

2006 Canadian Bus Industry Human Resources Study

Summary Report



*Motor Carrier Passenger Council Of Canada
Conseil canadien du transport de passagers*



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The Motor Carrier Passenger Council of Canada (MCPCC) provides a crucial national forum for industry, labour, government, and education to share resources and concepts, formulating an integrated pan-Canadian human resources strategy. The Council brings the required financial and human resources together, transforming *Vision to Reality*.

MCPCC's work is focused on several key areas: raising awareness of and advocating for the bus industry across Canada, reaching government, education, and the public; recognizing the outstanding service of bus professionals; promoting industry-wide career opportunities, and the exceptional training and development that has contributed to the industry's commendable safety record.

MCPCC is constantly seeking innovative ways to work with industry and government to promote the bus sector as a critical link in the nation's transportation infrastructure. It is a privilege to advocate for the exceptional men and women dedicated to this essential service.

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Part One - Study Overview

The motor carrier passenger industry has significant economic and societal influence on Canada and Canadians producing many benefits including: *public mobility, cost-efficient transportation that stimulates economic development, environmentally sound solutions to traffic congestion, reduction of energy consumption and improved air quality.*

In summary, it is evident that this industry is a substantial and indispensable contributor to the economic strength of Canada and to the quality of life enjoyed by our citizens.

It is essential to the industry's future viability to ensure a constant workforce of qualified, skilled individuals. The **Motor Carrier Passenger Council of Canada (MCPCC)**, in partnership with Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC), commissioned a comprehensive human resources Study to provide a thorough overview of the evolving challenges faced by this industry and the related implications for its workforce.

This Study has identified that changing national, regional and global demographic, economic, legislative, technological, competitive and fiscal influences continue to present challenges that require the industry to adapt, innovate and invest, particularly in relation to its human resources. The findings will assist in the development of a forward-looking human resources strategy applicable to the next decade.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The key objectives of this Study were:

- to assess the current and future business environment
- to identify, assess and forecast technology trends and developments in the context of emerging human resource skills requirements
- to develop a workforce profile including changing skills requirements and identifying the steps needed to ensure future skilled workforce sufficiency
- to examine current workforce planning and development activities and recommend recruitment, retention and return on investment (ROI) training strategies
- to identify industry "best practices" with respect to key issues recognized by the industry
- to develop an encompassing vision and recommendations to create a targeted human resource strategy for the sector

Research Activities

Findings are based on extensive research activities, including:

- six regional consultation sessions with over 150 participants from industry employers and employees, labour, associations, education, manufacturers and governments
- over fifty interviews with key stakeholder groups including employers, industry associations, union representatives, education institutions, manufacturers, government agencies and international contacts
- eight site visits conducted throughout Canada with urban transit, intercity, school bus and tour and charter transportation service providers
- web and paper surveys of a representative sampling of employers, owners, managers and human resources practitioners covering all sub-sectors in all provinces and territories
- telephone data collection activities for four case studies
- extensive telephone interviews to build reliable data relative to the school and intercity sub-sectors
- a comprehensive review of secondary sources, databases and internet search



Part Two - A Tour of the Bus Industry

Industry Profile

The motor carrier passenger industry of Canada (the bus industry) is a significant force in the Canadian economy, with business activity of nearly 1,500 companies, generating more than \$7.6 billion in 2004 revenues, and employing over 90,000 full-time equivalent people. It is an essential component of Canada's transportation infrastructure. The bus industry is responsible for moving more than 1.5 billion passengers annually (Statistics Canada, 2005).

The industry encompasses five sub-sectors:

- urban transit systems
- scheduled intercity bus carriers
- school bus services
- tour and charter carriers
- accessible services (paratransit)

Business and Regulatory Environment

Over the course of this Study, members of the industry and other stakeholders were provided the opportunity to comment on the industry's work and on-going issues that continue to shape it. A human resources Study completed in 1996-1997 herein referred to as the Price Waterhouse (PW) Study, identified a number of *major strategic human resources issues* with respect to the industry's ability to manage its human resources.

These were:

- managing an ageing workforce
- developing interpersonal skills and a customer-service focus
- ensuring employee safety
- improving communications
- recruiting and retaining well-qualified employees
- enhancing the image and professionalism of drivers/operators
- reducing absenteeism
- addressing employment equity for women and visible minorities

The following recommendations were made to provide a foundation for future tangible action by the industry as a whole, as well as by individual service providers, to address human resource issues.

- create an industry-wide human resource forum
- encourage the industry to acquire new skills
- facilitate change management
- foster joint labour-management actions at the local level
- build readiness for managing change at local level
- plan and develop a strategic approach to human resource management

Many recommendations in the (PW) Study committed the industry to adopt strategies and actions on a local level. Industry results and progress in these areas are compared and discussed throughout the 2006 **On the Move** Study.

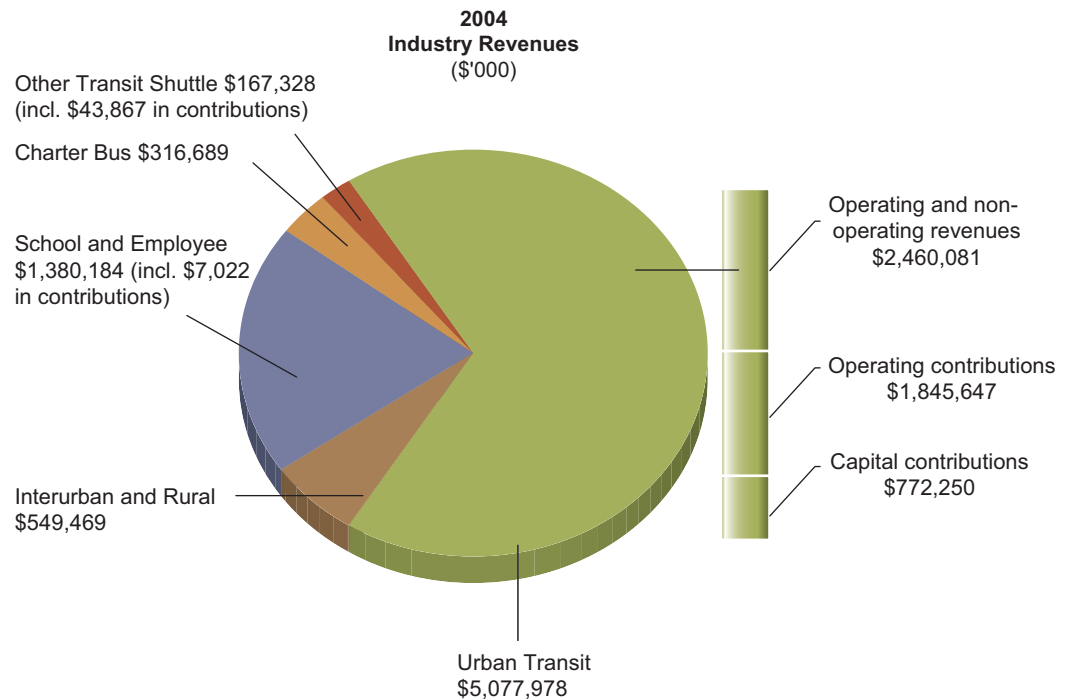
In the years since the PW Study the industry has faced unprecedented events that have made a lasting impact on the way it conducts its business. These include but are not limited to: *increased security threats, SARS and other pandemics, environmental issues, restrictive legislation and increased workplace violence*. Many of the *recurring human resources issues* identified in that Study continue to resonate within the industry today along with the need to effectively address and cope with this changing environment.

Progress has been made on a number of fronts. For example, the MCPCC was created in 1999 as the industry-wide human resources forum and has focused on addressing many of the recommendations such as enhancing the image and professionalism of bus operators with national programs such as *Occupational Standards, Accreditation, Certification, Career Awareness and Recruitment* best practices. Furthermore, associations and unions have taken a stronger role in advocating the bus industry to governments, and developing and delivering effective education programs. Individual companies have progressively addressed many issues and have been more open in the sharing of best practices and policies -- a number are outlined in the *Case Studies* section of the detailed Study.



Industry Revenues and Government Contributions

The bus industry generated more than \$7.6 billion in total revenues in 2004. Urban transit, predominantly publicly operated, is the sub-sector with the greatest revenues, producing 67.8% of the industry total. It should be noted that 51.6% of urban transit revenues are operating and capital contributions from government necessitated by the complexity of the urban infrastructure, combined with the essential nature of urban services.



Public Sector Investment

Public sector funding for intercity service providers exists in the form of small subsidies at the provincial level; the sub-sector receives no direct federal assistance. Urban transit systems receive funding primarily through the provinces or territories and directly from municipalities. Provincial investment in transit has generally strengthened over the last few years (CUTA).

