



**SKILLEDTRADES**  
A CAREER YOU CAN BUILD ON.

**Employer  
Outreach Guide**  
2006



## **Acknowledgements**

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## Background

The *Skilled Trades: A Career You Can Build On* campaign, a joint initiative between the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum - Forum canadien sur l'apprentissage (CAF-FCA) and Skills/Compétences Canada (S/CC), undertook regional consultations across Canada to discuss a range of challenges, solutions and grassroots initiatives taking place to help promote skilled trades and apprenticeship. Among the challenges identified and discussed during these cross-country consultations was the difficulty in getting employers to register apprentices.

### Need for Better Employer Engagement on Apprenticeship

In fact, many stakeholders highlighted their challenge in reaching out to, and ultimately being successful in convincing employers to register an apprentice. Employers seem to fall within a continuum where the top 20 percent see apprenticeship as an integral part of their business and currently hire apprentices. The middle 60 – 70 percent tends to have a positive perception regarding apprenticeship, but for a number of reasons, choose not to register one within their business. The bottom 20 per cent of the continuum either haven't been exposed to apprenticeship or don't see the system as being relevant to their business.

There are many studies that validate these findings. CAF-FCA released *Accessing and Completing Apprenticeship – Perceptions of Barriers Report* that suggests that some employers still have the perception that apprenticeship is costly; that big businesses will poach apprentices from Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) once they are done their training; and, that the apprenticeship system is rigid and difficult to manoeuvre. Further research by the *Skilled Trades: A Career You Can Build On* campaign provides quantitative evidence that only 18% of employers actually hire apprentices. CAF-FCA's recent *Return on Training Investment* also validates these statistics.

### There are Many Benefits of Apprenticeship to be Communicated

Research conducted by the *Skilled Trades: A Career You Can Build On* campaign identified that the majority of employers have a favourable perception of apprenticeship. In fact, nearly 90% of companies surveyed — regardless of whether they currently register apprentices, had apprentices in the past, or have never registered apprentices — have a favourable opinion of apprenticeship training in Canada. Employers identified the following benefits of apprenticeship training:

- Increases competitiveness
- Trains apprentices according to employer needs or specifications
- Improves productivity
- Improves the quality of employer services and finished products
- Improves the skills of the skilled labour workforce
- Reduces employee turnover and increases loyalty
- Assists in the ability to plan for the future



The CAF-FCA's *Return on Training Investment* report also took a positive step forward in providing empirical evidence that there is a cost-benefit to hiring apprentices. It found that, on average, for each dollar invested in an apprentice, a direct benefit of \$1.38 accrues to employers or a net return of \$0.38.

By every indication, there are many advantages to registering an apprentice; however, successfully engaging employers in doing so remains a challenge. Organizing and maximizing the use of limited resources for outreach efforts are essential in successfully engaging employers.

## Objectives of the Employer Outreach Guide

The goal of this Employer Outreach Guide is to assist you with your outreach efforts by providing resources and tips that have been tried and tested in the field. The guide also provides a formalized approach to engaging employers in the hopes of assisting organizations with limited time, human, and financial resources in organizing their outreach efforts. Specifically, this guide will provide information on how to:

- Identify and respond to common objections to registering an apprentice
- Identify and prioritize employers that should be approached regarding apprenticeship
- Develop a “pitch” that will convince an employer to register an apprentice
- Identify the types of follow up activities that should be done with employers
- Organize your Employer Outreach Program in general

In addition to suggesting a step-by-step approach for identifying, approaching, engaging and following up with employers regarding apprenticeship, the guide will also provide tips and tools from the front line, as well as templates that can be easily customized and implemented within your organization. For each step, we have also tried to provide you with “helpful hints” from the front lines to highlight what others are doing in their specific efforts.



# A Step-by-Step Guide to Promoting Apprenticeship

## Lessons Learned and Best Practices From the Front Line

To develop this guide, interviews were conducted across Canada with people who reach out to employers promoting apprenticeship every day. Though techniques and approaches, as well as rules and regulations may differ, this guide presents a compilation of their insights, lessons learned and best practices, as well as suggested approaches to engaging employers on apprenticeship.

### Skilled Trades Environment

Just like any other group, the skilled trades community – including employers, apprentices, associations, labour organizations, government departments and the educational community – have their own way of doing things, interacting with each other, and hold their own beliefs regarding issues affecting them. Truly understanding the environment in which they work is the first step in successfully promoting apprenticeship to employers.

