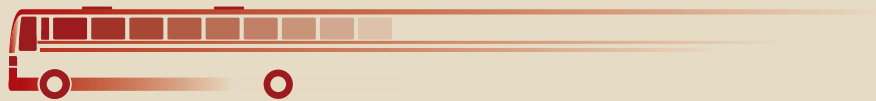




Part 3
Employment Analysis



3.0 Employment Analysis

3.1 Employment Profile

The industry is composed of numerous occupations, each with its own skills and responsibilities and each dependent on the others to ensure that its respective service providers are capable of meeting customers' demands. The list of those employed in the industry includes, but is not limited to:

- bus & streetcar operators
- dispatchers
- supervisors and inspectors
- mechanics, technicians and maintenance workers
- training and safety personnel
- sales and service personnel
- finance and administration personnel
- planners and schedulers
- management and other professionals
- subway train and light rail transit operators
- subway traffic controllers

The occupation most commonly associated with the industry, and by far the most visible, is that of the 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.

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-talented employees whose actual workday activities cross the boundaries of conventional job descriptions. Refer to table 3-1 to learn more about organization size.



Table 3-1: Breakdown of Industry Employment by Occupation – 2001 v. 1991

Occupations	2001		1991		Occupations
	Total Workforce (FTE)	Percent of Total	Percent of Total	Total Workforce (FTE)	
Bus Drivers and Subway and Other Transit Operators (NOC 7412)	57,090	66.00%	65.10%	55,730	Operators
Mechanics (NOC 7321)	6,195	7.20%	6.30%	5,375	Maintenance and Mechanics
Business, Finance and Administration	6,145	7.10%	8.30%	7,110	Administrative Staff
Sales and Service	4,380	5.10%	2.50%	2,160	Marketing and Customer Services
Management	3,075	3.60%	3.70%	3,150	Management
Other Equipment / Vehicle Operators	2,845	3.30%	–	–	–
Supervisors (NOC 7222)	1,935	2.20%	3.20%	2,710	Supervisors and Inspectors
Other Trades	1,815	2.10%	–	–	–
Other	1,400	1.60%	9.00%	7,680	Other Occupations
Professionals	1,230	1.40%	2.00%	1,700	Professionals
Trades Contractors and Supervisors	350	0.40%	–	–	–
Total	86,460	100%	100%	85,615	Total

Source: Statistics Canada, special tabulation, unpublished data, Census, 2001; Price Waterhouse 1997

Though differences by specific occupation may be attributed to changes in tabulation methods, comparing industry workforce composition between 2001 and 1991 reveals a shift toward leaner administration (table 3-1). The proportion of mechanics and operators has increased, and that of all other occupations combined has declined (table 3-2). Stakeholders contacted suggest that, while figures do indeed show the shrinking number of managers, this shift is likely more reflective of a general management skills shortage than of an effort to streamline operations.

Table 3-2: 2001-1991 Comparison of Industry Employment

Occupation	Percent of Industry Workforce (2001)	Percent of Industry Workforce (1991)
Operators	66.00%	65.10%
Mechanics	7.20%	6.30%
Management	3.60%	3.70%
Other	23.20%	24.90%

Source: Statistics Canada, special tabulation, unpublished data, Census, 2001; Price Waterhouse® 1997

3. 1. 1 Key Industry Occupations

3. 1. 1. 1 Operators and drivers (NOC 7412)

Besides simply driving, **Operators** rely on their skills to ensure the safe operation of their vehicles and to provide quality customer service.

An operator’s ability to meet even the most basic driving requirements is dependent upon becoming familiar with policies, procedures and regulations, especially if travelling between jurisdictions. Fundamental training and operating manuals are supplemented on a daily basis by other information such as schedules, itineraries, student lists, or even commentary and historical information of tour destinations (Essential Skills, 2005).

Reporting—a critical element of any program, particularly maintenance— is a key responsibility of the operator. Some of the reports for which operators are responsible include inspection reports, maintenance logs, vehicle defect reports and accident reports. Details of operators’ current shifts are also subject to reporting requirements. Though they may vary by sub-sector and by organization, reports in the form of time sheets, shift summary reports or logbooks may include information on the following:

- hours worked
- passengers
- vehicle information
- route information
- ticket/sales information
- mileage

Ultimately, the most important roles that the effective driver/operator must play rely on solid communication and interpersonal skills. In addition to making announcements and responding to the questions of their passengers, operators may need to intervene and take control of often critically important situations. Being called upon to resolve conflicts with or between passengers, parents or even passers-by and to provide emergency response to protect the health and safety of their passengers are all responsibilities that operators and drivers routinely assume.

Operators’ Profiles

Urban Bus Operators travel prescribed routes in towns, cities and the suburbs picking up passengers at designated stops according to defined schedules. Often they must deal with heavy traffic and congested streets while collecting fares, issuing transfers and validating passes. Many urban buses now have wheelchair accessible features, which may require the Bus Operator to assist the passenger on and off the bus by operating ramps or lifts and securing the wheelchair.

Intercity Bus Operators typically pick up passengers at inner-city bus terminals and drive them directly to bus terminals in other cities. However, some Intercity Bus Operators make frequent stops to pick up and drop off passengers and parcels at local agencies. Parcel pick-up and delivery is an important component of the Intercity Bus Operator’s work, which may entail some heavy lifting and maintaining careful records.



School Bus Operators drive students to and from school, and to and from intramural activities, stopping and starting in both rural and urban areas. These operators have the additional safety and security responsibility associated with carrying students, i.e. maintaining order, and ensuring safe stopping and starting, often on busy highways and country roads. In most areas they are also responsible for controlling traffic through the use of flashing lights. Some school buses now have wheelchair accessible features, which require the Bus Operator to assist the passenger on and off the bus and secure wheelchairs/scooters.

Tour and Charter Bus Operators convey passengers from point to point for specific purposes, such as sightseeing tours, transporting passengers from their hotel to the airport or rail station, or transporting groups, i.e. sports teams or the elderly. Tour and Charter Bus Operators often have the additional responsibility of acting as Tour Guides, and as such, they must be knowledgeable of the sights and places of interest.

Accessible Services Bus Operators transport passengers using vehicles specially equipped to accommodate wheelchairs, scooters and people with special needs. They provide a door-to-door service assisting passengers from and to their doors and on to and off the bus.

Source: MCPCC NOS, 2006

There is a broad, industry-wide concern about the safety and well-being of the men and women in the motor carrier passenger industry in the light of a dramatic increase in violence against operators. Across the country, programs designed to address this alarming issue are expressed in two ways: training and awareness programs for operators/drivers (e. g. CUTA's Violence Against Transit Operators Program, rolling out nationally in 2006); and public education programs aimed at increasing respect for the operator's role and for fellow passengers.

3. 1. 1. 2 Mechanics (NOC 7321)

Mechanics and technicians inspect, diagnose, repair and service mechanical, electrical and electronic systems and components of the industry's various vehicles (www.jobfutures.ca, 2005). Their work involves not only the act of repairing equipment, but also problem analysis and determining appropriate solutions. With the help of various technical documents (e. g. , shop manuals, specification sheets), mechanics and technicians use a variety of tools and technologies to manage and execute maintenance activities (e. g. , routine maintenance, overhaul) in repair shops and/or working in the field using mobile repair trucks. Mechanics are also responsible for documenting repairs and the condition of equipment through work orders and other related paperwork (Essential Skills, 2005a).

A key factor in mechanics' ability to successfully meet the requirements placed upon them is continuous learning. As technology continues to evolve, mechanics must ensure that their skills keep pace and are expected to continue to upgrade their skills through reading, courses and hands-on work. This is especially important because transportation technologies are evolving rapidly and more sophisticated computerized equipment is replacing traditional systems. It has been said that the laptop is becoming the most important tool in the bus mechanic's "toolbox."

3. 1. 1. 3 Dispatchers / Subway Traffic Controllers

Bus dispatchers dispatch bus drivers and monitor routes to make sure that drivers meet schedules. They also co-ordinate responses to countless operating problems as they occur, from crew scheduling, delays and route changes to equipment breakdowns and accidents. Additionally, dispatchers maintain logs and reports on shift activities by logging run, vehicle and driver information and reporting on calls received, accidents and emergencies (occupationalinfo.org, 2005). **Subway traffic controllers** provide similar problem solving services in operating and monitoring signal/track switch control panels (Job Futures, 2005).

3. 1. 1. 4 Supervisors (NOC 7222)

Supervisors of motor transport and other ground transit operators supervise, co-ordinate, and schedule the activities of workers who operate trucks, buses, subway trains, light rail transit, taxicabs and other transport vehicles (Job Futures, 2005).

3. 1. 2 Skill Requirements

3. 1. 2. 1 Operators

The basic requirements for drivers/operators of buses include a valid appropriate **driver's licence**, a minimum of one year of clean driving record and an air brake endorsement, if driving air brake-equipped vehicles. Some employers may require a grade twelve education and up to three months of on-the-job training.

In addition to basic licensing requirements, operators benefit from having certain **related skills** that may enhance their ability to perform. These essential bus-driving skills include (MCPCC Essential Skills Profile; MCPCC, 2005; HRDC, 2001a, b; Underwood, G. , Chapman, Brocklehurst, Underwood, & Crundall, 2003):

- cognitive abilities such as spatial orientation
- mechanical reasoning
- problem solving
- arithmetic
- communication
- motor co-ordination
- manual dexterity
- visual attention ability

Being able to read, use documents, plan job tasks, organize and make significant use of memory recall are essential for operators (MCPCC, 2004). School bus drivers in particular, given their unique and important responsibilities for the passengers they carry, require pupil management skills (TRB, 1999c).

Personality characteristics are also deemed important to an individual's likelihood of success as an operator. Jacobs et al. (1996) identified five main personality factors:

- emotional stability for coping with stressful situations
- extraversion
- intellect
- agreeableness
- conscientiousness

These specific personality characteristics appear to predict performance in time sensitive situations, such as keeping a bus on schedule. When combined with tasks, cognitive abilities and biographical information, these can be used in a composite model to predict operator performance or to recruit new operators more likely to have a good attendance record and fewer accidents (Jacobs et al. , 1996).