In addition, the recent federal and provincial decisions to allocate substantial gas tax revenues to their transit investment, with particular emphasis on ridership growth represent a tangible increase in sub-sector funding commitments. While most provinces provide some funding, the monetary value of some grant programs is small. Indirect funding such as unallocated grants from provinces to municipalities (general revenue that may be used for transit) and dedicated taxes or fees (e.g., fuel taxes and vehicle registration fees) is common. Overall, funding is growing, but is still considered inadequate by many jurisdictions (CUTA - 2003/2005).

Student transportation funding also occurs at the provincial level, however funding formulae vary by province. While funding comes primarily from the general revenue of the provinces, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan rely on partial municipal funding, and Manitoba school districts earn extra revenue by taxing transportation. Satisfaction with the adequacy of funding varies by province.

Structure

The structure of the industry has changed significantly as a result of widespread industry consolidations in the school bus, intercity and tour and charter sub-sectors; this has repeatedly involved international investment. Selective evaluation of public/private partnerships and inter-modal alliances is continuing, primarily motivated by economic and competitive issues.

Changing Ridership Demands

The age distribution of the Canadian population will change dramatically over the next 15 years. The only significant growth in population cohort will occur in those aged fifty years and more. In contrast to the rapid rise in the number of elderly Canadians, overall population data point to a progressively declining rate of growth. The growth rate, currently at just under 0.9%, will dip below 0.8% by 2014 and is expected to continue to decrease. A significant proportion of the marginal growth in the general population will be directly attributable to immigration, offsetting the Canadian population's declining net natural increase (Conference Board of Canada, 2004).

This will have significant implications for the bus industry. Although research indicates that seniors show increasing rates of personal vehicle use, the bus industry will likely see increases in demand for services from seniors over the next ten years. In addition to devices that accommodate limited mobility, buses will also have to cater to the needs of those with other disabilities, such as hearing and sight impairments (CUTA, 2004b). It is expected that further improvements in the accessibility of transport will involve the use of new and emerging electronic technologies.

Currently, Canada adopts a voluntary approach to improving accessibility. As ridership needs grow for accessible services, and in light of an impending United Nations Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, the industry must be in a position to respond.

The Conference Board of Canada (2004) predicts an increase in annual immigration levels from 235,500 in 2003-2004 to 252,800 in 2015, but claims little is currently being done by Canadian employers to access this labour resource pool. Greater efforts and outreach are needed to overcome the language and cultural barriers and facilitate job access. The report concluded that Canadian industry needs to provide instruction in understanding diversity, develop courses that will assist new immigrants with both language and overall skill development, and work with government agencies to encourage new immigrant populations to participate in industry.



Safety and Security

The passenger/public safety record of the Canadian bus industry is exceptional. For the five year period 2000 - 2004 inclusive, only 186 of 20,417 (0.91%) vehicles of all types involved in Canadian traffic accidents in which a fatality occurred were buses. Only 28 of 14,135 (0.20%) traffic fatalities that occurred during this period were attributed to bus involvement in an accident. (Transport Canada 2005).

All sectors of the industry are subject to several laws and regulations regarding safety including the National Safety Code, the Motor Vehicle Transport Act and Motor Carrier Fitness Certificate Regulation, Hours of Service Regulations, and the pending child restraint systems anchorage (CRS) regulations.

The effects of recent reactions to Canada-U. S. border security concerns, particularly the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), which will require all travellers to present a passport or other appropriate secure documents when entering or re-entering the U. S. A. , will pose significant challenges to the tour and charter sub-sectors. From ensuring that all cross-border employees and travellers are prepared and legally permitted to cross the border, to dealing with the scheduling challenges posed by any delays or disruptions in service, the industry will need to manage both the perception and the reality of border crossing-related delays, annoyances and risks.

Labour

The levels of union representation in the industry differ significantly by sub-sector. By far, the most highly unionized workforce belongs to the urban sub-sector where almost 90% of all employees were represented by a union in 2004, a figure that has risen from a low of just under 80% in 1999. Though fluctuating, figures show that roughly 60% of intercity employees are unionized, as are 25% of school bus employees.

During the course of the Study stakeholders commented that the relationship between management and labour throughout the industry is generally positive and co-operative. This relationship is expected to continue, particularly as these parties build on recognizing the need to work together in order to effectively address major on-going common concerns such as violence and security.

Because of a strong focus on security and safety of personnel, it is expected that Canadian unions undergoing collective bargaining processes over the next several years will insist on a solid commitment from employers to increased protection of the men and women of the industry.

The immediate future will see on-going attention to such labour concerns as job protection, public/private partnerships, occupational health and safety among others. In addition, there will be a greater and more sophisticated influence on policy development by unions.

This will include:

- increased presence at the federal level in order to influence policy development regarding public transportation. Beyond issues directly related to transportation funding and policy, labour interests will include lobbying on privacy and personal information fronts
- collaborative lobbying with employers at the local, provincial, and national level for severe prosecution of those who commit assault and other violent acts against bus industry employees

Impacts

The industry strives to improve its services so that growing customer expectations are reasonably met in the areas of reliability, safety, comfort and affordability. This is seen by many industry stakeholders as an exceptional challenge as they also must contend with a number of significant business and economic issues, some beyond their operational control. These include but are not limited to:

- ageing and/or inadequate fleets and related infrastructure
- automobile competitor dominance
- funding inadequacies
- new technology costs
- prohibitive operating/capital costs escalation
- declining student populations
- increased safety and security issues including growing violence and pandemics

Recent substantial investment has been made in the urban transit infrastructure including the progressive upgrading of fleets, to enable this sub-sector to provide a modern, accessible network of bus services to meet 21st century expectations/requirements. This investment will need to be continued over the coming years. Development of quality partnerships with governments, other key stakeholders and capital investors is also crucial to further success. These relationships need to strengthen to ensure maximum benefits are realized.

All sub-sectors report growing difficulties in recruiting qualified staff for all positions. To some extent this reflects the employment buoyancy of the Canadian market where the unemployment rate has dropped from 9.3% in 1996 to a 32-year low of 6.1% in 2006.

The industry still has substantial work to do to overcome the negative public perception of bus and coach travel. This will have to change appreciably if the industry is to realize its full potential. It is therefore imperative that the industry is enabled to work in a stable and fiscally supportive legislative environment. Most important, that all stakeholders commit to delivering a high quality of transportation services that meet or exceed the legitimate needs and reasonable expectations of the public, which it serves.



Part Three - Workforce Profile

The industry is composed of numerous occupations, each with its own skills and responsibilities. Each is dependent on the others to ensure that together, they are capable of meeting their customers' requirements.

The occupation most commonly associated with the industry and by far the most visible is that of the bus operator. Based on *Statistics Canada* data for 2004, 69.2% of the industry's employees are drivers/operators. Mechanics, the second most sizeable occupational group, represent only 6.1% of employees. Other positions include dispatchers, supervisors, inspectors, maintenance workers, training and safety personnel, sales and service personnel, finance and administrative staff, planners and schedulers and management, and other professionals.

The range of occupations varies with the size of the organization. Larger organizations have both the need and the wherewithal to make use of specialized resources, such as human resource specialists, dedicated training and educational staff, customer service and marketing professionals and more varied administrative and managerial positions. Smaller organizations are composed of people who are often relied upon to be multi-tasking employees whose actual workday activities cross the boundaries of conventional job descriptions.

Levels of Education

Of the three measured occupations that make up almost 80% of the industry (operators, mechanics and supervisors), operators and supervisors appear to have generally similar educational backgrounds. However, proportionately, more supervisors have finished high school and a greater number have a non-trade-related certificate or degree. Mechanics are far more likely to have completed a specialized training program, primarily to meet certification requirements. In more than 65% of cases, they possess a trades certificate or diploma, and only 18% of mechanics do not possess a high school certificate. When compared to the general population, primarily operators have shown a significantly larger shift toward greater education between 1991 and 2001.

Ageing Workforce

Though the ageing pattern that appears in the demographic distribution of the industry's employees is similar to that of the general population, there is a greater prevalence of older workers aged 40-59 years of age in the industry than in the population at large. When compared to similar statistics from 1991, it becomes clear that there has been a significant shift in the age distribution of industry personnel. Though the school bus sub-sector views retirees as a potential labour pool, the effect in the urban and intercity sub-sectors, where employees either voluntarily or as decreed in collective bargaining agreements typically retire as they reach their 60s, suggests cause for concern. Alternatively, the entry age of employees new to the industry has progressively increased due in part to more vigorous regulatory, licencing and employer requirements.