Some of the key characteristics of the skilled trades environment, as identified through the consultations, include:

- **Large number of SMEs** – Businesses that employ skilled trades people are for the most part Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises. Outreach efforts are therefore complicated given that a larger number of individual businesses must be approached.
- **Fast paced** – People are extremely busy, and many don't have the time to sit and talk to someone regarding apprenticeship. Identifying busy times for different industries, and avoiding visits during those times, becomes extremely important.
- **Bottom line is top of mind** – Because businesses are usually small, and because employment in the trades tends to be very cyclical, employers are often preoccupied with keeping themselves in business. Any addition to their company must therefore pass the important return-on-investment test.
- **Many stakeholders** – There are a number of stakeholder groups involved with apprenticeship, including employers/industry, education, labour groups, equity seeking groups, as well as various levels of government, each with distinct responsibilities and enforcement roles.
- **Diverse regional needs** – Each region is very different. For example, the economic climate within each region will drive the types of industries as well as the type of skills that are in demand. These unique environments can make it a challenge to share best practices across regions and learn from the experiences of others.



## Exemplary Practices

While understanding the general environment and recognizing your regional differences is important, learning from the experiences of others can also help you successfully promote apprenticeship to employers. Some exemplary practices have been identified through consultations with your peers, including:

- **View potential employers as customers** – Treat promoting apprenticeship as a customer service. This means being proactive in your outreach, as well as approaching target employers with an understanding of their needs before explaining how apprenticeship can positively contribute to their company. It also means emphasizing that you will help them every step of the way.
- **Know your audience and tailor your approach accordingly** – A formal presentation might be needed when approaching a large company or industry association, but may be overwhelming when meeting with a small business owner.
- **Keep the message simple** – Identify your key messages and arguments supporting apprenticeship before going into a meeting. We have provided you with the most common arguments in support of and against apprenticeship – as well as some key messages to counter them in the following pages.
- **Highlight your success stories** – Many employers have registered apprentices in the past, and strongly support it in general. Make sure that you get testimonials from them to show to other employers – peer successes are often important motivators!
- **Leave behind materials** – Employers may not have the time to listen to a full presentation and leaving behind supporting materials such as brochures, testimonials, fact sheets, and industry regulations gives them the opportunity to consult them at their convenience – and gives your message regarding apprenticeship a future opportunity to be heard.
- **Know the company you are approaching** – Do your research before any meeting in order to establish an understanding of the company, and tailor your approach accordingly.
- **Choose your time** – Recognize that business in the trades can be very cyclical, and avoid going to visit them during peak times.
- **Use technology to your advantage** – There are great cost-effective technological tools with which to track employers, organize your contact lists, and generally promote apprenticeship. Many who promote apprenticeship have adopted these tools – and some use technology such as websites as central features in their promotion efforts, even offering online matching services.
- **Don't be afraid to demonstrate your passion for apprenticeship** – Most people who reach out to employers attribute much of their success to the fact that they really believe in apprenticeship and its benefits to employers. Approaching employers with this attitude will go a long way in getting someone to register an apprentice.
- **Be easily accessible** – Leave behind your business card and make sure all promotional materials have your contact information.
- **Be patient and persistent** – Don't discount a target employer if they choose not to register an apprentice. Make yourself a note to re-visit them within a year. Much can change in that time!



## How Others Engage Employers

Learning from exemplary practices of those already promoting apprenticeship is a great first step in understanding what works best when approaching employers. Looking at what similar organizations do to engage employers is also important. We looked into some of the ways through which organizations successfully engage, and continue to keep employers committed to their cause, and found some of the following methods:

- **Financial incentives** – Incentives such as tax breaks or rebates often ensure employer adoption of a concept.
- **Customized or tailored services** – Some organizations offer teams of consultants that assess an organizations needs and see how the solution they are promoting responds to these needs.
- **Recognition programs** – People love to be recognized for what they are doing well. Programs recognizing employers or associations for their contributions range from certificates, to awards, as well as newsletter or newspaper mentions.
- **Enforcing rules and regulations** – Some organizations have rules to support their outreach efforts. For example, some trades have legislation that requires individuals to be registered as an apprentice.

These are just some of the incentives offered by other organizations to help engage and retain employer participation for their cause. The following pages will provide you with tips and tools to help engage employers in your cause – apprenticeship – and help organize your Employer Outreach Program.