The main factors currently influencing operator skill requirements are technology and changing population demographics. Operators will require additional training and skill development specific to the use of new technologies, and they will also need to develop the abilities to communicate effectively with riders from a growing and

Supervisors in transport are generally responsible for establishing methods to meet work schedules, co-ordinating work activities with other units, and requisitioning materials and supplies. They also resolve work problems, recommend measures to improve performance, and make recommendations regarding hirings, promotions and other personnel actions. Supervisors in transport may also be responsible for preparing work reports and for training staff in job duties, safety procedures and company policy.

*Source:
www.saskjobfutures.ca
2005*

The Red Seal Program

Through the Red Seal Program, apprentices who have completed their training and certified journey persons are able to obtain a "Red Seal" endorsement on their Certificates of Qualification and Apprenticeship by successfully completing an Interprovincial Standards Examination. The "Red Seal" allows qualified tradespersons to practice the trade in any province or territory in Canada where the trade is designated without having to write further examinations.

Source: www.red-seal.ca

changing range of demographic and cultural backgrounds. These changes and pressures will add to the skills required of the effective and efficient operator.

3. 1. 2. 2 Subway and Light Rail Operators, Inspectors and Dispatchers

Given that to become a **subway or light rail operator** candidates require prior experience as a public transit bus operator (HRDC, 2001a) and that these resources are typically hired from within an organization, the entry skills of these resources are largely equivalent to those of experienced operators. Similarly, in larger unionized organizations where a career progression is determined largely by seniority, those in positions such as **dispatcher** and **inspector** have similar backgrounds. The ability to communicate well, particularly orally, is an asset in these positions, as is relying on experience and a sound knowledge of operations for problem solving and quick and effective decision-making (Essential Skills, 2005b).

3. 1. 2. 3 Supervisors, Railway and Motor Transportation Occupations (NOC 7222)

The basic employment pre-requisites to becoming a supervisor of operations typically include several years of experience as a driver/operator and completion of secondary school. Though this offers operators more mobility and opportunity for career progression within the industry, those already in supervisory positions have far more limited advancement prospects.

3. 1. 2. 4 Motor Vehicle Mechanics (NOC 7321)

Success as a motor vehicle mechanic is predicated largely on mechanical aptitude; however, patience, reliability, co-ordination and agility are also required, as are lightness of touch and an attention to detail. There may also be a requirement for physical strength, depending on the specific environment. Strong skills in mathematics and computers are becoming more and more important, as the technology deployed throughout the industry evolves (Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2003).

The career path of a certified motor vehicle mechanic begins with a minimum high school education requirement as per province of residence. Prospective certified mechanics enrol in an apprenticeship program in which they work under the tutelage of a journey person until completing a set number of hours of work and successfully passing an examination (written and/or practical) in order to become a certified journey person themselves. A combination of work experience in the trade and the completion of approved exemption tests may also be acceptable for trade certification (red-seal.ca, 2004)

Though there is no national trade certification for mechanics, the *Red Seal Program* Certification provides trades people with the opportunity to complete an inter-provincial standards examination, which facilitates movement between those provinces where the trade is designated.

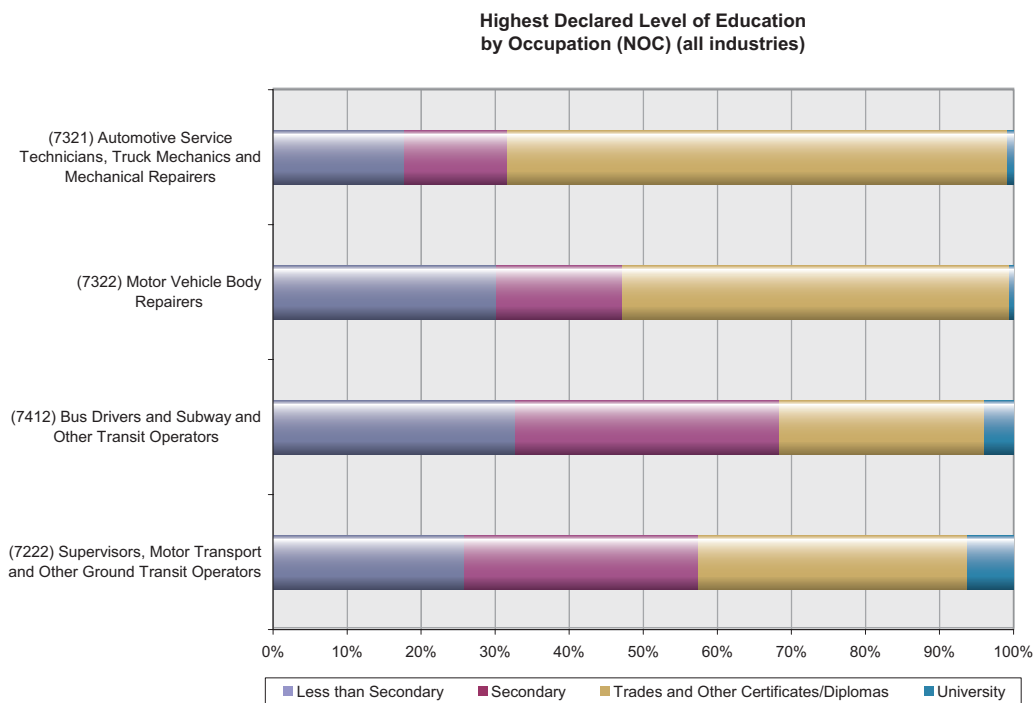
The trade of motor vehicle mechanic, however, is an extremely broad grouping of skills and does not distinguish between specializations, such as diesel or automotive, or the major systems of which individual mechanics may have a command (fuel, brake, steering and suspension, transmission, differentials, drive axles and shafts, emission

control and exhaust, engines, electronics and electrical, cooling and climate control). This very broad categorization makes identification of available skills and the balancing of industry-specific supply and demand more challenging.

3. 1. 3 Educational Background of Employees

Of the three primary distinct occupations that make up the industry (operators, mechanics and supervisors), operators and supervisors appear to have generally similar educational backgrounds (figure 3-1). Supervisors, however, are on average slightly more highly educated; proportionally fewer tend to have not finished high school and a greater share have a non trade-related certificate or degree. Not surprisingly, given broader expectations of certification, mechanics are far more likely to have completed a specialized training program. 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.

Figure 3-1: Level of education by industry occupation



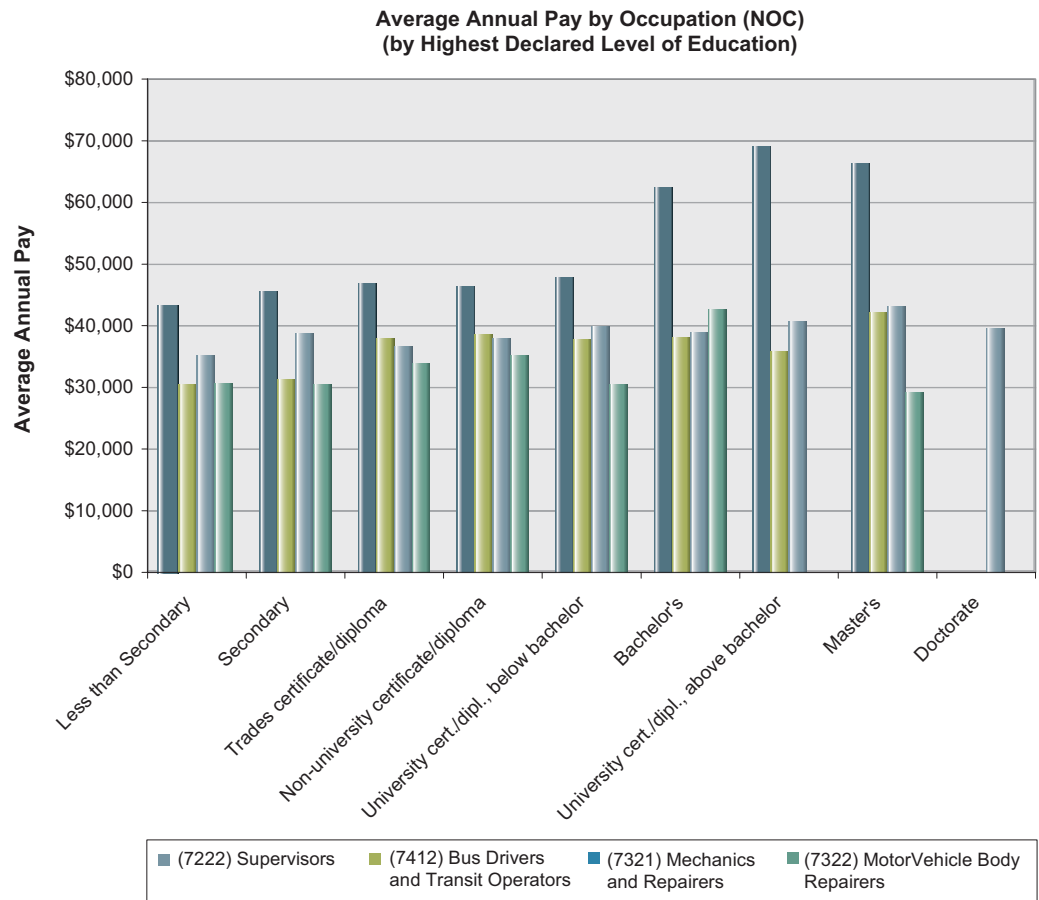
Source: Statistics Canada, special tabulation, unpublished data, Census, 2001

In the case of both mechanics and operators, there is limited evidence of greater pay with greater education. Supervisors, however, show significant gains in pay with university level education (figure 3-2).