Gender and Diversity

In focus groups, interviews and questionnaire responses, the industry's stakeholders have recognized the need to build a workforce more reflective of Canadian society. Although the gender and ethnic diversity of the industry have shown positive change since the (PW) Study, several contributing factors minimizing the rate of change include, but are not limited to:

- employment stability and tenure
- working conditions related to the bus operator role such as shift work, extended overnight travel and situational risk
- official language requirements
- skills requirements
- increased marketplace competition for job applicants

On an occupation-specific level progress has been made to engage women in the workforce. In comparing the 1991 census data reported in the PW Study to the most recent 2001 census data, one can see that women have already begun to assume a more prominent role in several of the industry occupations. Across the sectors there is a large disparity in the ratio of men to women. As an example, the 36% of female bus operators are predominantly in the school bus sub-sector. They represent 56% of that sub-sector's operators while fewer than 15% of urban transit operators are women.

As the industry continues to build an employee population more reflective of the diversity of cultures in both the ridership it serves and the general population, it has become apparent that effecting rapid change is problematic given the tenured nature of many of the industry's positions.

The latest available data indicates that in 2001 Aboriginal people and visible minorities made up 10.6% of the industry's workforce, an increase of +3.1% over the 1991 figure. The gains were most evident in visible minority representation, which increased from 4.9% to 7.9%, reasonably proportional to the increase in the visible minority portion of the Canadian workforce. The representation of Aboriginal people in the industry remained stable over that same time period, despite a drop in the relative size of the Aboriginal workforce in Canada.

The 2001 percentages reflect focused progress by the industry toward greater integration (hiring, training and development) of Aboriginal People and visible minorities.



Culture of the Industry

The traditional culture of the industry is driven by the essential nature of the services it must provide. Maintaining safety on the road and in the bus is a key element as are delivering friendly, punctual service and financial performance. The following areas are of critical importance and are proactively being addressed by the industry:

- defensive driving training
- endorsement of competency standards
- customer service
- emergency response and management
- work-life balance
- managing absenteeism
- occupational health and safety

Customer Service

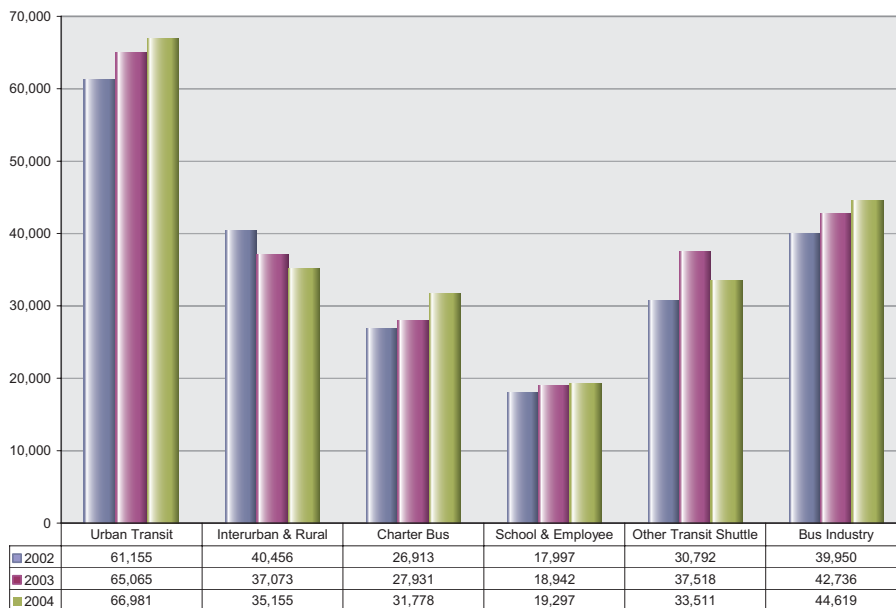
An expanding focus on customer service has been resoundingly expressed in the consultations carried out throughout this Study and from reliable international sources. The industry recognizes the importance of not only providing safe and efficient transportation, but doing so in a customer friendly manner. While much publicity focuses on negative public behaviour, the industry acknowledges that the vast majority of passengers want and deserve quality service. Furthermore, research demonstrates a strong correlation between service and ridership. As a consequence, the hiring practices of the industry's members have become firmly centred on the importance of customer service skills to which the industry has responded in a number of ways.

- developed National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Professional Bus Operators setting a high level of interpersonal competency (MCPCC)
- developed a National Accreditation Program whereby organizations must demonstrate comprehensive customer service training based on the NOS to receive this mark of distinction
- similarly, individuals being granted Certification must demonstrate performance at the NOS level
- association training programs, for example, CUTA's Transit Ambassador Program

Compensation and Benefits

The average compensation across the industry has increased during the period 2002-03 by 7% and 2003-04 by 4.4% as indicated in the chart below.

Average Annual Employee Compensation



Source: Statistics Canada, Preliminary Surface and Marine Transport Service Bulletin data 2006

Due to year-to-year variances in the composition of sub-sectors as reported by *Statistics Canada*, trends shown above should be considered estimates.

The figures illustrate a disparity in annual compensation (inclusive of wages, salaries and benefits and other expenses such as subcontracting, training, uniforms and meals) between the sub-sectors. Responses to the Study surveys illustrate that pay ranges also vary widely between positions and organizations in the sub-sectors and show that there is considerable overlap in pay scales, such that those of the urban sub-sector are not always highest, nor are those of the school bus sub-sector always lowest.

The vast majority of survey respondents offer employees a wide range of benefits. In addition to typical benefits such as health and dental care, pensions, disability benefits or employee assistance programs, respondents identified many others including: on-site fitness facilities, complimentary transit passes, critical incident diffusing, clothing or tool allowances, education allowances, and computer purchase plans.

When asked to identify benefits that would likely be added to their company's existing benefit plan within 3 years, survey respondents indicated the following: family sick days, salary continuance when on workers' compensation, recognition



and reward programs, increased cost sharing of benefit programs, long term sick benefits; programs promoting healthy lifestyles, professional driver certification, and family driver improvement courses.

Respondents have recognized the necessity and value of structuring attractive benefits programs to maintain recruitment competitiveness and retention effectiveness.

It should be noted, however, that the above benefits tend to be offered mostly to those working in a unionized environment. The school bus and charter sub-sectors are segments of the industry where benefits are likely more limited in number and scope.

Part Four - Workforce Management

In order to meet the ever-increasing demand for more and better developed skills, and to replace the expertise lost to the sector as thousands retire, it is vital that companies are successful in assessing both organizational requirements and resource supply. Most organizations have encountered prevailing difficulties in filling vacancies.

When asked about the challenges of recruitment, Study participants cited a general lack of quality applicants and disinterest in working in the sector. Deterrents quoted include working conditions, unsociable hours and limited career advancement opportunity. As a result those individuals applying for jobs often do not have the basic prerequisite skills.

This means that skill gaps and deficiencies in the sector's future workforce could be significant. Many cite that the skills lacking in new applicants are the very areas where employer requirements are increasing; in particular, technical and practical skills, communications and customer service skills, literacy, numeracy and management skills.

Given the problems that the industry is encountering in attracting new recruits, it is vital that applicants are able to access the training they require to enhance their competence and value to the sector. 89% of survey respondents report that internal training is the most used training delivery method. In light of increased training needs, the industry must exploit all effective training development and delivery approaches, including industry associations, education institutions and cross-industry partnerships to ensure the timely provision of adequate and affordable training to meet current and future demands.

Growth Prospects

All sector growth for the next decade is expected to take place in the urban (+8,404 employees, +2,857 vehicles, +440 million passengers) and to a lesser extent intercity (+176 employees, +84 vehicles) sub-sectors. School and tour/charter are forecast to show decreases in employees and vehicles primarily due to social changes, which have negatively influenced ridership, such as declining birthrates and student enrolments and an overall reduction in visitors to Canada.

Key Drivers of Sector Growth

Where growth is projected in the sector it is attributable in part to a range of developments within the market, including:

- government focus and support. Developments already underway include traffic priority measures, income tax deductions for transit passes, reallocation of fuel tax funds and additional infrastructure funding
- urbanization of the Canadian population
- immigration settlement patterns
- ageing population
- economic factors (e. g. escalating costs of auto ownership)



Recruitment

The Study reveals that the industry is a conscientious recruiter but is increasingly challenged by the shortage and quality of applications for many positions. This is particularly noted in the skilled trades occupation of mechanic. As well, recruiting bus operators has become more challenging, particularly in the school bus sector and the seasonal tour and charter business. Filling vacancies for planners, schedulers and managers is also becoming more difficult.

For skilled trades workers, the ability to ensure that the working environment is comfortable is important in attracting and retaining qualified staff. The industry working conditions for these workers are generally positive, with low levels of exposure to such undesirable external elements as heat, noise and cold. However, many Study participants believe that present shift schedules are negatively impacting their ability to recruit skilled trades workers when compared to related industries where regular working hours complemented by high compensation are available.