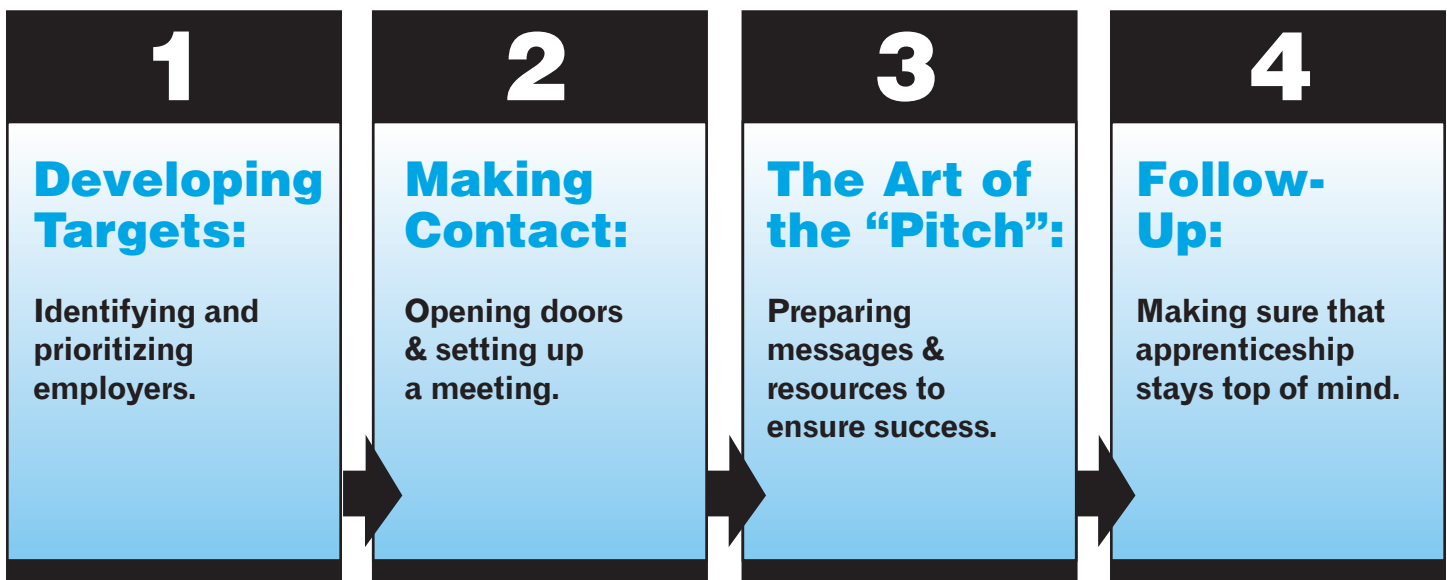


## Overall Approach

While a lot of employer outreach takes place every day on an informal basis, the goal of this guide is to offer a proposed framework on how to organize these efforts. From identifying who to approach, making that initial contact, organizing a meeting, and that ever-important follow call, promoting apprenticeship to employers can in many ways be looked at as a “sales pitch”.

Promotion and outreach efforts require processes and resources with which this guide hopes to provide you. Specifically, we are proposing a four-step approach to employer engagement that includes resources and lessons learned from people who conduct outreach to employers every day. The objective of each activity is the same: organizing efforts and internal resources in order to increase the number of employers who register apprentices.

Below is a chart summarizing the proposed 4-step approach to promoting apprenticeship to employers:



The following pages will offer you a rationale, as well as a detailed explanation of each of these steps in developing your Employer Outreach Program. Most importantly, this information will be supplemented by anecdotes and ideas from people that have years of experience in promoting apprenticeship to employers. Valuable templates are available at the end of this guide to help you get started.



## Developing Targets

The first step to any process is always the hardest to take. And while in theory making a list of potential employers to approach should be fairly straight forward, the lines get a little blurry in practice. How do you identify potential employers to approach regarding registering an apprentice? What information do you need to collect? Are there existing lists of employers in your region that might make your life easier? If so, where can they be found?

Developing the foundation of your Employer Outreach Program, including a database of potential contacts and useful information on each of the employers, is the first step. Essentially, you will need to construct your “rolodex” of employers in the region who you will approach to explain the benefits and encourage them to register an apprentice. Below are tips and guidelines to help you with creating and growing your database of contacts.