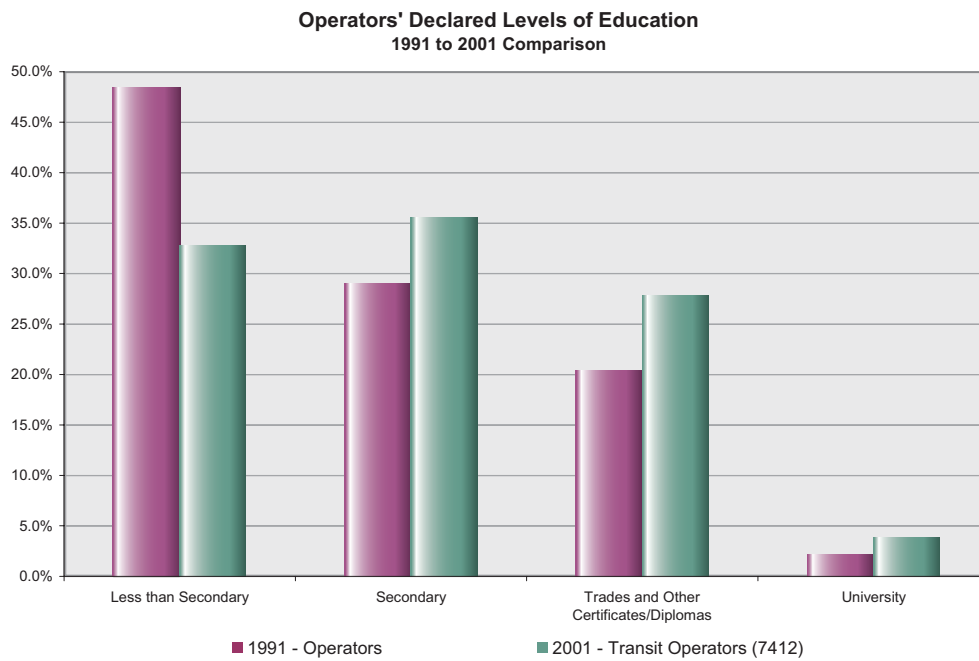
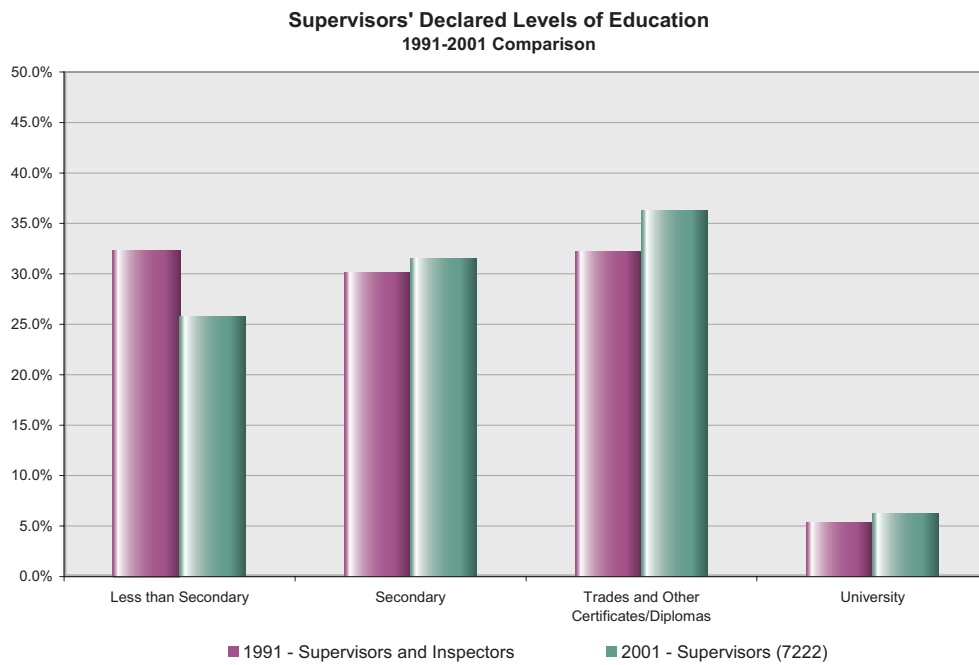
Figure 3-2: Relationship between education and pay by industry occupation

When comparing the declared levels of education identified in the 1997 Study to those of 2001 identified above, there is evidence trending towards operators and supervisors having greater education (figure 3-3).



Source: Statistics Canada, undergraduate special tabulation, unpublished data, Census, 2001

Figure 3-3: Level of education comparison (1991-2001)

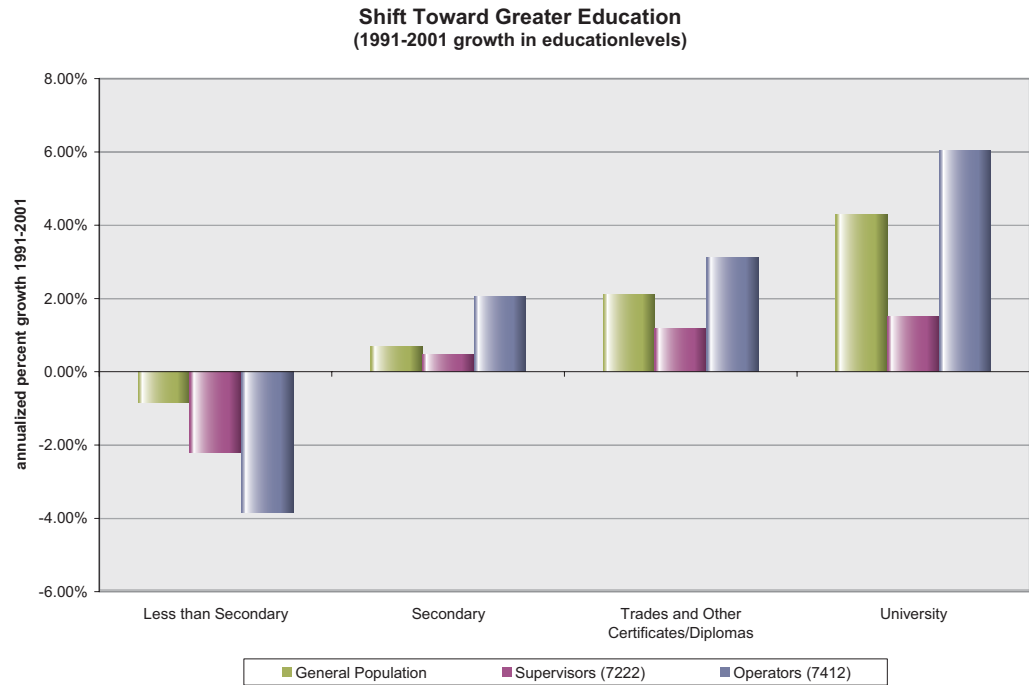


Source: Statistics Canada, special tabulation, unpublished data, Census, 2001; Price Waterhouse 1997



When compared to the general population 15 to 65 years of age, operators have shown a significantly larger shift toward greater education between 1991 and 2001 (figure 3-4). The shift in the education levels of the supervisor group is far less dramatic than both operators and the general population, as in 1991 they were already largely evenly distributed between three primary educational groupings (less than secondary, secondary and trades and other).

Figure 3-4: Shifting levels of education (1991-2001)



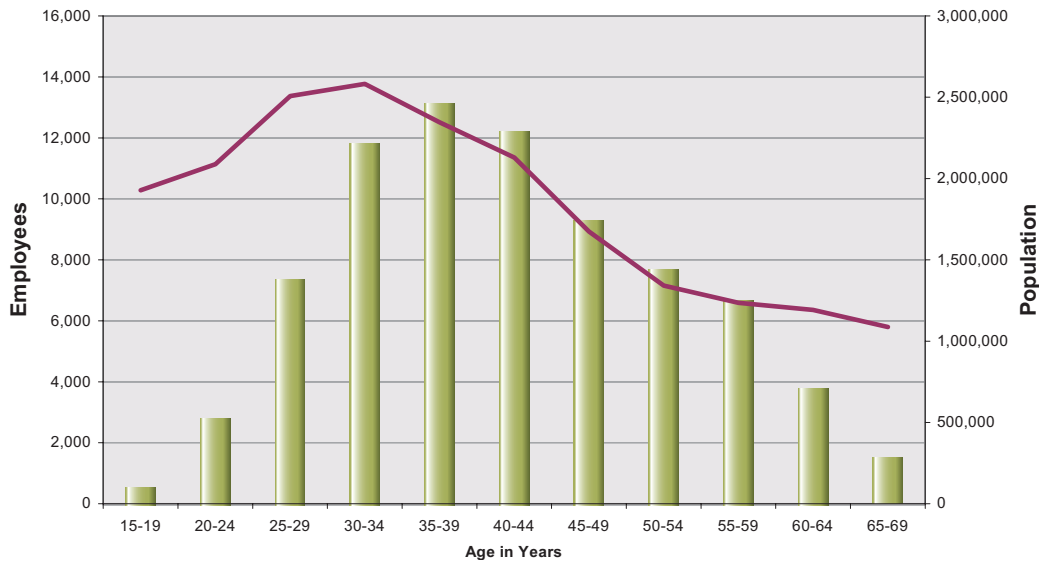
Source: Statistics Canada, special tabulation, unpublished data, Census, 2001; Price Waterhouse 1997; Statistics Canada, <http://www40.statcan.ca/101/cst01/educ45.htm>, February 8, 2006