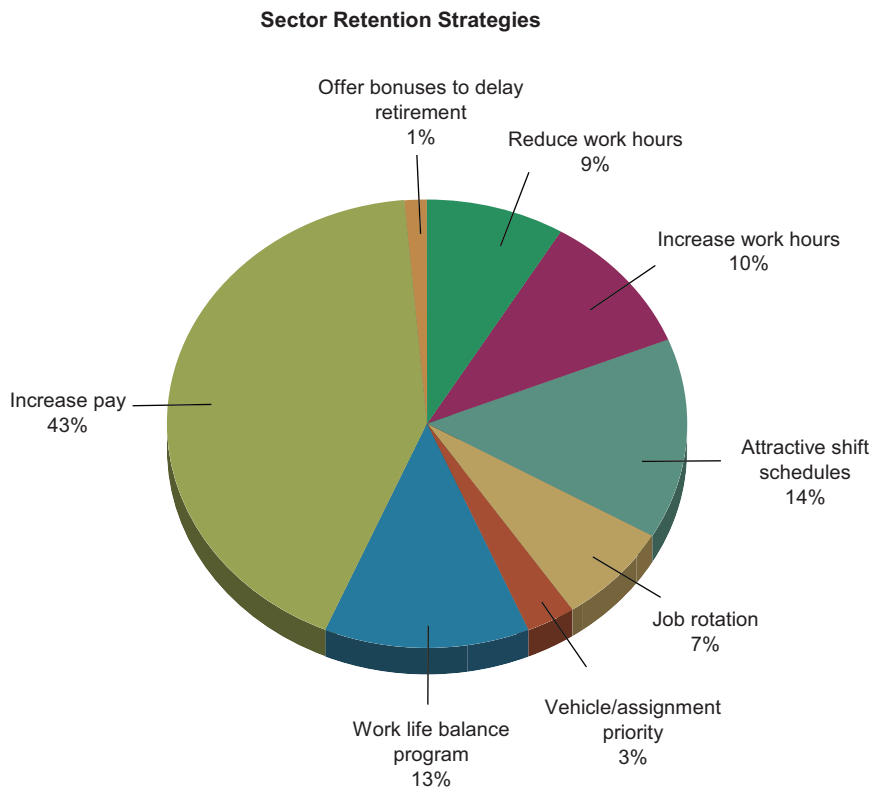
To maximize the success of recruitment initiatives, many companies have implemented more sophisticated recruitment and orientation practices to ensure that people are prepared for the demands of the industry. Though proven media vehicles of print, in-bus and outdoor advertising continue to produce results, as do employee referrals and various government programs, new tools are being developed and implemented. The use of corporate and employment websites to attract and initiate contact with prospects is expanding. Also, the scope of their use is expanding beyond the capabilities of traditional methods. Web-based tools are moving from information dissemination to information collection and pre-screening, as potential candidates are now given a pre-interview opportunity to learn more about the organization and the job.

The need to expand the recruitment target market is obviously most acute in occupations within the bus industry that are reliant on the pre-existence of specific scarce skills or characteristics in applicants.

Many employers in the industry have become skilled at screening and qualifying prospects. Though the ability to recognize potentially successful employees from great numbers of applicants has become essential, the industry must also ensure that recruitment activities are targeted to reach the broadest pool of potential recruits.

Retention

Study survey participants indicated that they employ a number of retention strategies. By far the most popular across all employment categories is simply to increase pay. This creates high risk particularly in a competitive labour market. Though pay raises may be required to remain competitive, they do not address the fundamental challenges of retention, but instead contribute to escalating costs. Attractive shift schedules are the second most popular retention strategy (for example, alternative work weeks with variable days and hours). Studies have shown that more flexibility in the workplace is a key component of establishing a work environment that is not only attractive to workers, but also healthy and satisfying (Canadian Council on Social Development, 1999).



Traditionally, employees have tended to remain with the same employer for several years. The most significant reason identified by survey respondents for employee turnover is retirement. Other leading motivations to leave were lack of advancement opportunities and career changes. Health issues, which may include those brought on by working conditions, are also a contributor to early departures, particularly for mechanics.



One of the most difficult challenges facing the transportation employer in the near future will be establishing a reputation as an “employer of choice”. Industry employers will be competing with other employers for a dwindling resource base. Attracting qualified employees will require a fundamental re-thinking of the way work assignments and schedules, wage rates, benefits and other employee services are provided.

Succession Planning

As borne out by the significant increase in the age of the industry’s workforce, there will be a large-scale renewal of the workforce over the coming years in virtually all occupation groups. Results of the Study’s research suggest that the industry is just beginning to tackle the issue of formal succession planning. This lack of a structured approach is curtailing the industry’s ability to create, develop and maintain a high performing workforce capable of supporting its long-term growth and performance strategies and goals. Research indicates that employers are twice as likely to estimate workforce demand as supply. This is a concern as demand has already outpaced supply in some markets. To ensure the sustainment of operational effectiveness and efficiencies, systems/companies must develop within their business plan a workforce plan that includes succession planning strategies that address all reasonable, current and foreseeable staffing requirements and contingencies.

Occupational Health and Safety

Occupational health and safety is a major area of concern for the industry, particularly for bus operators. Physically, operators find themselves prone to many lifting, handling and strain injuries that often demand comprehensive disability management and modified work programs. Psychologically, the most notable issue specifically affecting bus operators is that of occupational stress.

Occupational stress for operators is a result of various situations including negative social interactions with passengers, pressures of tightly planned schedules, traffic congestion and highly demanding work environments. While much research is available on this subject in general, to date little has been written specifically for bus operators regarding workplace stress prevention and mental health management.

Relative to the growing issue of assault, a bulletin published by the U. S. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health identified the factors, all of which are applicable to the industry, that might increase a worker’s risk for workplace violence including: contact with the public, exchange of money, delivery of passengers or goods, working alone or in small numbers; working in high crime areas and working in community-based settings.

Although not speaking specifically of bus operators, prevention strategies included such ideas as cashless transactions, physical separation from customers, enhanced visibility and lighting, security devices and personal protective equipment. Administratively, policies and procedures for assessing and reporting incidents were suggested as helpful to tracking and evaluating areas and levels of potential recurrent risk for use in developing prevention strategies tailored to a particular area. Further, training in non-violent response and conflict resolution was suggested to reduce the risk of volatility within a given risk situation.

Work-Life Balance

Today, most workers are acutely aware of the impact that working conditions can have on their quality of life. Many are actively seeking work that offers them a “better” degree of work-life balance. Job security and compensation are just two of several factors people evaluate when deciding where to work. Research reveals that jobs providing some measure of autonomy, decision-making authority and opportunity for self development are highly attractive. Further, with the increase in dual-income families and single parents, organizations that offer special considerations and flexible work arrangements gain competitive advantages in recruiting (*Belcourt, Monica: Recruitment and Selection in Canada*).

A 2004 study funded by Health Canada examined the link between work-life conflict and the demand on Canada’s health care system. Almost one in five workers rated his or her health as fair or poor. Canadian companies are struggling to control benefit costs and establish what portion they can reasonably pass on to the employees. A potential solution is for companies to actively invest in the health of their workers by providing wellness programs that help workers cope with their work-life demands. The Human Resources Association of Ontario (HRPAO) estimates that there is a \$2 to \$6 return on investment for every \$1 spent on introducing wellness initiatives.

Management Effectiveness

Leadership is a culmination of vision, skills, attitude and applied knowledge. There are many examples of participative leadership approaches that are transforming the way the industry is perceived as well as traditional top down management styles. Study participants have identified that there is a notable absence of well-developed skills relating to people and information management, business, financial and marketing acumen as well as proficiency in negotiation. Participants also commented on a general lack of formalized management training, development and succession planning programs.

Industry leaders are also represented within the ageing workforce demographic. It is critical that companies place high priority on developing workforce planning programs that include succession planning, mentoring and management development.



Part Five - Life Long Learning

A key element of Study research was to identify current practices in training and development, determine emerging skills and competencies, and assess the ability of education and training systems to meet future demand for workers.

Training

Types of training offered

The following outlines *key training* offered by survey participants:

Bus Operator	Mechanic	Administration	Management
Interpersonal and customer service skills	New technology	Customer service skills	Interpersonal and customer service skills
Driving techniques	Workplace health and safety	New technology	Conflict management
Driver refresher training	Conflict management	Workplace health and safety	Workplace health and safety
Workplace health and safety		Stress management	New technologies
Personal safety and security		Conflict management	Stress management
Stress management			
Conflict management			

The priorities facing the operators are very much oriented toward customer relations while workplace health and safety remain an important factor. The technical skills required of employees are well served by the training offered. As illustrated, a large majority of employers surveyed provide training on the functional requirements of the position: driving and customer service skills for operators; technical skills for mechanics; and conflict management and interpersonal skills for managers.

As noted previously, stress has become a prevalent concern in the industry, and the types of training offered reflect the desire by organizations to address this issue.