## Set a Team Goal

Motivate your staff and yourself by setting goals for the year. With scarce time and human resources to conduct outreach – and with many people who promote apprenticeship already running at 100% capacity – setting targets is the first step in increasing outreach efficiencies.

The following are some tips on setting these goals:

- **Set goals at the beginning of the year** – This will lay the groundwork for the next 12 months.
- **Make sure goals measurable** – Be specific when identifying what you wish to attain so that you can celebrate future milestones and successes.
- **Don't limit the focus of your goals** – Because every visit might not produce an apprenticeship registration, or a new match between an apprentice and an employer, make sure to set goals for other activities.
- **Be realistic** – Look at the number of new apprentices that have been registered over the course of the past year. Also take into consideration your environment – and anticipate the effect of an economic downturn, or company closures/openings.
- **Get input from your team** – Goals should never be set in isolation. Make sure that your team has the opportunity to contribute to the process to ensure that everybody is moving forward on the same page.

**Don't limit your goals to the number of new registered apprentices.**

**Try identifying other measurable goals such as:**

- **Number of visits to new employers**
- **Number of qualified new apprentices on your matching list**
- **Number of new employers on your contact list**
- **Number of speaking opportunities to trade associations**
- **Number of inquiries about apprenticeship from employers**
- **Number of website visits**



## Identifying Employers

Once you have identified your goals for the year, the next step is to begin to identify employers whom you would like to speak with regarding apprenticeship. When looking for employers, you may find it useful to consult the following sources:

- **Your personal address book** – As someone who works with trades people, you have direct access to employers that have been visited and who have registered apprentices in the past. Continue to keep them in mind for registering future apprentices.
- **Referrals** – Ask employers who you already have a relationship with if they know of other employers who might benefit from hearing about apprenticeship. Don't be shy! You've got a great message to relay.
- **Municipal contact lists** – It is often possible to obtain contact lists of companies registered within your region from the municipal economic development corporation.
- **Public access lists** – Consult sources such as Canada411 and the Yellow Pages for businesses that employ tradespeople. They are public, and best of all, free of charge.
- **Online lists and resources** – Conduct a “Google” search for different types of businesses in your area. You can also purchase online databases of employers such as [www.scottsinfo.com](http://www.scottsinfo.com) for more in-depth and up-to-date information.
- **Associations for different trades** – Approaching an entire association means tapping into a significant membership list. Be a member, or contact someone to find out when their next meeting takes place so that you can send information or make a presentation.
- **Scan your local newspapers** – If a company that hires skilled trades workers is profiled for community initiatives, use the opportunity to congratulate them and see if they currently register or would be interested in registering an apprentice. Also, check the classified section to see if there is a particular employer that is hiring.
- **Being involved in your community** – Sitting on a Board or being a member of an association will help introduce you to new people, and most importantly, new employers to grow your network.
- **Be aware of your environment** – Look for additional contacts while at business lunches, conferences, seminars, or meeting friends, colleagues or peers.



## Helpful Hints to Identify Employers (From the Field)

- **Conduct a “blitz” in a specific area during the year** – Get all of your officers together, distribute your contact lists for the area, and take a day to approach as many potential new employers as possible.
- **Host a meeting at your office** – A breakfast, lunch or coffee meeting for employers offers an informal setting where you can present the benefits of apprenticeship.
- **“Drop in” to new businesses** – Drop in to new businesses in your community to talk about apprenticeship and leave behind information and brochures.
- **“Piggy back” a mailout to a new initiative** – Stay informed about new initiatives regarding youth or small businesses. Use these types of new initiatives to send out a mailing on apprenticeship to employers in your database.

## Organizing Information

Organizing information on the employers you would like to approach differs according to the needs and goals of your outreach program. Whatever your plan regarding the organization of this information, make sure first and foremost that you respect the provincial/territorial and federal privacy legislation. These rules and regulations are in place to provide important guidelines to organizations on the compilation of personal information and outreach to individuals and organizations.

When collecting and ultimately organizing your information, you might want to consider the following tips:

- **Be consistent in the type of information you look for** and make sure that you have that information for each of the employers you are looking to speak with.
- **Identify one central contact person** for every organization and make sure they are key decision makers regarding apprenticeship.
- **Think about how you would like to be able to search for specific information** in the future and make sure that you collect this information - i.e. if you may want to send training schedules to employers within a certain industry sector, make sure that you create an “industry sector” column to save yourself time!
- **Keep the information current.** Mailing companies that no longer exist, or mailing to the wrong location will cost you valuable time and budget resources.