3. 1. 4 An Ageing Workforce

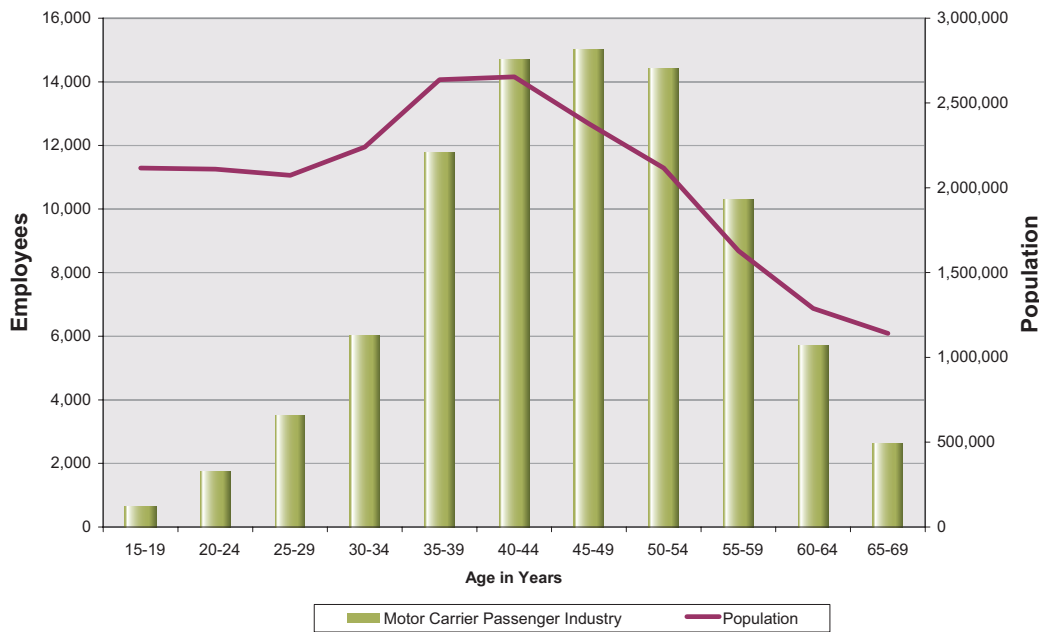
The ageing of the general population is likely to have an impact on the makeup and needs of the industry’s market base and its ridership. Though the ageing pattern that appears in the demographic distribution of the industry’s employees is similar to that of the general population, there is a greater prevalence of older workers in the range of 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 workers in the industry (figure 3-5). 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. Alternately, the entry age of employees new to the industry has progressively increased due in part to more vigorous regulatory, licensing and employer requirements.

Figure 3-5: Age of Industry employees

**1991 Demographic Distribution
of the Motor Carrier Passenger Industry's Employees**



**2001 Demographic Distribution
of the Motor Carrier Passenger Industry's Employees**

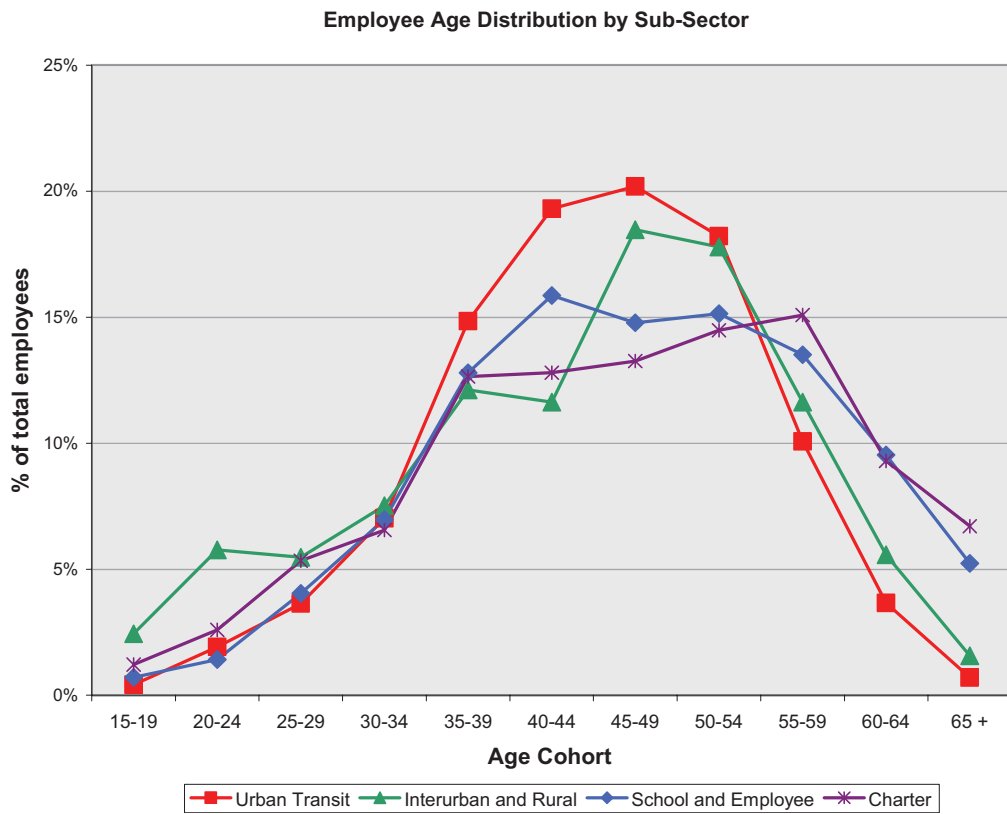


Source: (industry employee data) Statistics Canada, special tabulation, unpublished data, Census, 1991 and 2001; (population data) The Centre for Spatial Economics®, 2004



When broken out by industry sub-sector (figure 3-6), it becomes clear that a significant share of the workforce age profile is attributable to the urban and interurban sub-sectors, which show greater peaks and a more precipitous drop off in the age distribution of employees. The school bus and charter sub-sectors' profiles are flatter and retain a greater percentage of older employees.

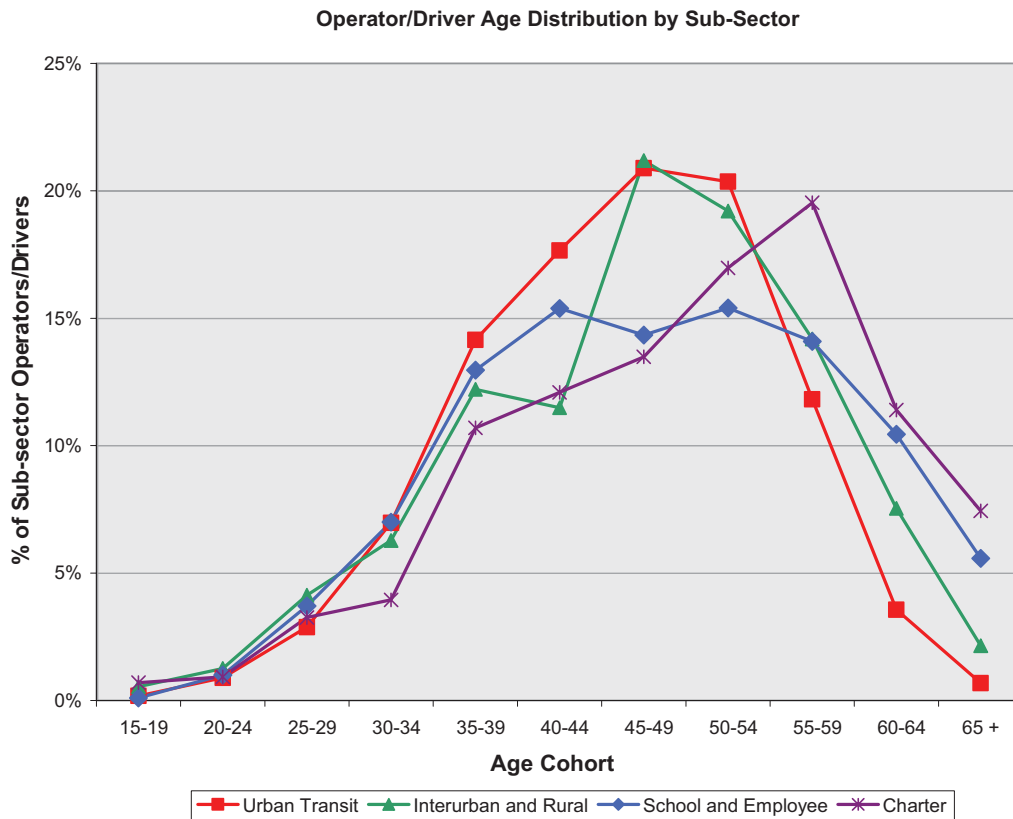
Figure 3-6: Age of sub-sector employees



Source: Statistics Canada, special tabulation, unpublished data, Census, 2001

Examining the age profiles of each sub-sectors' operators/drivers (figure 3-7), one can see that the urban, interurban and charter sub-sectors all show operator age profiles peaking later than the overall employee distribution. The peak is particularly dramatic in the charter sub-sector. The school bus sub-sector, on the other hand, continues to show a comparatively more balanced distribution.

Figure 3-7: Age of sub-sector operators/drivers

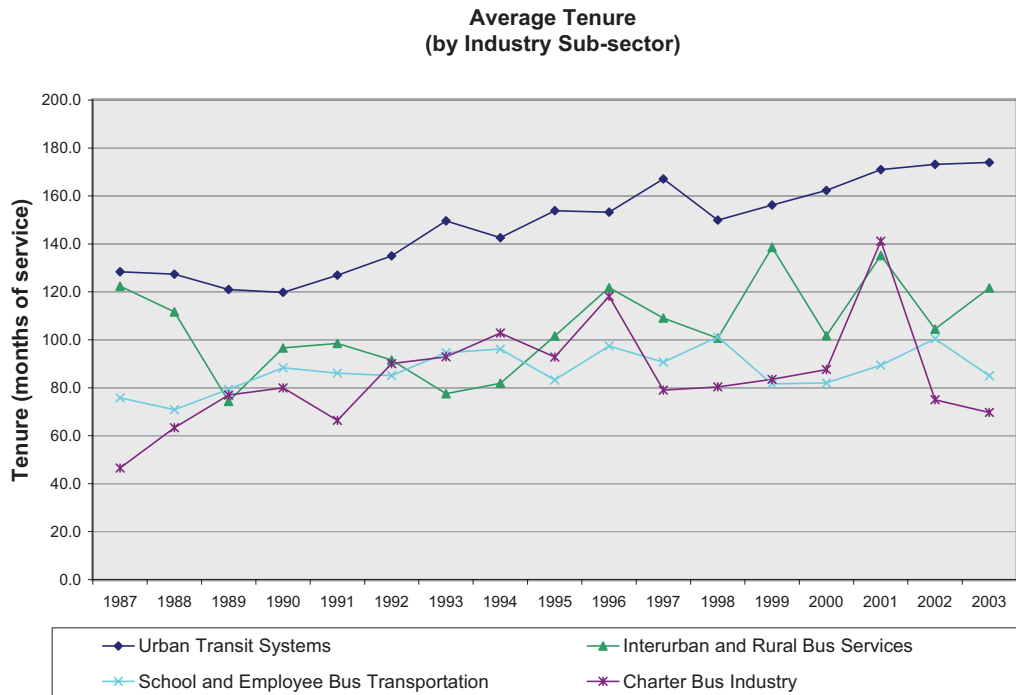


Source: Statistics Canada, special tabulation, unpublished data, Census®, 2001

Additionally, the number of months of service of the urban sub-sector’s employee base has trended steadily upwards over the past 15 years (figure 3-8), whereas the other sub-sectors have shown less stability.