Comparing the training offered to first-year employees and that offered on an on-going basis reveals that drivers' training is reasonably intensive and largely consistent irrespective of the stage of career. The same cannot be said for other positions particularly that of manager, where very few organizations offer significant training specifically targeted at new hires or invest in an on-going way in management development. Stress and conflict management training programs figure more prominently in the training offered to existing employees than that offered to new hires.

Mandatory licencing or accreditation requirements ranked as the highest stated reason for conducting training with skills refresher training ranking second. With the growing concern over violence, employers are looking to augment their programs with "violence in the workplace" training. For example, Edmonton Transit with the assistance of Rutgers University has developed a comprehensive violence in the workplace training program which has been given to all current staff and is given to

all new employees during their orientation and training program. As well CUTA has developed a program with OC Transpo on this issue.

Emerging Skills

The emerging skills requirements include the development of coping skills to address effectively the stress and personal security concerns expressed by stakeholder participants. Continuing to be dominant are customer service, communications and technical competence. Increasing in importance for management are leadership, strategic planning, marketing, communications, and innovation skills.

Training Development and Delivery

The preference for in-house training development and delivery suggests that there is a significant knowledge base resident in industry organizations. Several organizations are simultaneously developing comparable training programs without the benefit of access to the vast knowledge contained within the industry.

Furthermore, research indicated a lack of utilization of e-learning technologies to address technical training. E-learning has been demonstrated to reduce both time and costs over traditional training methods. Research has concluded that time savings associated with computer-based training can range from 20-80%, with 40-60% being the most common without a decrease in training effectiveness.

The potential exists to learn from the experience of other industry stakeholders who share the same concerns, potentially even to consolidate program development and delivery.

Many industry stakeholders are more closely examining the role of private and public educational institutions in training delivery and development. In many instances training of mechanics and technicians already involves a partnership with an education institution.

Cost of Training

Because training, operating practices and technologies currently vary across the industry, employers often put newly hired operators, even those with years of experience, through the same training given to novice operators. The application of non-standard practices and technologies in the industry has had the effect of increasing the industry's overall cost of human resource development. Costs are essentially duplicated to re-train an experienced individual.

In response to this concern, the MCPCC working with the industry has developed a National Accreditation Program which recognizes employer training that meets or exceeds the National Occupational Standards.



The current practices of representative urban systems illustrate the varied approaches to tackling the cost issue in training new candidate operators. Where some systems continue to provide training in-house, others have opted to download the expense to the candidates themselves by charging for the service and outsourcing its delivery to educational institutions. Similarly, the decision of whether or not to pay candidates for their time while on training or to guarantee a position or a minimum number of hours per week upon completion differs from one system to another. It is obvious that each system has chosen an approach which they believe best maintains their market competitiveness.

Apprenticeships

A theme throughout this Study has been the shortage of skilled trades workers. Firms were surveyed to determine the extent of apprenticeship programs within the industry. Several organizations indicated that they offer either apprenticeship or co-op programs chiefly in the maintenance field, with the most common being that of *diesel mechanic*. The support for apprenticeships among the surveyed members was varied.

Several stakeholders relayed concerns over the high cost to the employer in setting up and running the program, only to lose apprentices to higher paying organizations when the apprenticeship is completed. It was noted in a joint CUTA/MCPCC Study that firms that implemented apprenticeship programs did not have a policy in place relative to reimbursement for leaving employment following the completion of the apprenticeship. This Study also concluded that there is a lack of any rigorous evaluation of the program benefits by the respondents. None of the surveyed systems/companies use an evaluative process to gauge the return on investment (ROI) for introducing such programs. In addition, employers are often unaware of the federal and other government tax credits and/or incentives available to support delivery of apprenticeship training.

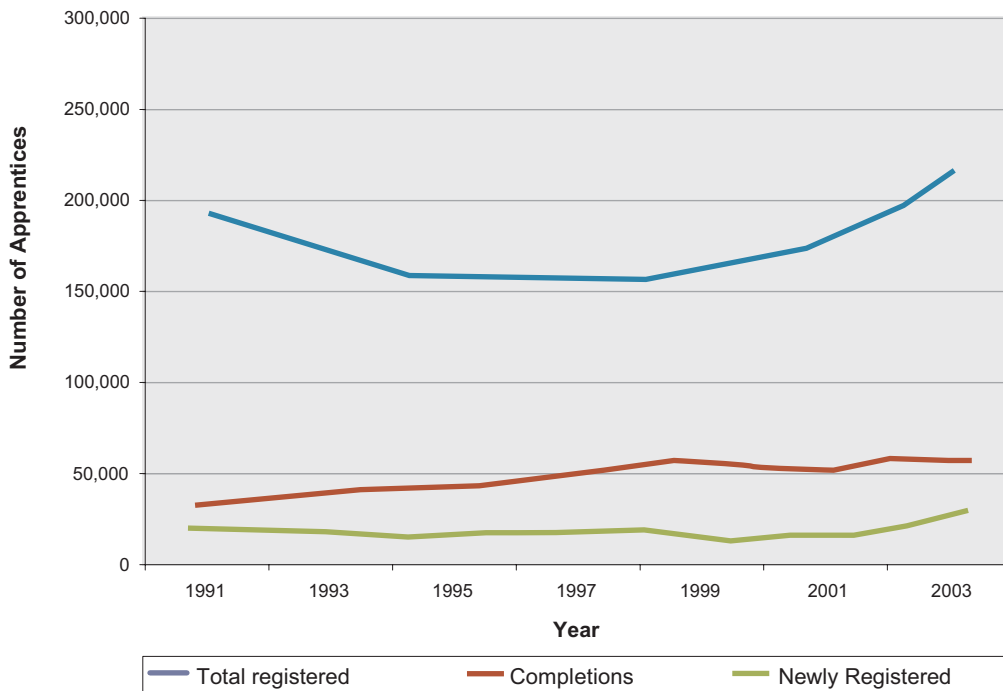
The Canadian apprenticeship trend has turned positive since the mid-1990's, subsequently reflecting steady increases in the number of new registrants each year.

There were 249,837 registered apprentices in Canada in 2003, an increase of +80,854 (+47.8%) since 1993. As of 2003, registrants in the motor vehicle and heavy equipment trades group which includes several bus industry trades totaled 49,657, up +14,747 (+42.2%) for the same decade.

It is important to note that despite the significant motor vehicle and heavy equipment trade group increase in registrants, there has been only nominal change in the annual number of apprenticeship completions, which averaged 4,050 per year for the decade, but also represented better performance than certain other trade groups.

The number of registrants over age 40 shows the greatest increase (+167.2%) for the 1993-2003 period, producing a 2003 total of 41,721, and contributing to the average 2003 age for all registrants of 30.1 years, and for new registrants of 27.6 years.

Trends in Registered Apprenticeship Training, Canada, 1991 to 2003



Source: Statistics Canada, Registered Apprenticeship Information System.

Another important trend has been the +83.16% increase in younger registrants aged 16 - 24, producing a 2003 total of 82,687 registrants for this age group. (all preceding data - *Statistics Canada* sources). This growth has been in part attributed to increased student recognition of their economic limitations without post-secondary education, plus an increase in provincially-sponsored programs designed to encourage high-school students to consider apprenticeship-related careers.

The very structure of the apprenticeship program may be working at cross-purposes to industry needs. The qualification process itself is a barrier. In a report from the Conference Board of Canada (*Performance and Potential 2002-03*), the nation's apprenticeship programs were described as "a complex system that requires a great deal of initiative by the participants." There is no natural progression from high school to an apprenticeship as there is to college or university.

In 2006, The Canadian Council of Learning in a report on *Apprenticeship Training in Canada* observed that the market for apprenticeships is primarily constrained by employer reluctance to participate, rather than by a shortage of potential apprentices. To capitalize on this underutilized resource, the bus industry must strategize to ensure that this observation does not apply.



Certification and Accreditation

A recurring theme during the PW Study was concern over the negative image of both the industry and the professional bus operator. The industry supported the concept of recognizing professionalism by developing a program of Certification for Professional Bus Operators and the accreditation of qualified training programs (MCPCC).

Both programs were launched in 2005 and have received growing support. To achieve the intended impact relative to recognition of professionalism, industry image, and employee self-esteem, the industry now must give wholehearted commitment to the adoption of these programs.

Career Progression

Given that over 69% of employees are in one job [bus operator], it follows that promotional opportunities for this group are limited. Career enhancement strategies and lifelong learning programs need to be created for all positions within systems/companies to the extent reasonably possible. It is important to recognize that career enhancement does not necessarily require job promotion but can represent expanded scope, skills, and responsibilities within an existing position.