See **APPENDIX A** for a tip sheet on organizing employer information.



## Prioritizing Employers

Prioritizing the employers you would like to approach can help you allocate your organizational resources so that you get maximum results. Consider prioritizing employers in the following ways:

- **Employers who have already registered apprentices** – Given that they have already bought into the concept, visit them first to see if they have anybody else to register
- **Compulsory vs. voluntary trade** – This will help you prioritize and adjust your “pitch” and preparation accordingly.
- **Types of training that you are offering** – If your organization is offering training to plumbers in the coming months, organize your list by plumbing companies, and prioritize your outreach accordingly
- **Scan your environment and know the industry issues in your area** – If there is something that affects a certain type of employer in your area, then reach out to them as a priority, and take the opportunity to also talk about apprenticeship!

## Developing Employer Profiles

Once you have structured your information and prioritized it according to your needs, it might be a good idea to delve a little deeper in preparation for that initial call. While this step is not essential, and not used by every employer outreach officer, it might nonetheless be a good idea to help you organize your outreach efforts.

Essentially, developing a profile of an employer will help you to better prepare for an eventual meeting with an employer by providing you with an in-depth look at who you will be approaching. Information to be collected on the company and person you are meeting with could include:

- Position of person with whom you are meeting
- Length of time in position
- Trades background
- Name of business
- Size of business (number of employees)
- Type of business
- Short description of the business
- Background on registering apprentices

Approach the development of these profiles as you would a briefing note that will provide you with the necessary information before a meeting. An example of an Employer Profile can be found in **APPENDIX B** at the end of this guide.



## Developing Targets CHECKLIST

- Set goals*
- Identify employers*
- Organize your information*
- Develop employer profiles for priority employers*

## Making Contact

While many people who reach out to employers have indicated that they “just drop in” or “pick up the phone” on the initial contact with an employer, a more formal approach could be employed. Before going to actually visit an employer for a face-to-face meeting, it might be a good idea to send relevant information and set up a time that is convenient for them to meet. Approaching an employer first by email, mail, or telephone shows the employer that you are serious and organized in your outreach efforts, and also demonstrates that you are respectful of their time.





## Introductory Mailing

Consider contacting people on your database through an introductory mailing. The specific objective of this mailing will be to pique their interest in apprenticeship and ultimately, obtain a face-to-face meeting to further discuss registering an apprentice within their organization.

The note can either be sent by “snail mail” or by email, and should contain the following elements:

- Introduction of the mandate of your organization
- Recognition of the employer’s particular trade (and some type of acknowledgement that you are familiar with this type of trade)
- A brief description of apprenticeship and particularly the benefits of apprenticeship (if at all possible, make it specific to the trade or trades they have within their company)
- Request a face-to-face meeting with the employer

The letter should be brief and concise, and particular attention should be given to the tone. Remember that you want to ultimately “sell” the idea of apprenticeship – the note should be customer service oriented with a “how you are there to help them” tone.

Please refer to **APPENDIX C** for an example of a letter of introduction.

Note that many field officers do not send an introductory letter, preferring the telephone as an initial means of contact. The introductory letter is a suggestion, not a guideline on how to conduct your outreach.

## Telephone Contact

Your written letter or email should be **followed by a telephone call** to the target employer. The purpose of this call is to ensure that the employer has received your letter/email and, most importantly, to set up a time to meet to further discuss apprenticeship.

Before you pick up the phone, ensure that you have prepared a script or your *Elevator Pitch*. An *Elevator Pitch* is a common term used by communication professionals to describe a concise but powerful message that conveys who you are and what you do in a very short period of time. In this case, the elevator pitch is what you would say if you were in an elevator with an employer and you had 30 seconds to convince them to register an apprentice. Needless to say – you have to be prepared! This “pitch” will serve two purposes:

- 1) It will help guide the discussion and ensure that you highlight all of your key messages during the telephone call.
- 2) Because you will feel prepared, it will alleviate much of the stress associated with picking up the phone and talking to someone you do not know.



Preparing your *Elevator Pitch* is an important step in getting ready for that initial contact. Essentially, what you say should really POSITION apprenticeship – identify how registering an apprentice is beneficial to the employer you are approaching. In doing so, try answering the following questions:

- What does your client do?
- How would registering an apprentice benefit the employer?
- How can they benefit from a meeting with you to further explore how apprenticeship can positively contribute to their business?