Figure 3-8: Industry employee tenure



Source: Statistics Canada, special tabulation, unpublished data, Labour Force Survey®, 2005

3. 1. 5 Employment Equity

In focus groups, interviews and questionnaire responses, the industry’s stakeholders have recognized the need to build a workforce more reflective of Canadian society’s gender and diverse ethnic composition. Although the gender and ethnic diversity of the industry have shown positive change since the Price Waterhouse (PW) Study of 1997, several contributing factors minimizing the rate of change include, but are not limited to:

- employment stability/tenure
- working conditions applicable to the drivers/operators’ role, which represents over 69% of the industry workforce (e. g. shift work, extended overnight, travel, situational risk)
- official language requirements
- skills requirements
- increased marketplace competition for job applicants due to progressively stronger Canadian economy

3. 1. 5. 1 Gender

The industry’s overall efforts at building a more gender-inclusive workforce, however, have shown inconsistent results (figure 3-9).

Figure 3-9: Women employed in the Industry

**Gender Breakdown of Employment
in the Motor Carrier Passenger Industry**



Source: Statistics Canada, special tabulation, unpublished data, Labour Force Survey®, 2005

On an occupation-specific level, however, some progress has been made. In comparing the 1991 Census data reported in the initial Sector Study of 1997 to the most recent 2001 census data, one can see that women are beginning to assume a more prominent role in many industry occupations (table 3-3).

Table 3-3: Gender by Employment Category - 1991 v. 2001

Employment Category	Women (Per cent of category workforce)	
	1991	2001
Operators	34%	36%
Mechanics	0.60%	2%
Administrative Occupations	56%	62%
Management	21%	23%
Professionals	24.80%	27%
Supervisors/Inspectors	16%	18%
Workforce	33%	33%

Source: Statistics Canada, special tabulation, unpublished data, Census, 2001; Price Waterhouse® 1997.



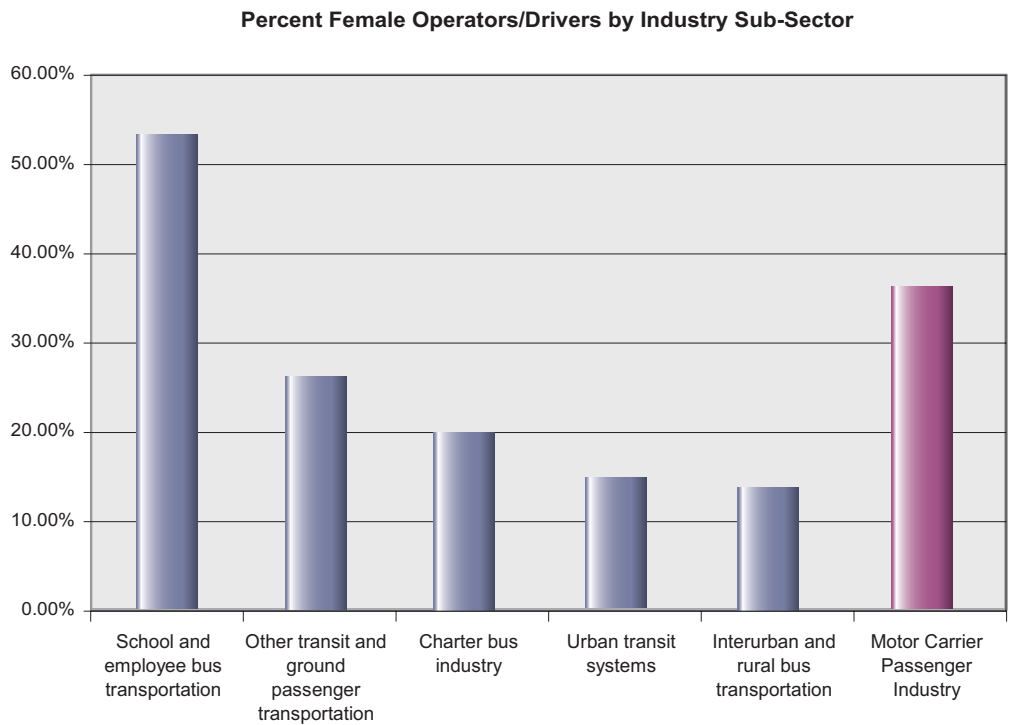
Across the industry's sub sectors, there is a large disparity in the ratio of men to women. As an example, the 36% of female industry operators are predominantly in the school bus sub-sector representing 56% of that sub-sector's operators while fewer than 15% of each of urban transit and intercity operators are women (figure 3-10).

The urban transit sub-sector employs the smallest workforce percentage of female employees.

Furthermore, though there are regular fluctuations in the available data values, figures show that men consistently earn more than women across all sub-sectors (figure 3-12). This is due to the fact that women continue to be more highly represented in lower paid positions.

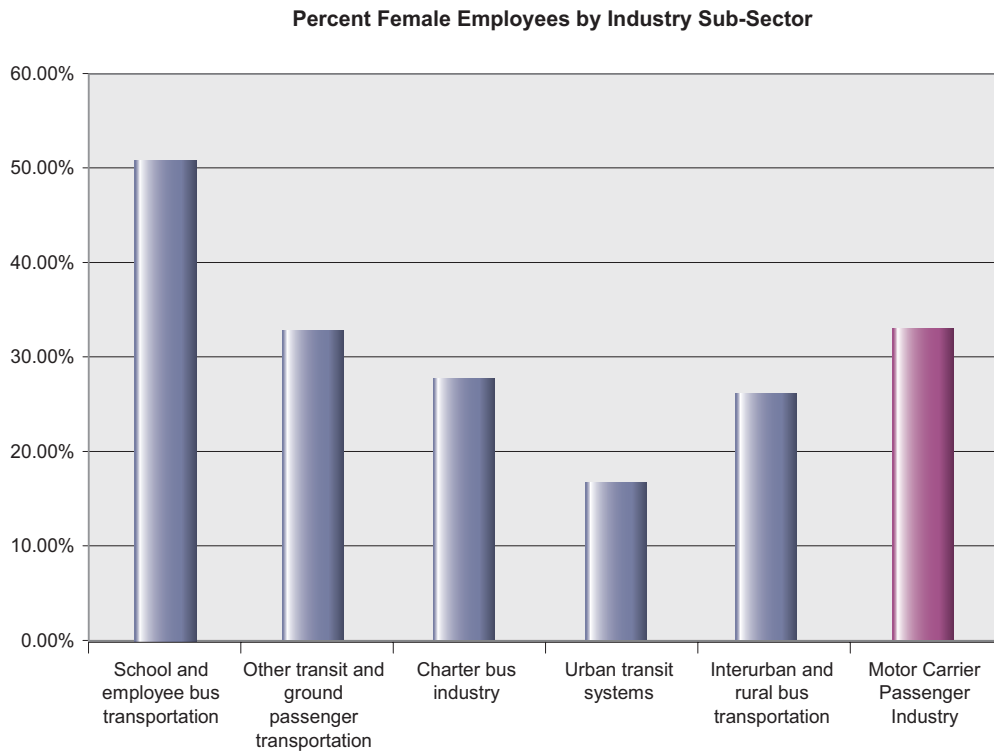
The earnings differential is smallest in the urban sub-sector, which is perceived to be substantially attributable to collective bargaining agreements.

