorship programs for business succession.
1B.4.1.3	Tuition assistance in exchange for return-of-service agreements.

Theme 2 - Focus on Workforce and Workplace Enhancement

Develop an Internationally Competitive Labour Force	
2A.1	Significantly Improve Education and Skill levels in Saskatchewan's Labour Force
2A.1.1	Ensure that Saskatchewan's grade 12 graduates have reading, math and science skills that exceed the national average as a minimum bench mark
2A.1.2	Raise the level of post-secondary graduates in the provincial labour force to exceed the national average as a minimum bench mark.
2A.1.3	Improve engagement between industry, government, education and training institutions to meet the foregoing challenges.
2A.1.4	Develop a training system that is responsive to the needs of both industry and individuals through the use of Labour Market Forecasting and Information
2A.1.4.1	Improve and enhance online education availability
2A.1.4.2	Improve and enhance delivery of trades and skills training across Saskatchewan
2A.1.5	Improve access to and enhance the scope of Adult Basic Education.
2A.1.6	Determine reasons for non-completion of schooling.
2A.1.7	Improve the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) by industry
2A.1.7.1	Develop and distribute information about RPL to stakeholders
2A.1.7.2	Develop mechanisms to connect those interested in accessing RPL supports and expertise with the providers of that expertise
2A.2	Significantly Improve the Education, Skill and Employment Outcomes for Aboriginal people.
2A.2.1	Determine potential areas of improvement for First Nations and Métis educational and skill outcomes.
2A.2.2	Raise the current Grade 12 education completion levels of First Nation and Métis adults to the level of the non-Aboriginal adults
2A.2.3	Improve access to and enhance the scope of Adult Basic Education and substantially improve Aboriginal literacy levels
2A.2.4	Continue to support the development of Aboriginal post-secondary education institutions
2A.2.5	Support First Nations and Métis in Strengthening their Governance Capacity
2A.2.5.1	Conduct a nation building seminar based on the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development in conjunction with First Nation and Métis partners as an inaugural event for this initiative.
2A.2.5.2	Develop a leadership and governance centre of excellence to support the long term capacity of First Nation and Métis.
2A.3	Ensure that education and skill training is accessible and affordable for all Saskatchewan citizens at any point in their lifetime.
Prepare the Workplace for Change	
2B.1	Through a partnership with a number of labour market stakeholders to ensure widespread commitment, develop a major workplace enhancement and diversity program. This would include the development of core messages and toolkits regarding representative workforce development and how to achieve workplace diversity.

Enhance Workplace Productivity	
2C.1	Enhance productivity gains for Saskatchewan business.
2C.1.1	Promote a regulatory environment that enhances competitiveness and ensures existing and new regulations do not hinder labour force development.
2C.1.2	Work with employers to increase commercialization of new research and technology, including improvements to administrative processes and services, production, and delivery activities.
2C.1.3	Work with employers and industry associations to ensure small to medium sized companies have access to excellent benchmarking data to assist in their decision making.
2C.1.4	Work with employers and industry associations to increase work-based training that incorporates the development of essential skills in the workplace.
Theme 3 - Focus on Retention and Attraction of Highly Skilled Individuals	
Market the opportunities Saskatchewan presents	
3A.1	Develop an effective branding strategy for Saskatchewan
Ensure Saskatchewan retains its youth and skilled labour force.	
3B.1	Develop an older worker retention strategy
3B.2	Develop a youth retention strategy
3B.3	Encourage inter-industry collaboration to retain skilled workers.
Enhance the transition of Saskatchewan's small to medium-sized enterprises to a new generation of entrepreneurs.	
3C.1	Assemble a group of relevant stakeholders to create a strategic plan that promotes and facilitates business succession planning to new entrepreneurs.
Develop the necessary infrastructure to accommodate a growing labour force. Ensure the transition of Saskatchewan's small to medium-sized enterprises to a new generation of entrepreneurs.	
3D.1	Create a long term (20 year) provincial infrastructure plan that will prepare Saskatchewan for population growth and changes in demographics. It must be integrated with municipal and other institutional plans, and built in consultation with industry and post-secondary institutions.
3D.2	Create a housing strategy to address the supply of affordable housing.