More recently, recognizing both the values of job rotation and mentoring, many organizations are giving employees the opportunity to take on different roles. Organizations have begun to take advantage of vast amounts of knowledge and occupational skills within their workforce by enabling current experienced employees to contribute to the training of newer employees. There is evidence, however, that many employees within the industry are not attracted to supervisory or management positions as they bring with them different work schedules, greater responsibility and remuneration packages that do not always enhance those of the positions being left behind.

The industry ratio of management to other employees has declined from census to census (2001 = 1:13 versus 1991 = 1:11). While downsizing of management structures was a contributing factor in the 1990's, the Study currently reveals that many organizations are now having difficulty staffing management positions. In the case of urban transit, the issue of career progression is made all the more challenging by the recent amalgamation of many transit systems and their respective municipal governments. In other sub-sectors such as the school bus sub-sector, the opportunities for progression are also limited, as the ratio of management to drivers is extremely low. Furthermore, many employees are not driving a school bus in order to further a career, but as part-time employment or to fill a gap between jobs.

In the intercity sub-sector, scheduled operations offer some career progression options. The Study indicated that, in most cases, it is the long-time employees that often fill the mid-management functions because of tenure and experience. In charter and tour operations, seasonality makes it difficult to sustain a large management structure allowing for career progression.

Part Six - Technology

Diverse new and emerging technologies are an integral component of sector operations applicable to all sub-sectors and a primary element of employee skills requirements and development.

The motor carrier passenger industry encompasses a broad array of existing and emerging technologies primarily related to vehicles, vehicle systems and communications systems. These systems are designed to provide *a better rider experience, influence operator competence and improve overall operational and organizational effectiveness.*

Based on research there is reasonable evidence that committed application by the bus industry of these technologies should be expected to favourably impact:

- industry/company image and hence the career appeal of the industry
- industry competitiveness in relation to other modes of transportation using high levels of technology
- recruitment, selection, training, job satisfaction, career commitment and retention
- operations' safety, efficiency and communications
- ridership and profitability

Implementation

The industry has implemented much technological advancement. Some technologies are government imposed, others are manufacturer imposed, but the optional remainder relies on industry choice and acceptance. In this latter situation, the industry must become more collaborative with manufacturers in the conceptual development phase of the emerging technology to ensure that the end-product has reasonable cost-benefit value to the industry. It is very likely that customer demand will have an impact on the adoption of some emerging technologies, but this does not change the fact that capital and maintenance costs, replacement cycle, and impact on training add to industry reluctance to implement costly technologies without proven ROI.



Part Seven - Key Findings

Working in Partnership

A reliable, efficient and comprehensive motor carrier passenger transportation network enhances image and reputation, and accommodates the social needs of the community which it serves. The bus industry must be committed to forging lasting relationships with all levels of government and other stakeholders including labour, manufacturers and education to ensure optimization of systems performance, growth and influence.

Innovation

Creative thinking and the harnessing of new technology must be at the heart of the industry's vision for modern, dependable and safe bus transportation. Improvements to services and facilities that are driven by exciting new ways of thinking will benefit customers and change public attitudes relative to the industry's image.

Security

Commitment to passenger and employee safety and security must continue to be paramount within the industry particularly in this age of global-social instability.

The protection of passengers and operators from violent acts has become a critical issue in the light of increased incidents. This issue dominates discussions during collective bargaining sessions, and is the focus of public education campaigns across the industry. Also, growing concerns over potential pandemics require industry preparedness.

The Environment

Transportation has a measurable impact on the environment and the industry has both the responsibility and opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions via on-going improvements in vehicle technology and driver training. The industry must communicate its positive environmental impact energetically.

Energy issues will continue to impact all sub-sectors, as the price of fuel, combined with new environmental regulations, pushes the costs of operations higher. Although fuel prices may ease at some point, experts predict that they will likely remain high for some time to come. Furthermore, no economically viable alternatives are foreseen over the next five to ten years. Programs such as the recently developed Natural Resources Canada's **SmartDriver** training program for fuel-efficient driving should be implemented as early evidence shows promising operations and maintenance cost efficiencies.

Customer Service and Social Inclusion

The social environment in which the bus sector now operates, is significantly different to that of 10 years ago. Among other influences the population of seniors, persons with disabilities, immigrants including visible minorities and persons with language barriers are all increasing. The industry must focus on the special needs of

these groups while also meeting public expectations regarding levels of efficiency and reliability, customer service, comfort, safety, security and cost. This encompasses involving these groups in future planning of service delivery.

Labour/Management Collaboration

While wages and related benefits continue to receive labour/management attention, focus at the bargaining table has begun to shift to issues such as operator safety/security and work-life balance. In unionized environments the emphasis must be on collaborative resolution of a broader spectrum of issues than in the past.

Information Management

Despite the higher levels of regulation and licencing requirements in the industry there is insufficient data in three of the four sub-sectors to provide meaningful historical trends and sub-sector profiles. Participation by all stakeholders in the process of data development is essential in order for industry needs to be accurately identified and effectively addressed.

Human Resources Quality and Quantity

The quality and quantity of the industry's human resources is critical to the performance, influence, competitiveness and image of the industry.

The Study identifies the following as key human resources priorities:

- addressing the diversity of skills and training needs
- improving productivity and performance
- meeting emerging skills requirements
- dealing with an ageing workforce
- tackling recruitment and retention difficulties
- addressing skill gaps and deficiencies in the workforce
- improving access to training and qualifications
- combating limitations in the supply of qualified resources
- enhancing employee wellness and satisfaction
- increasing participation of women,Aboriginals and minorities
- promoting the professionalism of employees
- formalizing both labour demand and supply forecasting



Part Eight - Vision

Conducting this Study has provided employers, employees, unions, associations, manufacturers, educators and other stakeholders the opportunity to reflect and comment on the current state of the industry and share their perspectives for its future. In a variety of forums stakeholders discussed what changes must be made to industry culture and philosophy, and what alliances and linkages must be forged in order to develop a strong, responsive, profitable, safe and secure motor carrier passenger industry in Canada.

Based on this extensive feedback and participation stakeholder comments, ideas, and beliefs have been synthesized into the following **Vision**:

“We envision a healthy, sustainable motor carrier passenger industry which is respected and valued by governments and by the Canadian riding public, and in which careers are given significant stature and desirability.

We envision an industry in which sub-sectors co-operate through sharing of information and best practices affecting all aspects of the industry, and in which the impact of the industry’s over 90,000 employees and nearly \$8 billion in economic activity is fairly considered in the transportation and human resources policy decisions by governments.

We envision an industry linked by compatible technologies that allow instant interaction between modes, enabling customers to plan, pay for, and use an integrated motor carrier passenger system.

We envision an industry that is a model for human resources excellence, in which wellness, career skills development, safety and security are considered essential.”

Every element of this vision can be attained through the co-ordinated efforts of all players involved.

Part Nine – Recommendations

Recommendations are presented as *Strategies* followed by related *Priorities* and *Actions*. The reader should not consider this list complete but rather a presentation of the highest priority issues developed by the Study. Additional and unlimited opportunity exists for creative and innovative contributions, investment and influence from all stakeholders for the betterment of the industry. The process of this Study has shown that there is a great deal of innovative thinking already taking place. MCPCC stands ready to be the “table” at which stakeholders gather for the generation and deployment of a host of additional ideas, strategies, and action steps.

Strategy A: Workforce Planning and Recruitment

Priority 1: Making workforce planning integral to business planning

Priority 2: Communicating a compelling recruiting image

Priority 3: Attracting seasonal and part-time workers

Priority 4: Accessing and screening applicants efficiently and effectively

Priority 5: Increasing gender, Aboriginal, and minority work force participation

Priority 6: Attracting future generations (employees and ridership)

Strategy B: Training, Life Long Learning and Resources

Priority 1: Gaining employer commitment to on-going training as an essential investment

Priority 2: Meeting on-going demand for skilled trades

Priority 3: Providing industry access to training programs and resources

Priority 4: Maximizing training investment and delivery options

Priority 5: Raising the professional status of bus operators through the promotion of certification/accreditation

Priority 6: Developing management and leadership skills



Strategy C: Retention and Working Conditions

Priority 1: Orientation of new employees

Priority 2: Responding to the needs and opportunities presented by the ageing workforce

Priority 3: Marketplace intelligence

Priority 4: Career progression strategies

Priority 5: Building morale and motivating productivity

Priority 6: Workplace safety and security

Priority 7: Developing healthier workplaces

Strategy D: Industry Advocacy

Priority 1: Strengthening the industry voice at all government levels

Priority 2: Developing and maintaining international industry intelligence and collaboration

Strategy A – Workforce Planning and Recruitment

The future of the motor carrier passenger industry in Canada hinges on its ability to attract the necessary quantity and quality of industry-compatible human resources. Attracting qualified career applicants for roles including operators, mechanics, planners, service and support personnel, management and administration requires dedicated, targeted, and aggressive action. This initiative must encompass comprehensive knowledge of productive target markets, best recruitment sources and media, and the many other factors that will create marketplace-competitive job appeal.