Figure 3-10: Sub-sector breakdown of women operators/drivers in the Industry



Source: Statistics Canada Special Tabulation, unpublished data®, 2001 census

Figure 3-11: Sub-sector breakdown of the employment of women in the Industry - 2001

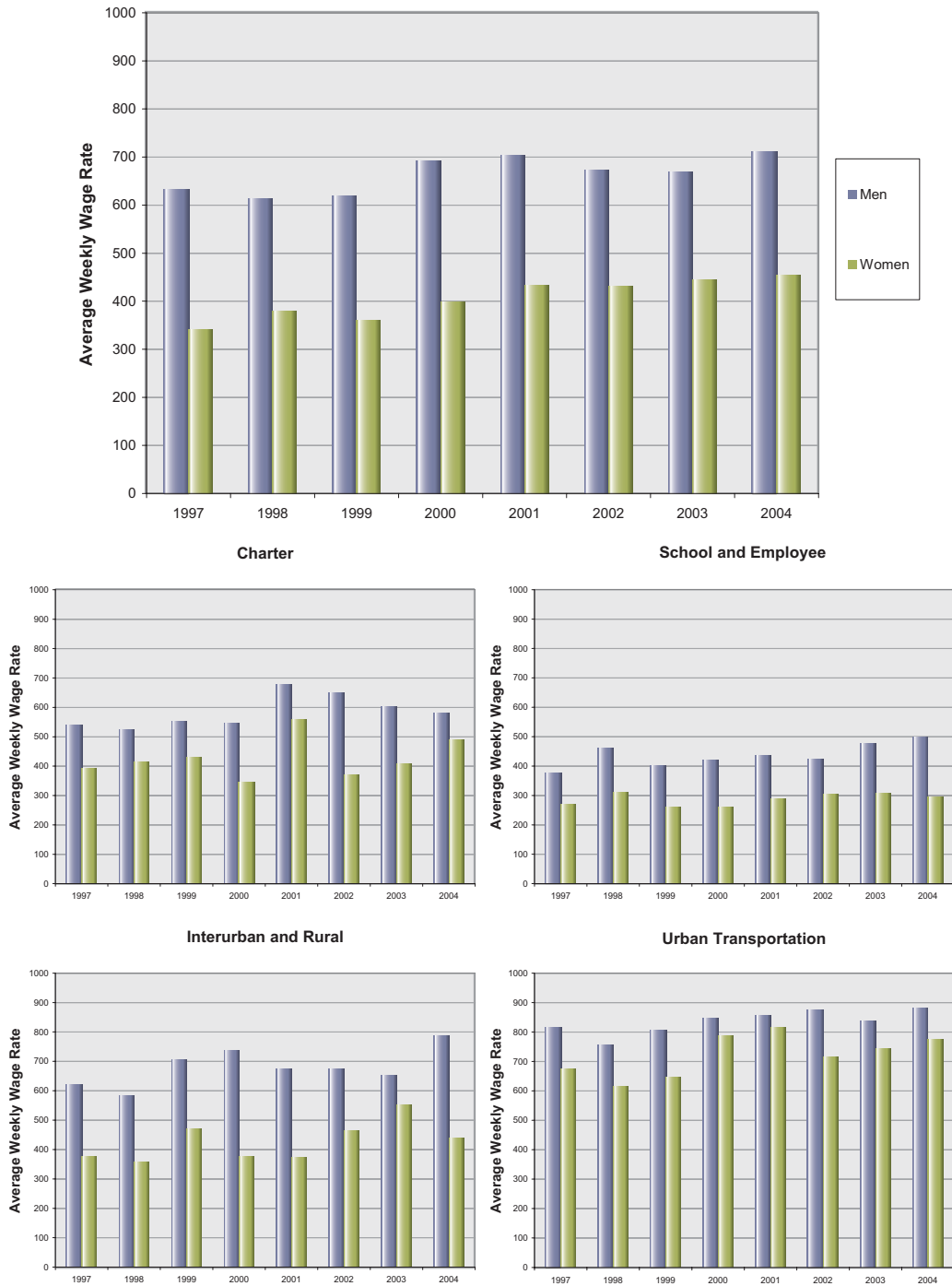


Source: Statistics Canada Special Tabulation, unpublished data®, 2001 census



Figure 3-12: Industry Wages - Men vs. Women

All Transit and Ground Transportation Sub-sectors



Source: Statistics Canada, special tabulation, unpublished data, Labour Force Survey®, 2005

As noted, the percentages of women employed by the industry in all designated employment categories except “Administrative Occupations” increased only marginally for the period of 1991-2001. Study participants expressed recognition of, and concern for these results, and indicated that for all job openings, female applicants are encouraged and received equal opportunity consideration. However, it also appears that recruitment activities specifically targeted to attract female applicants are more commonly employed by the school sub-sector.

Certain lifestyle limitations and choices in part explain the high school sub-sector level of female operator employment vs. a much lower level within the other sub-sectors. Since the 1997 PW Study, the vocation with the most notable gender disparity, although one of the most desirable industry positions, has continued to be that of the urban bus operator.

3. 1. 5. 2 Ethnic Diversity in the Industry

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 (table 3-4) 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 industry percentages for both groups reflect progress by the industry toward greater integration of hiring, training and development of Aboriginal People and visible minorities.

Table 3-4: Aboriginal People and Visible Minorities in the Industry Workforce

Group	Canadian Workforce (1991)	Industry Workforce (1991)	Canadian Workforce (2001)	Industry Workforce (2001)
Aboriginal People	2.90%	2.60%	2.60%	2.60%
Visible Minorities	9.20%	4.90%	12.60%	7.90%
Total	12.10%	7.50%	15.20%	10.60%

Source: Statistics Canada, special tabulation, unpublished data, Census, 1991, 2001; Price Waterhouse® 1997

The Canadian Bus Association (CBA) and the MCPCC offer an example of ways in which representation of specific communities may be improved. A memorandum of Understanding has been signed with the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples to improve Aboriginal youth’s access to training and positions in the industry (Canadian Bus Association, 2004b). It is anticipated that this will help Aboriginal youth gain access to valuable employment opportunities while helping the industry address issues of labour availability and workforce diversity.

Visible Minorities in Canada’s Metropolitan Areas

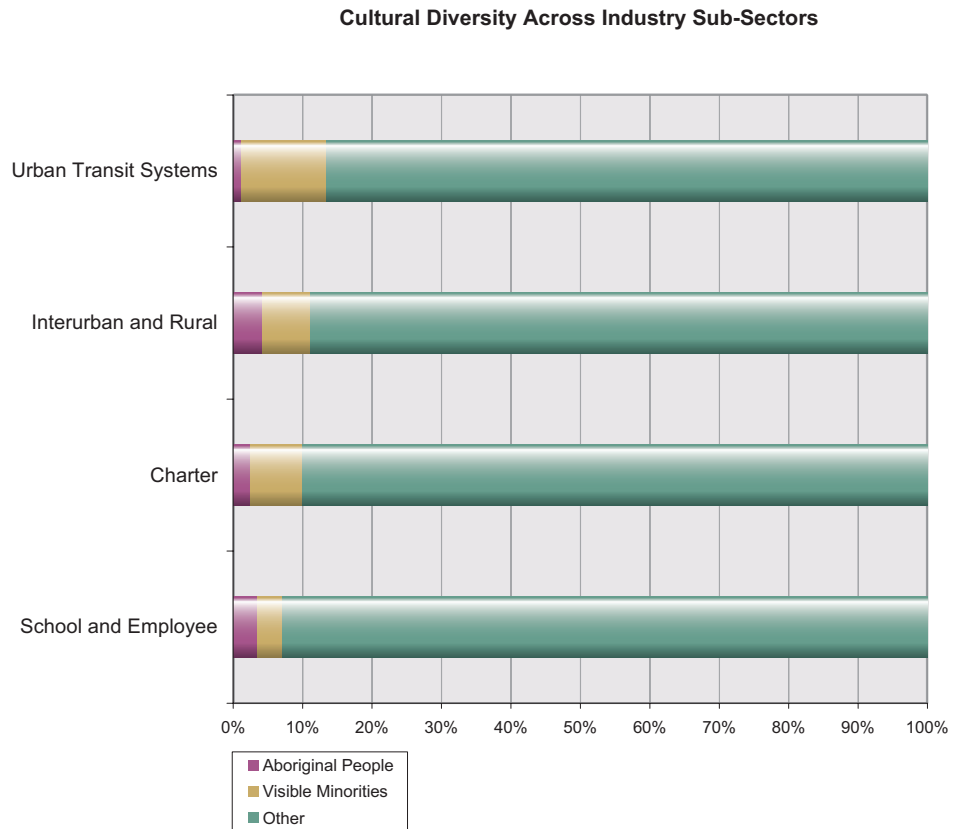
- 37% of the populations of Toronto and Vancouver are visible minorities
- More than 90% of Québec’s visible minorities live in Montréal
- More than 91% of Alberta’s visible minorities live in Calgary or Edmonton

Source: Statistics Canada, 2003



When broken down by occupation and industry sub-sector, however, dissimilarities become apparent (figure 3-13). The urban transit sub-sector by far, the most multi-cultural and school and Employee the least. This may, however, be partly explained by immigrant settlement patterns and the concentration of visible minorities in major metropolitan areas.

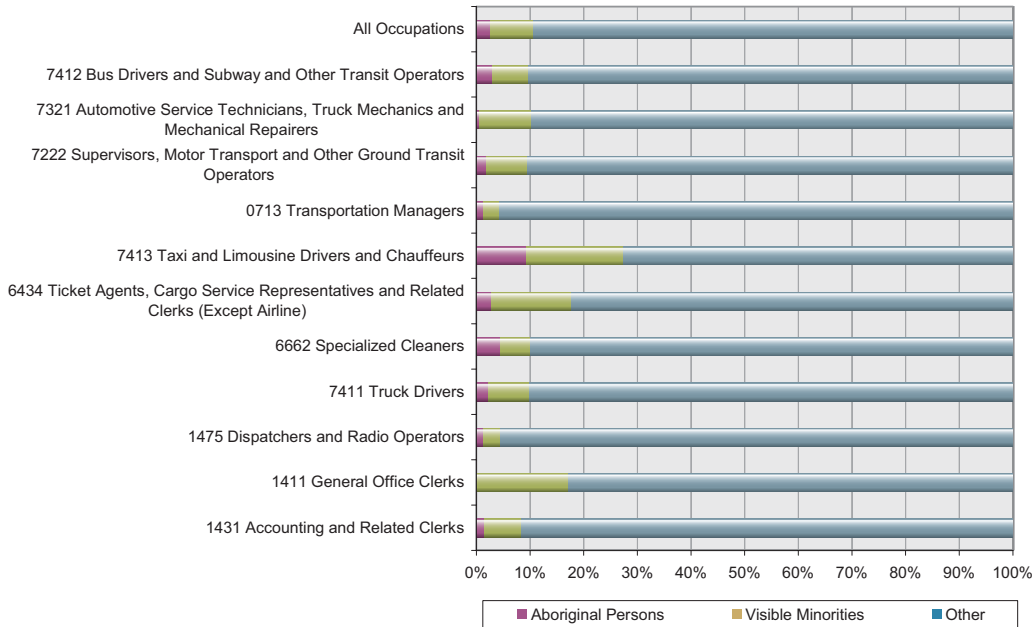
Figure 3-13: Representation of visible minorities and Aboriginal people - 2001



Source: Statistics Canada, special tabulation, unpublished data, Census, 2001

Figure 3-14: Representation of Visible Minorities and Aboriginal People by Industry Occupation - 2001

Cultural Diversity in the Motor Carrier Passenger Industry (leading occupations)



Source: Statistics Canada, special tabulation, unpublished data, Census®, 2001



A number of service providers have found that an ideal short-term solution to finding the best mix of skills is to seek out industry retirees, even those from within their own ranks. This labour pool potentially provides employers with candidates that have an ideal mix of skills, both technical and interpersonal, that can be immediately leveraged.