Endnotes

- ¹ Table D3, Labour Market Issues in Saskatchewan: A Situational Analysis, February 2009, SaskTrends Monitor
- ² Statistics Canada Labour Force Historical Review CDROM 71F0004XCB Table T01
- ³ Canadian Council on Learning
- ⁴ This is a demand scenario only. It is not a projection or expected outcome. If the economy does better or worse, the demand projections will need to be adjusted accordingly.
- ⁵ Note that the boom-bust-echo cycle will have another bust as the children of Generation X enter the labour force. Addressing labour market challenges will prepare the province for this eventuality.
- ⁶ This is a supply scenario only. It is not a projected outcome. It shows theoretically how future supply could be met. Different supply sources may respond better or worse than in this scenario.
- ⁷ Statistics Canada 2006 Census 97-559-XCB2006019
- ⁸ Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy, 2005 (Now Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy.)
- ⁹ Labour Market Issues in Saskatchewan: A Situational Analysis, SaskTrends Monitor, February 2009, p38
- ¹⁰ Labour Market Issues in Saskatchewan: A Situational Analysis, SaskTrends Monitor, February 2009, p31
- ¹¹ It is important to note that the migrant and immigrant targets are population numbers. Not all migrants or immigrants are of working-age or will participate in the labour force, such as children or caregivers. Therefore, the actual number of workers entering the province will be less than the numbers shown in Figure 9.
- ¹² Recognizing Prior Learning in Saskatchewan Current Practices, Challenges and Future Directions, The Saskatchewan Recognizing Prior Learning Co-ordinating Group (RCG) Environmental Scan Working Group, 2007
- ¹³ 2008 Saskatchewan Education Indicators Report, Saskatchewan Education, 2008
- ¹⁴ **Reference unavailable at time of publication.**
- ¹⁵ <http://www.alexa.com/topsites>
- ¹⁶ Labour Market Issues in Saskatchewan: A Situational Analysis, SaskTrends Monitor, February 2009, p36
- ¹⁷ Statistics Canada Labour Force Historical Review - 71F0004XCB CDROM - Table 1
- ¹⁸ Statistics Canada Labour Force Historical Review - 71F0004XCB CDROM - Table 2
- ¹⁹ Canadian Council on Learning: Post-secondary Education in Canada: Meeting our Needs?
- ²⁰ Canadian Learning and Knowledge Centre
- ²¹ 2008 Saskatchewan Indicators Report
- ²² Statistics Canada
- ²³ OECD 2000
- ²⁴ Statistics Canada
- ²⁵ Statistics Canada, Building on our Competencies :Canadian Results of the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey, 2005.
- ²⁶ <http://www.aeel.gov.sk.ca/abe>
- ²⁷ Labour Market Issues in Saskatchewan: A Situational Analysis, SaskTrends Monitor, February 2009
- ²⁸ Recognizing Prior Learning in Saskatchewan Current Practices, Challenges and Future Directions, The Saskatchewan Recognizing Prior Learning Co-ordinating Group (RCG) Environmental Scan Working Group, 2007
- ²⁹ Recognizing Prior Learning in Saskatchewan Current Practices, Challenges and Future Directions, The Saskatchewan Recognizing Prior Learning Co-ordinating Group (RCG) Environmental Scan Working Group, 2007
- ³⁰ Recognizing Prior Learning in Saskatchewan Current Practices, Challenges and Future Directions, The Saskatchewan Recognizing Prior Learning Co-ordinating Group (RCG) Environmental Scan Working Group, 2007
- ³¹ MSF, The Price of Knowledge: Access and Student Finance in Canada, 2002, 13.
- ³² Statistics Canada - The Daily, University tuition fees 2002/2003, August 21, 2002.
- ³³ CAUT, 6.
- ³⁴ Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey

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- ³⁵ Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey
- ³⁶ 2006 Census Statistics Canada 97-564-XCB2006002
- ³⁷ Boyd, Monica, 2005 Immigration, Internal Migration and the Distribution of Canada's Population
- ³⁸ 2006 Census Statistics Canada 97-564-XCB2006002
- ³⁹ CMHC (http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/corp/about/cahoob/data/data_004.cfm)