Priority: Making workforce planning integral to business planning

- Organizations must commit the necessary resources to develop and implement an effective **workforce plan** as part of their business planning process. This includes both demand and supply forecasts, formal succession planning and integrated apprenticeship programs.
- Develop a comprehensive **model workforce plan** incorporating guidelines, strategies, and formulae that can be readily adapted throughout the sector. This could include case studies, analysis of what constitutes a successful employee in each industry position, sourcing and competitiveness.
- Actively **promote** the concept and model through management development conferences and by interactive presentations on an individual company basis.

Action/Project	Lead	Partners	Activity Duration
Workforce Plan	Employers		On-going
Model workforce plan	MCPCC	Employers External Resources Government	18 months
Promotion	MCPCC	Employers External Resources Government	On-going



Priority: Communicating a compelling recruiting image

- Expand the Motor Carrier Passenger Council of Canada’s recruitment and career information **website** (“Put Your Career in Gear”) to include a broader range of industry positions. Encourage educators to **disseminate information** about the industry.
- **Partner** with relevant federal, provincial and municipal governments and other organizations to promote the industry and industry vocations **via their media**.
- Promote in all recruitment media and activities the professional status of careers in the industry. For example, professional designations including **Certification** for Professional Bus Operators.
- Expand the **Behind the Wheel** guide to recruitment best practices to incorporate more of the “how to” aspects of establishing linkages with diverse audiences. For example, cultural communities and opportunistic labour pools.

Action/Project	Lead	Partners	Activity Duration
Website/information dissemination	MCPCC	Employers Government	12 months
Partnering	MCPCC	Associations Employers	On-going
Promoting professionalism	Employers	MCPCC Associations	On-going
Behind the Wheel	MCPCC	Employers	18 months

Priority: Attracting seasonal and part-time workers

- Develop a comprehensive list of proven **best sources** of applicants which will then represent target market considerations for sector employers.
- Conduct regional **sample-surveys and/or focus groups** of seasonal and part-time employees to determine what workplace benefits and opportunities do and/or would contribute most to the appeal of the job and their job satisfaction.
- Initiate influential representation to government for the purpose of negotiating a change in the **Employment Insurance (EI) benefits** qualifying threshold for seasonal and part-time workers to enable uninterrupted income during the “off season”, where this need applies.

Action/Project	Lead	Partners	Activity Duration
Best sources	MCPCC	Employers External Resources	On-going
Surveys and/or focus groups	MCPCC	Employers External Resources	24 months
E.I. benefits	MCPCC Associations	Employers Labour	On-going

Priority: Accessing and screening applicants efficiently and effectively

- It is recommended that organizations ensure that all staff involved in the recruitment process be well versed in best practices (**qualifications of recruiters**) relating to evaluating résumés, transference of skills, and development and assessment of bona fide selection criteria.
- Develop a **national inventory** of proven screening tools/media and/or assess existing tools used by industry or other users with similar screening requirements to facilitate screening efficiency and judgment.
- Develop and implement **National Occupational Standards (NOS)** and **Essential Skills strategy** for a wider range of jobs in the industry.
- Implement an **evaluation process** to assess recruit success potential.

Action/Project	Lead	Partners	Activity Duration
Qualifications of recruiters	Employers	Associations (training) MCPCC (best practices) External Sources	On-going
National inventory	MCPCC	Employers External Sources	24 months
NOS/Essential Skills	MCPCC	Employers Associations Educators Government	On-going
Evaluation process	Employers	Associations MCPCC	On-going



Priority: Increasing gender, Aboriginal, and minority work force participation

- Develop on-going **relationships and partnerships** with community cultural organizations.
- Develop linkages to **cultural placement and employment agencies** that assist in job placement.
- Conduct labour market research to **identify** real and perceived **barriers** that inhibit industry career interest from these groups; with the objective of facilitating possible solutions.
- Invest in aggressive **marketing** to cultural communities through activities such as industry presence at cultural events, and advertising in cultural media.
- Develop a series of **“female-focused” career presentations** representing various occupations in the industry.
- Develop a **Strategy Guide** to assist employers in identifying and addressing language skills needs.

Action/Project	Lead	Partners	Activity Duration
Relationships and partnerships	Employers	Cultural Organizations	On-going
Linkages to agencies	Employers	MCPCC Agencies	On-going
Identify barriers	MCPCC	Employers External Resources	24 months
Marketing	Employers	Cultural communities	On-going
Female-focused career presentations	Employers MCPCC	Unions Referrals and Agencies	On-going
Strategy Guide	MCPCC	Educators	On-going

Priority: Attracting future generations (employees and ridership)

- Work with **elementary and secondary schools** to incorporate industry-required essential skills and attributes in curricula and qualifications framework.
- **Raise the profile** of road and travel safety and behaviour expectations in learning programs especially in relation to citizenship, personal and social development and tourism courses. The increased emphasis for vocational learning in schools provides an opportunity to embed information about the sector in school curricula.
- **Outreach** - employers should seize opportunities to showcase the bus industry, for example presentations at schools, community events.

Action/Project Item	Lead	Partners	Activity Duration
Elementary and secondary schools	MCPCC	Education	On-going
Raising profile	MCPCC	Education	On-going
Outreach	Employers	Education	On-going

Strategy B – Training, Life Long Learning and Resources

Foundational to the success of any training investment is the employer’s recognition of, and commitment to employ the financial and other resources required to deliver on-going profitable results. The Study identified a broad range of quality, quantity and consistency of training and development throughout the industry. Of particular current and on-going concern is the need to address the changing characteristics of Canada and the industry, more specifically as related to an ageing population, the shortage of skilled trades, the rapid evolution of technology and the ultra competitive marketplace relative to similar career opportunities. In this context, an industry culture which values market intelligence, employs a broad diversity of training methods and media to maximize workforce performance, and deliver a measurable return on investment (ROI) is paramount.

Priority: Gaining employer commitment to on-going training as an essential investment

- Identify “best practices” that clearly outline the benefits and **ROI** offered by continuous learning, including apprenticeship programs.
- Maintain currency of **National Occupational Standards (NOS)** and/or competencies as well as **Essential Skills** profiles and provide appropriate training as competency requirements change.

Action/Project	Lead	Partners	Activity Duration
ROI	MCPCC	Associations Employers	24 months
NOS/Essential Skills	MCPCC Employers		On-going



Priority: Meet on-going demand for skilled trades

- Initiate/develop trade-specific **apprenticeship programs** with qualified institutions.
- Develop **materials** to demonstrate to employers the benefits of offering apprenticeships.
- Initiate/develop training **partnerships** with original equipment manufacturers (OEMs).
- Investigate the feasibility of including industry skilled trades as part of the federal government’s **Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR)** Program.
- Activate the MCPCC-sponsored **Skilled Trades Commission** consisting of stakeholder experts convened to address this challenge including review of the apprenticeship system and setting national standards for apprenticeship in the bus industry.

Action/Project	Lead	Partners	Activity Duration
Apprenticeships	Employers	Education Associations	On-going
Materials	MCPCC	Education	On-going
Partnerships	Employers	OEM’s Associations	On-going
FCR	MCPCC	Employers	6 months
Skilled Trades Commission	MCPCC	Employers, Unions Associations, Educators, Directors of Apprenticeship, Government	18 Months

Priority: Provide industry access to training programs and resources

- Develop a dedicated **resource centre** as part of the Council’s website to post labour market information, studies, relevant training and other resources including a “best practices” section and maintain currency of information.
- Target **government subsidy programs** such as the Employment Insurance System to train workers.
- Hold National **cross-industry sessions** to identify changing skill requirements and gaps and determine any training development needed.

Action/Project	Lead	Partners	Activity Duration
Resource centre	MCPCC	All stakeholders	On-going
Government subsidies	Employers		On-going
Cross-industry sessions	MCPCC	All stakeholders	Periodically

Priority: Maximizing training investment and delivery options

- Engage in a collaborative, **cross-industry strategy** for maximizing industry training. For example, commitment to and employment of the National Accreditation Program.
- Initiate and/or strengthen **linkages with educational institutions** which could include joint ventures and the offer of faculty, trainers and speakers; and by inviting institutions to use employer facilities, simulators, and equipment as part of their programs.
- Evaluate for potential industry application **international programs** considered “benchmark” in other countries including the UK, USA, Australia and EU.