Camo-route Initiatives

In promoting the transportation industry within Québec and supporting the development of a qualified source of human resources to meet the current and future needs of the industry, Camo-route has successfully undertaken a number of initiatives to maintain the industry's competitiveness, including:

- *Standardized training in technical and interpersonal skills for the motor carrier passenger industry;*
- *Provincially subsidized training to improve the skills and marketability of prospective industry employees;*
- *Promotion of industry careers to local employment centres, school guidance councillors and visitors to transportation conferences and job fairs;*
- *Bus mechanic work/Study programs.*
- *Bus driving vocational study qualification (through the Centre de formation en transport de Charlesbourg, a publicly funded transportation school)*

Source: Camo-route, 2005b

3. 2 Human Resources Supply

3. 2. 1 Traditional and Alternate Sources of Supply

As shown in the initial Sector Study in 1997, the industry has broadened its recruiting focus for operators to include a greater emphasis on interpersonal and customer service skills. These required skills of potential bus operators far outweigh initial technical driving skills in determining the suitability of candidates for a position in the industry.

Though proven media vehicles of print, transit and outdoor advertising (e. g. , billboards, sandwich boards) continue to produce results, as do employee referrals and various government programs, new tools are being developed and implemented throughout the industry to address most effectively the need for skilled employees. Just as web-based tools are improving the training process, as described in Part 2, the use of corporate and employment websites to attract and initiate contact with candidates is expanding. Also, the scope of its 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 the opportunity to learn more about the organization and the job and even to apply online. Such on-line applications allow the employer to quickly and automatically screen candidates in an effective manner while reducing costs.

In markets where applicant potential is limited, specifically targeting the ideal candidate profile is becoming a necessity. Whether it is fleet management appealing directly to schools and their students, organizations encouraging their own skilled employees to delay retirement or focusing recruitment efforts in specific, including ethnic communities (often so as to find the candidates most able to serve that very same community), organizations are targeting specific employee markets.

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

Many employers in the industry have become skilled at screening and qualifying candidates. Though the ability to recognize potentially successful employees from great numbers of applicants has become essential, the industry must also ensure that the pool of applicants it is choosing from is sufficiently large to satisfy its needs.

3. 2. 2 Competition for Skills and Human Resources

3. 2. 2. 1 Operators

Competition for applicants with operator potential is evident by the publicized shortages/demand within several sectors of the Canadian economy (e. g. trucking) for employees with industry-compatible qualifications. The long-declining level of unemployment in Canada (e. g. from 9. 3% - May 1996 to 6. 1% - May 2006 - Statistics Canada) indicates the degree of labour pool diminishment. In addition, due to more vigorous hiring criteria including legislative requirements, the available pool of prospects has been even further reduced. In this context, even industry sub-sectors have become inter-competitive for operators.

3. 2. 2. 2 Mechanics

Acute shortages of mechanics have prevailed for some time in multiple sectors of the Canadian economy. The supply of mechanics in many markets has not been and will not be sufficient to satisfy the demands of the industry. As a result, industry employers must seek to secure supply either by purchasing it in the open market (competing to hire qualified mechanics on the basis of compensation and work environment) or by building their own capacity through the promotion of apprenticeships with individual employers or industry-wide partnerships with training institutions.

3. 2. 2. 3 The Impact on the Industry

With this need to attract candidates, particularly those with the skills that will allow them to be satisfied and successful employees, comes the recognition within the industry of the importance of the employers' or the industry's value proposition to potential employees. Where prospective employees are more plentiful, or conversely have fewer employment opportunities and choices, the power balance remains with the employer. In many of today's labour markets, where prospective candidates may be less plentiful or more likely to move to a competing employer, the demands and requirements of candidates must also be considered. In direct competition for the ideal candidate with other industries, the value proposition of bus industry employers becomes more important.

The ability of industry employers to attract and select most suitable candidates competitively is contingent on the astute management of the hiring process through a combination of workforce planning, well-defined recruit-qualifying criteria, knowledge/use of recruitment media options, targeted marketing and efficient/effective screening/processing systems.

3. 3 Transferability of Skills

Provincial certification standards exist for mechanics as well as an inter-provincial endorsement of skills through the *Red Seal* Program allowing for national recognition. Operators have voluntary access to the MCPCC Certification Program, which relates to the essential performance criteria required by all sub-sectors. This Program is designed to formalize/standardize operator training while providing greater inter-sector and/or geographic mobility.

3. 4 Culture of the Industry

The traditional culture of the industry has been driven by the essential nature of the services it must provide. While maintaining exemplary safety standards on the road and in the bus, the industry has always focused on delivering strong financial performance and reliable, punctual service.

Today, the shift to a stronger customer service modality has had an impact on the culture of the industry, and more training is devoted to aspects of this, including communications skills, conflict resolution skills, and diversity awareness.

Best Practices for the Planning, Recruitment and Orientation of Bus Operators

*To address the industry need for more competitive HR practices, The MCPCC has developed *Behind the Wheel, a Guide to best practices for the planning, recruitment and orientation of Bus Operators*:*

"The Guide is an ideal resource for managers and recruiters and focuses on the critical areas necessary for hiring the right people. "Behind the Wheel" gives you the information you must have to take a long-term perspective on your organization to anticipate and respond to emerging industry, customer and competitive forces."


Source: MCPCC®, 2002

Operator Skills and Competency Standards

In addressing the issue of skills and competency standards, the MCPCC has made considerable progress in the advancement of Industry-accepted occupational standards and the certification and accreditation of driver/operator training. The newly launched operator Certification program is a professional designation that provides operators with industry-recognized credentials through a formal process of assessment.

Accreditation is a mark of distinction demonstrating a company's pride in its employees, its service and its place as a leader in a highly visible industry.

Source: MCPCC



The SmartDriver series of training programs for professional drivers for transit, motor coach and school bus are a unique combination of coaching, on-the-road and classroom training and include vehicle spec'ing, maintenance, fuel efficient driving techniques, use of alternative fuels and state-of-the-art transportation technologies. The training package has also been enhanced with defensive driving techniques, recognizing that fuel-efficient drivers are also safe drivers.

Operators learn techniques to reduce idling time, maintain consistent speeds, accelerate/ decelerate, and apply brakes efficiently thereby providing a smoother ride.

The programs are seen as a win/win for everyone and will help Canada to meet its Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets.

Source: MCPCC and NRCAN

In addition, the following are identified to be of critical importance:

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

3. 4. 1 Safety

When comparing the fatality rates of car passengers to that of transit passengers, transit is by far the safer mode of urban transportation (CUTA 2002b). The same is true of all the sub-sectors; passengers of all bus modes combined, consistently account for less than 0.35% of all road fatalities (Transport Canada, 2005).

The safety culture in the industry is promoted through management programs of best practice interventions (Moser, 2001). For example, the Industry, *The Motor Carrier Passenger Council* of Canada and Natural Resources Canada have worked together to produce **SmartDriver** fuel efficiency driver training programs for urban transit, motor coach and school bus sub-sectors. These programs are currently being promoted throughout the industry and are achieving a high level of support. Natural Resources Canada is in the process of implementing an evaluation program to document cost and energy efficiencies realized.

Best practice examples from the U. S.A. also emphasize a safety culture that minimizes operators' risks and reduces accident rates, a philosophy mirrored in the Canadian industry. Published training packages with survey tools can assist in developing and maintaining a workplace safety culture and safety standards (Moser 2001; Mejza, m. , Barnard, R. , Corsi, T. , & Keane, T. , 2003).

Maintaining such a safety culture can increase net revenues for the industry by reducing costs related to accidents, personal injury, compensation and disability claims and by increasing productivity.

3. 4. 2 Customer Service

An expanding focus on customer service has been resoundingly expressed in the consultations carried out throughout this Study. 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.

The hiring practices of the industry's members are now firmly centred on the importance of customer service, 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

3. 4. 3 Work-Life Balance

Over and above operational requirements, the industry is becoming more aware of employees' needs for a balanced lifestyle. Traditionally, this issue has contributed to recruitment and retention challenges, absenteeism and disability, as well as job dissatisfaction. 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 degree of work-life balance. Job security and compensation are just two factors people consider 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 accommodations and flexible work arrangements gain competitive advantages in recruiting (*Belcourt, Monica: Recruitment and Selection in Canada*).



To address this, some companies have implemented more sophisticated recruitment and orientation practices to ensure that people are prepared for the demands of the industry. As well, labour has been active in pursuing solutions with management and making representation to government.

In commenting on proposed driver hours of service, Motor Coach Canada (MCC) gives expression to the complexity of balancing both the economic consequences of operators taking more time off for rest and the necessity of providing for drivers' needs (MCC, 2003a).

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.

3.4.4 Absenteeism

A major concern in the bus industry is the rate of absenteeism, principally among bus operators/drivers. As a symptom of other problems, it is part of a cyclical process—absenteeism leads to other organizational problems and inefficiencies that reduce employee morale and job satisfaction that in turn lead to increased absenteeism—that needs both intervention and prevention programs at various points in the cycle (Jacobs et al., 1996; Kompier et al., 2000). Implementing intervention and preventative programs and policies has been shown to decrease absenteeism, increase productivity, foster improved staff retention and ultimately decrease costs (Jacobs et al., 1996; Kompier et al., 2000). As these costs can be very high (Jacobs et al., 1996), it is important that management and labour collaborate to find solutions to reduce absenteeism.