This initial elevator pitch should demonstrate in 30 seconds or less that you understand the employer's business and that registering an apprentice would be beneficial to him/her. This message should be constructed with the following in mind:

- Reference the initial email or mailing.
- Know your listener – Show that you have an understanding and appreciation for their size and type of business.
- Focus on the objective of your call – To engage the employer on the subject of apprenticeship, and specifically, highlight the benefits of apprenticeship to their business.
- Call for action – Make sure you finish the message with a request to meet or speak in greater length at a time that is convenient for them. Make sure that you ask to meet with someone who is responsible for human resource decisions.

Please refer to **APPENDIX D** for an example of a script to prepare prior to making the initial telephone call.

## Helpful Hints in Making the Call (From the Field)

- **Ask questions and listen!** Talk about the employers business first & understand their business before talking about how apprenticeship can benefit them.
- Focus on promoting **apprenticeship, not enforcing rules** – Overall, make sure your tone is friendly, informal and inviting, and you will probably get a good response from employers.
- **Recognize busy times** and avoid calling then.
- **Don't rely on voicemail** – If an employer is not there, try calling back later instead of leaving a voicemail message.
- **Build credibility** – Introduce yourself and your experience with the trades
- **Be flexible** – Let employers know that you will meet them whenever and wherever is most convenient
- **Be confident** – You have an important message to relay to employers regarding apprenticeship. It can help their business, and that's why you are calling!



## Setting up the meeting

The initial call can go two ways – an employer will either agree to meet with you, or they will not. If they do have time, be flexible on the location and time. As you are aware, trades people are busy, and if you want to promote apprenticeship to them, you have to show that you will fit into their schedule.

Consider sending a follow up email to the employer in order to confirm the details of your meeting.

If they do not want to meet with you, try to understand the “why”. Most officers in the field treat a “no” as a “maybe later”. If you understand the “why” you can monitor the situation. For instance, if the employer is particularly busy with jobs at the moment, identify their traditional “downtime”, make a note of it, and re-visit the employer at that time.

### Initial Contact CHECKLIST

- Send an introductory letter*
- Prepare your telephone pitch*
- Call to set up a meeting*
- Confirm meeting time and place (by mail or email)*



## The Art of the “Pitch”

Once you have successfully scheduled a meeting with an employer, you should prepare yourself for the “pitch” – your chance to speak to an employer about the benefits of apprenticeship, and how it applies to their organization.

## Know why Employers Register Apprentices – and why They Don’t!

Knowing beforehand what motivates employers as well as what generally discourages them from registering an apprentice is essential. In speaking with employer outreach professionals across the country, we have compiled a list of the most common objections to registering an apprentice, as well as the reasons people chose to register an apprentice.

### Key Reasons Employers Might Choose to Register an Apprentice

- ☑ **Retention** – Ensuring young people stay in the region.
- ☑ **Compulsory** – Regulations make it mandatory to register an apprentice.
- ☑ **Influence of staff** – Employers are being asked by the people who work for them to have them registered.
- ☑ **Tailoring workers to their needs** – By registering an apprentice an employer can train them to meet their specific needs.
- ☑ **Loyalty** – Apprentices are more likely to stay with the company, thus reducing time and money spent in finding someone new.
- ☑ **Tradition** – They have gone through the process and want to help a young person doing the same.
- ☑ **Productivity** – Hiring young apprentices who are energetic and technologically savvy helps boost productivity within the workplace.
- ☑ **Cost-effective** – Some employers find apprenticeship a cost-effective way to get people with good skills that can contribute to their bottom line.

### Key Reasons Employers Might Choose NOT to Register an Apprentice

- ☒ **Cost** – Some employers view apprenticeship as a simple expense as opposed to an investment.
- ☒ **Need for immediate experience** – Employers might have immediate needs for a worker with the skills to complete an assignment.
- ☒ **Time** – Most skilled trades employers manage a cyclical business and cannot contemplate taking on an apprentice at certain times of the year.
- ☒ **Too much regulation** – Employers may find the apprenticeship process daunting.
- ☒ **Lack of loyalty** – Some companies have had negative experiences with apprentices leaving the company after they have invested their time and money in training.
- ☒ **Credibility of apprentice** – Employers who do not know the person in question may not want to take a chance on them.
- ☒ **Bad experience** – An employer has invested in someone in the past who has left the company/organization prematurely.