Action/Project	Lead	Partners	Activity Duration
Cross-industry strategy	All stakeholders	MCPCC Associations	On-going
Linkages with educational institutions	Employers Educators	Associations MCPCC	On-going
International programs	MCPCC	Associations International representatives	On-going



Priority: Raising the professional status of bus operators through the promotion of certification/accreditation

- The entire industry must commit to showcasing the professionalism of operators via unlimited **support of certification and accreditation**. This support and promotion commitment will reinforce the industry’s adoption of National Occupational Standards, will increase training efficiencies and results, attract new entrants and has the potential to improve both operator pride (and potentially, retention) and public confidence in the providers’ ability to deliver reliable, courteous and safe transportation.
- Consistently integrate the benefits of certification and accreditation into **corporate marketing** with the goal to enhance the image of the industry, increase public recognition of operator professionalism and promote greater utilization of services.
- Investigate the feasibility of having the **certification designation registered** with each province/territory.
- Submit a proposal for review of the **National Occupational Classification (NOC)** for bus operators.

Action/Project	Lead	Partners	Activity Duration
Support of certification and accreditation	Employers	Associations MCPCC Educators Unions	On-going
Corporate marketing	Employers	Associations MCPCC	On-going
Certification designation registration	MCPCC	Government	18 months
NOC	MCPCC	Government	On-going

Priority: Developing management and leadership skills

- Establish a “**Toolkit**” that sets out National Standards for mentoring and succession planning programs and enable organizations to develop their own programs.
- Promote management development **sessions** at conferences; develop workshops, seminars or forums.

Action/Project	Lead	Partners	Activity Duration
Toolkit	MCPCCC	Employers Associations	On-going
Sessions	Associations	External Resources	On-going

Strategy C - Retention and Working Conditions

Throughout every phase of this Study, issues of retention and working conditions and their interrelationship have been identified as matters requiring serious consideration. Turnover can be a result of several factors beginning with an improper hire and/or orientation but much can be done to improve employee retention.

Priority: Orientation of new employees

- Implement **employer orientation programs** that are used consistently to initiate a mutually-supportive foundational relationship.
- Develop a **generic orientation template** encompassing objectives, methods, and scope, which can be adapted by organizations. Include exemplary orientation program outlines as a resource.

Action/Project	Lead	Partners	Activity Duration
Employer programs	Employers		On-going
Generic template	MCPCCC	Employers External Resources	18 months



Priority: Responding to the needs and opportunities presented by the ageing workforce

- Identify legislative, insurance, and other **factors and/or potential barriers** that negatively affect:
 - retention of staff beyond specific age ranges or lengths of service.
 - employer ability to retain retirees in the workforce, and initiate remedial action, as appropriate.
- Develop the capacity to **capture the knowledge** and experience of senior staff before they retire, and use it effectively in orientation, training, and retention programs. Strategies could include mentoring programs, training and formal documentation.

Action/Project	Lead	Partners	Activity Duration
Age factors/barriers	Employers	MCPCC	On-going
Capture knowledge	Employers		On-going

Priority: Marketplace intelligence

- Initiate a cost/benefit evaluation of the practicality (costs and industry support) of commissioning a periodic **survey** of compensation and benefits to include all sectors, and selected like industries in order to develop a comprehensive database, which can be shared across the industry.
- Investigate **retention strategies** “best practices” and publish these on the MCPCC resource centre website.
- Periodically conduct **employee surveys** to evaluate employee workplace satisfaction.
- Investigate areas which would benefit from the development of **pilot projects** such as exemplary recruitment, work-based learning initiatives or occupational health and safety.
- Hold **focus groups** to increase labour market intelligence and post results on MCPCC resource centre website.

Action/Project	Lead	Partners	Activity Duration
Feasibility of survey	MCPCC	Employers	On-going
Retention strategies	MCPCC	External Resources	On-going
Employee surveys	Employers / Employees		On-going
Pilot projects	MCPCC	Associations Employers	Periodically
Focus groups	MCPCC	External Resources	Periodically

Priority: Career progression strategies

- Employers must **define** precisely what career progression is and means within their structure, and must effectively communicate opportunity options and related training prerequisites to employees and recruiting markets.
- **Evaluate** what **similar industries** are doing to create career progression strategies and/or enhancement for application by systems/companies within the sector.
- Employers and employees must jointly create an employee **development strategy**, which constantly grooms, evaluates, and recognizes employee progress toward the achievement of their maximum potential.

Action/Project	Lead	Partners	Activity Duration
Definition	Employers	Unions	On-going
Evaluate similar industries	MCPCC	Associations	On-going
Development strategy	Employers/Employees	Unions	On-going

Priority: Building morale and motivating productivity

- Collect industry and external examples of **”best practices”**, which detail proven programs for building morale and motivating productivity, and make these available to the sector.
- Include motivational **leadership training** as an essential component of management development.
- Initiate creative **types and levels of recognition** that showcase and reward achievers internally and externally.
- Give line **staff visibility** and showcase them in public advertising.
- To the extent reasonably possible, involve employees in **workplace decisions**, which will affect them.

Action/Project	Lead	Partners	Activity Duration
Best practices	MCPCC	All stakeholders External Resources	On-going
Leadership training	Employers	Associations MCPCC	On-going
Recognition levels	Employers	Associations MCPCC	On-going
Staff visibility	Employers	Associations MCPCC	On-going
Workplace decisions	Employers	Unions and Employers	On-going



Priority: Workplace safety and security

- Develop a national on-going **public education** campaign against public violence and abuse to educate the public on acceptable behaviour in a public transportation environment. This requires enlisting government support (financial and media), forging public education partnerships, holding public forums; and developing creative, sustainable solutions that are citizen and community driven.
- Access from industry and external sources **exemplary safety and security programs** and make these available to industry employers.
- Implement the use of **new and emerging technologies** that are designed to increase employee safety and security.
- Work with the industry through the creation of **joint management-labour committees** to address workplace health and safety concerns.

Action/Project	Lead	Partners	Activity Duration
Public education	All stakeholders	Government	On-going
Exemplary programs	MCPCC	Associations Employers	On-going
Technologies	Employers Unions		On-going
Joint management-labour committees	Employers Unions		On-going

Priority: Developing healthier workplaces

- Determine from industry and external sources which providers offer **exemplary health and wellness programs** and make this information available to all industry employers.
- **Invest in health and wellness programs** that have been proven to effectively address workplace stress and other identified factors that adversely affect employee health.
- Develop **Memoranda of Understanding** between Labour and Employers regarding the reconciliation of work and family life to build policy collaboratively.

Action/Project	Lead	Partners	Activity Duration
Exemplary health and wellness programs	MCPCC	Employers External resources	On-going
Invest in health and wellness programs	Employers		On-going
Memoranda of Understanding	Employers Unions		On-going

Strategy D - Industry Advocacy

In a global knowledge economy, links with counterparts around the world are essential to optimize knowledge transfer, not only for application within the industry, but as an aid to proactively influence our own governments at every level.

The Canadian motor carrier passenger industry is the first in the world to initiate both workplace Accreditation and Operator Certification on a national level -- an excellent example of an initiative that can leverage industry recognition and collaborative exchange in the international community.

From a Canadian legislative perspective, there are numerous Acts of Parliament and a multitude of local, provincial, and regional laws and regulations which have bearing on the motor carrier passenger industry. The industry's ability to yield strong influence on the legislation that affects it is essential for its long-term viability and reasonable autonomy.

Priority: Strengthening the industry voice at all government levels

- **Consolidate pertinent human resources** related industry/government initiatives as a resource on the Council resource centre website.
- Build **industry recognition** at all relevant government levels and venues through marketing initiatives, formal presentations, and the cultivation of influential relationships.
- **Monitor** the industry-related activity of government Standing Committees (federal and provincial) and municipal/regional transportation committees, etc. to enable an informed proactive industry influence and/or presence on contemplated and pending legislation impacting human resources.
- Initiate proactive/timely **submissions** to government on important industry concerns (e. g. disruptive/violent passenger control legislation).
- **Leverage the Sector Council collaboration** of labour, employers, associations, and other stakeholders to strengthen industry representation to all forms of government.

Action/Project	Lead	Partners	Activity Duration
Consolidate government human resources initiatives	MCPCC	Associations, Unions Systems/Companies	On-going
Industry recognition	All Stakeholders		On-going
Monitoring	Associations and other Stakeholders	All Stakeholders	On-going
Submissions	All Stakeholders		On-going
Leverage Sector Council collaboration	All Stakeholders	All Stakeholders	On-going



Priority: Developing and maintaining international industry intelligence and collaboration

- Initiate and develop centralized collaborative **liaison** with International counterparts operating in progressive economies.
- Leverage these relationships to include the **sharing** of research, concepts, methodologies, strategies and technologies. To ensure optimum reciprocity, the industry must be fully committed to reasonably sharing information and strategies with other stakeholders, both international and domestic.
- Access **international** industry human resource **intelligence** for dissemination to, and access by stakeholders.

Action/Project	Lead	Partners	Activity Duration
Liaison	Associations MCPC	International Representatives	On-going
Sharing	Associations/MCPC	International Representatives	On-going
International intelligence	MCPC	International Representatives Associations	On-going