Open communication between managers and bus operators is important in gaining the commitment of both parties to address workplace issues. This collaborative relationship is essential to managing organizational change, especially for an industry faced with mergers, acquisitions and technological advancement. Operators, if they perceive a lack of freedom, lack of recognition and a confrontational stance between themselves and management, may not feel committed to work, implying that management strategy has a high impact on organizational commitment (Brewer 1996, 1998).

Management practices that contribute to reducing absenteeism in operators are (Jacobs et al. , 1996; Kompier, M. ,Aust B. , Van Den Berg A. , Siegrist,J. , 2000):

- more flexible scheduling
- better control of overtime
- positive sick leave policies
- programs that encourage attendance

3. 4. 5 Training and Development

Encouraging a culture of learning, training and skills development for all employees is becoming increasingly important. An effective strategy for improving levels of basic skills is a key prerequisite to enabling the industry to access non traditional labour pools to meet replacement and growth demands. While the industry traditionally provides the majority of its training in-house, broadening the scope of education sources and training delivery methods is critical. The Canadian changing demographics, customer demands and diverse cultures make training partnerships a way of the future. The industry-developed Accreditation program through the MCPCC provides organizations with the tools to assess their programs based on national Occupational Standards designed as “a benchmark of excellence.” The employment and promotion of accredited industry-wide programs creates both industry and public recognition of professionalism across all sectors of the industry and maximizes the return on training investment (ROI).

3. 5 Occupational Health and Safety

The occupational health and safety of operators is an area that has received a great deal of attention. As previously discussed, the technologies at play in the industry can contribute significantly to the well-being of operators, and infrastructure and equipment design and implementation can have significant impacts on operators’ physical and mental health. Physically, operators, find themselves prone to many lifting, handling and strain injuries that often demand comprehensive disability management and modified work programs. The most notable issue specifically affecting bus operators is that of occupational stress.

3. 5. 1 Occupational Stress

Occupational stress in operators/drivers is a result of various situations:

- negative social interactions with passengers, which could include both verbal abuse and physical violence
- time pressures of tightly planned schedules
- traffic congestion
- high demand work environments



Situational job demands increase stress, and the need to meet the demand of fast, punctual, friendly and safe service in poor driving conditions can easily exacerbate stress levels (Rydstedt et al, 1998b, Rydstedt et al. , 1998a, Kompier et al. , 2000). In addition to the stressors associated directly with the performance of the occupation, job stressors also include:

- isolation from co-workers
- irregular work schedules
- low level of job support
- poor ergonomic bus design (Kompier et al. , 2000)
- a lack of worker and family oriented policy (Grosswald 2002)

The results of occupational stress are physical and mental health problems that affect the cardiovascular and musculoskeletal systems and include rates of fatigue and gastrointestinal disorders higher than those in comparable professions. Such health problems lead to greater rates of absenteeism, more disability claims, lower work effort and an increased safety risk while driving (MCC 2003b; Rydstedt et al. , 1998, B; Rydstedt et al. , 1998,A; Kompier et, al. , 2000).

Data from studies conducted in several different countries consistently find urban transit operators, differentiated from other industry operators/drivers due to “a uniquely severe combination of occupational stressors,” to be among the unhealthiest of occupational groups, often demonstrated by high rates of absenteeism and attrition (Evans, 1998). Work-life imbalance, isolation, lack of control over work, split shifts that require inordinately long work days and stressors related to traffic congestion and customers/passengers are noted as critical issues. In a 1997 Study of stress management in operators, Aust, Peter and Siegrist found that a worksite management program that combines both individual and structural measures of reducing stress is feasible and exerts beneficial effects on critical, health adverse coping behaviours of operators. An industry best practice in the development and maintenance of healthy work environments is discussed in the appendix to this Study.

3. 5. 1. 1 Prevention and Mental Health

To date, little has been written regarding prevention and mental health in the workplace, specifically for bus operators. Prevention is different from intervention in that it is an attempt to prevent individuals from becoming hurt or affected by a given incident as opposed to intervening once an incident has occurred.

The U. S. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Division of Safety Research published a bulletin (57) in July 1996 discussing violence in the workplace, investigating risk factors and prevention strategies. This report identified that risk factors that might increase a worker's risk for workplace assault include: contact with the public; exchange of money; delivery of passengers or goods; working alone or in small numbers; working in high crime areas; working in community-based settings (Violence in the Workplace (Current Intelligence Bulletin 57; Risk Factors) all of which are applicable to the industry.

Although not speaking specifically of bus operators, prevention strategies included such ideas as cashless transactions; physical separation from customers; 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 assessing threats and violent incidents. These can also be used to develop particular prevention strategies necessary for a particular area, as well as assessing effectiveness of such strategies. Further, training in non-violent response and conflict resolution was suggested to reduce the risk of volatility within a given incident.

3. 6 Career Development

Given that over 69% of employees are in one job [bus operator], it follows that promotional opportunities are limited. The ratio of management to other employees has declined from census to census (2001 = 1:13 versus 1991 = 1:11). Therefore, career enhancement strategies and lifelong learning programs need to be created within that job. For example, technology is playing an increasing role in the industry's operations, opening the way for learning opportunities.

More recently, recognizing both the values of job rotation and mentoring, many organizations across the industry 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. The opportunity to step outside of traditional roles is often perceived as a reward by participating 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.

3. 7 Management Challenges and Effectiveness

Over the course of this Study, members of the industry and its stakeholders were provided the opportunity to comment on the work of the industry and the issues that continue to shape it. In 1997, a number of *major strategic issues* were raised with respect to the industry's ability to manage its human resources.

In the years since the Price Waterhouse 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 continue to resonate within the

Major Strategic Issues (1997)

- *Instituting a commitment to change*
- *Training managers and union representatives to respond effectively to change*
- *Fostering collaboration between employers and labour organizations*
- *Developing innovative interpersonal and organizational skills*
- *Emphasizing the strategic planning focus in Human Resources Management*

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 and has focused on enhancing the image and professionalism of bus operators/drivers with national programs such as Occupational Standards, Accreditation, Certification, Career Awareness and Recruitment best practices. Furthermore, associations and unions have taken a strong role in advocating the bus industry to governments and developing and delivering effective education programs while individual companies have been more open in the sharing of best practices and policies—a number are outlined in the *Case Studies* section of this Study.

3. 7. 1 Communication and Labour/Management Relations

Across the industry, important communications issues continue to exist. Study participants shared their concerns regarding strained management/labour relations over such issues as cost control requirements—most specifically with respect to sub-contracting work to third parties, the use of part-time workers, compensation expectations, working conditions and lack of recognition.

Still, the work that the members of the industry have done has yielded considerable improvements since 1997. A number of organizations have maintained very co-operative relationships with their unions. The health of these relationships will continue to be important to both sides in addressing such issues as absenteeism, work schedule allocation and flexibility, seniority rights, the use of contract workers and the unit cost of operations. Favourably, Study participants have indicated that there is prevalent recognition within the industry that labour and management are collaboratively responsible for resolving mutually relevant issues.

Many systems/companies have demonstrated the ability and will to implement more effective communications programs within their organizations. These initiatives ranged from formal to informal, but centred on the recognition that communications at all levels—colleague to colleague or employee to management—help improve the working environment and performance. Underpinning examples of successful union/management relationships (identified over the course of this Study) is an understanding that labour and management are collaboratively responsible for resolving current organizational issues.

3. 7. 2 Leadership

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.

3. 7. 3 Finance and Operations Management

The stature, economic value, and essential nature of industry services have amplified the industry profile not only with the public but with all levels of government. Federal, provincial and municipal governments have increased their focus on and financial support to the industry, particularly the urban sub-sector. As a result, financial/fiscal accountability has become paramount. Organizations must ensure that managers are equipped with superior financial management skills.

3. 7. 4 Implementation of New Technology

The industry has implemented much technological advancement as outlined in Part 2. 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. Commonly cited reasons for not adopting new technologies are costs, both capital and maintenance, and replacement cycles. Furthermore, the industry is reluctant to implement costly technologies without proven return on investment (ROI).


3. 7. 5 Workforce Management

The industry's successes at managing its human resources have evolved considerably since 1997. Though not consistent across the industry, there are progressive management practices in place in many systems/companies which facilitate the ability of these service providers to remain competitive and profitable.

The school bus sub-sector, under considerable financial pressures in much of the country, has become very resourceful in finding new candidates. It has developed recruitment practices that identify and very successfully target specific segments of the labour market. The leading members of this sub-sector are capable of sustaining a productive recruitment funnel, the output of which exceeds that of many other organizations of similar size. Furthermore, it is also successful at leveraging the intangible rewards of the job—the responsibility of stewarding the future of the country—to attract and retain employees that are particularly influenced by values, principles and altruism.

Urban systems are beginning to demonstrate the ability to successfully manage to their advantage the relatively large numbers of applications they receive. In the face of increasingly demanding skill expectations, many urban systems have moved beyond a numbers game—from recruiting just to fill positions—to extracting the best candidates with specific skills from their pool of applicants.

Similarly, as the development of skills has become increasingly important, organizations have invested in an internal capability to generate knowledge, skills and competencies



***Recurring Specific HR
Issues (1997)***

- *Managing an ageing workforce*
- *Developing interpersonal skills and customer-service focus*
- *Ensuring employee safety*
- *Improving communications*
- *Recruiting and retaining well-qualified employees*
- *Enhancing the image and professionalism of drivers*
- *Reducing absenteeism*
- *Addressing employment equity for women and visible minorities*
- *Upgrading basic skills*

that are specifically required for their operations including, those skills that employees and managers need to function most effectively as a unit. The industry's expanded focus on, and increased investment in the management of working conditions and effective organizational relationships will have a positive effect on the critical issues of stress and absenteeism.

The most pressing issues identified for industry attention are managing the ageing workforce, succession planning, increasing representation of women and visible minorities and implementing effective recruitment and retention strategies.