## Countering Objections to Apprenticeship

Doing good research and being armed with the latest information on apprenticeship will help you in your meetings to promote apprenticeship. Consider the following tips from the field, as well as research and peer messaging to help you with your efforts.

### *Tips from the Field*

During interviews across the country field officers who interact with employers every day were asked to highlight the messages they felt resonated the most when approaching employers, and especially, in countering some of the negative perceptions that exist. While there were a variety of responses, many indicated that they raised the following points when they heard objections to apprenticeship:

- **ROI** – Apprenticeship provides a good return on investment – not only on the short term productivity and profitability of your business, but also in the long term by reducing employee turnover.
- **Loyalty** – Investing in someone increase the chances that they will stay with you over a longer period, thus minimizing staff turnover as well as time and money spent in finding replacements.
- **No bad habits** – Investing time in training ensures that your apprentice will be trained according to your needs and will not have the bad habits acquired from years of work.
- **Great help** – Apprentices can do some of the basic things during the first year that journeypersons may not like to do/are paid too much to do.
- **Young people know technology** – Apprentices are typically younger and have a handle on technology, which can be very beneficial to smaller companies.
- **Retention** – Registering an apprentice means being part of a bigger solution to keep young people in your community and ensure that there will be an adequate skilled workforce in your area in the years to come.
- **Competitiveness** – Registering an apprentice enhances the image of an employer's workplace, making it a more attractive place of work for young people.
- **Corporate responsibility** – Being a responsible employer who invests in training looks good within the community; peers and customers alike will recognize your contributions.

## Return on Investment Research Findings

In addition to the list of arguments above, consider some of the findings from the latest research *Return on Training Investment for Employers (ROTI)*, undertaken by CAF-FCA (to see the full report: [http://www.caf-fca.org/files/access/Return\\_On\\_Training\\_Investment-Employers\\_report.pdf](http://www.caf-fca.org/files/access/Return_On_Training_Investment-Employers_report.pdf)).

While evidence to date supporting the return on investment for apprenticeship has been anecdotal, the ROTI work utilized a comprehensive set of calculations to assess the costs – and related benefits – an employer might expect to encounter as part of the consideration to hire apprentices. In a pilot study of 15 trade areas, the ROTI research found that:

- On average, for each dollar invested in an apprentice, a direct benefit of \$1.38 accrues to employers or a net return of \$0.38.
- For most trades included in the study, the cost benefit results indicate that apprentices begin to generate net benefits for employers by the end of the second year or earlier.
- Employers feel that there are important qualitative or non-monetary benefits associated with apprenticeship training. Specifically, hiring apprentices ensure that an organization has skilled labour and a lower turnover rate.
- Employers believe journeypersons receive a benefit from training an apprentice. Journeypersons benefited by training apprentices by enhancement of skill and knowledge and an increase in productivity with the apprentice's help.

## Peer Messaging

Other sources for information to support apprenticeship can be found within each provincial and territorial government, as well as online at [www.careersintrades.ca](http://www.careersintrades.ca). See what messaging and tactics are being employed by your peers by visiting their websites.

### Nunavut

Apprenticeship and Occupations, Department of Education,  
Government of Nunavut  
[www.gov.nu.ca/education/eng/index.htm](http://www.gov.nu.ca/education/eng/index.htm)

### Northwest Territories

Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification - Education, Culture and  
Employment, Government of the Northwest Territories  
[www.ece.gov.nt.ca/Divisions/Apprenticeship/index.htm](http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/Divisions/Apprenticeship/index.htm)

### Yukon

Advanced Education Branch, Department of Education,  
Government of the Yukon Territory  
[www.education.gov.yk.ca/advanceded/apprenticeship/index.html](http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/advanceded/apprenticeship/index.html)

### British Columbia

Industry Training and Apprenticeship  
[www.itabc.ca](http://www.itabc.ca)

### Alberta

Apprenticeship and Industry Training  
[www.tradesecrets.org](http://www.tradesecrets.org)

### Saskatchewan

Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission  
[www.saskapprenticeship.ca/index.php](http://www.saskapprenticeship.ca/index.php)

### Manitoba

Manitoba Education, Training and Youth Apprenticeship Branch  
[www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aet/apprent/](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aet/apprent/)

### Ontario

Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities  
[www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/training/apprenticeship/appren.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/training/apprenticeship/appren.html)

### Québec

Direction du Développement des Compétences en Milieu de Travail,  
Emploi-Québec  
[www.emploiquebec.net/anglais/individus/qualification/index.htm](http://www.emploiquebec.net/anglais/individus/qualification/index.htm)

### New Brunswick

Apprenticeship and Occupation Certification, Department of Advanced  
Education and Training  
[www.aoc-acp.gnb.ca](http://www.aoc-acp.gnb.ca)

### Prince Edward Island

Apprenticeship Training, Department of Education  
[www.apprenticeship.pe.ca](http://www.apprenticeship.pe.ca)

### Nova Scotia

Apprenticeship Training Division, Nova Scotia Department of Education  
[www.apprenticeship.ednet.ns.ca](http://www.apprenticeship.ednet.ns.ca)

### Newfoundland and Labrador

Department of Education  
[www.gov.nl.ca/app](http://www.gov.nl.ca/app)



## Know Your Audience

In addition to knowing, and honing your message, you must also select the tools and resources that you will bring with you when approaching employers.

Knowing your audience is the first step in deciding what to bring. For instance:

- If you are going to visit a small business owner, it might be best to make the presentation a little less formal. Try to organize an informal discussion over coffee or at a job site. They may not have the capacity to host something formal, or the will to listen to such a presentation.
- If you are visiting an association or a larger business, or know that there might be a larger crowd and the appropriate facilities, think of bringing a formal presentation. This could be done in PowerPoint for instance, and will ensure that your key messages are emphasized during the pitch.

Try as much as possible to decide in advance how you are going to make the presentation.

## Tools of the Trade

***“A PowerPoint can be a good thing, but people need to stick to the `keep-it-simple rule`.  
A PowerPoint should be well structured and only present key points.  
When too much information is given, nobody pays attention.”***

If you are going to do a more formal PowerPoint presentation, make sure that it contains the following elements:

- An overall table of contents to guide people through the presentation
- An understanding of the employer or organization – show them that you did your homework by highlighting some key facts of their organization
- An explanation of the benefits of apprenticeship
- Specifically, explain how apprenticeship can benefit their organization
- Background and mandate of your organization
- Employer testimonials (who have already registered an apprentice)
- Your contact information

We recommend that you use the Employer Presentation that can be found in the resources section of the [www.careersintrades.ca](http://www.careersintrades.ca) website.



*“Leave behinds are so important. Sometimes an employer won't have time to talk to me, so I'll leave them information and a pad of `sticky notes` with the coordinates of our office on it. That way, if they use the paper in the coming weeks, they might think of us and give us a call.”*

In addition to making a formal or informal presentation on the benefits of apprenticeship, **it is important to bring supporting materials from your organization** or from the national *Skilled Trades: A Career You Can Build On* campaign. These materials could include:

- Business card
- Brochures
- Posters
- Information sheets
- Upcoming training schedules
- Promotional items (pens, hats, post-it notes, etc)
- Testimonials
- Apprenticeship success stories
- An employer video

**Assess your budget** to see if you have resources to develop promotional materials personalized to your office. These items could include pens, notepads, paper weights, ball caps, etc...depending on your budget, the sky is the limit! Make sure your complete office coordinates (telephone number and website being most important) are on the materials. For many employers, promotional items might “jog” their memory regarding apprenticeship in the future – and they'll know who to contact should they need to speak to someone!

## Sources of Information Regarding Apprenticeship

In preparing the content of your presentation and messages for your meeting, consider getting information from the following sources:

- Your office – Every province and territory has different initiatives to support skilled trades and apprenticeship. Make sure you use the materials and information available to you.
- [www.careersintrades.ca](http://www.careersintrades.ca) website – The national skilled trades campaign has developed a number of employer resources that can help support your apprenticeship message. These tools include:
  - **Employer Toolkit** ([www.careersintrades.ca/resources/pdf/EmployerToolkitENG.pdf](http://www.careersintrades.ca/resources/pdf/EmployerToolkitENG.pdf))
  - **Employer Seminar** ([www.careersintrades.ca/all/Employer\\_Seminar-English.ppt](http://www.careersintrades.ca/all/Employer_Seminar-English.ppt))
  - **Employer Recognition Guide** ([www.careersintrades.ca/all/EmployerRecognitionGuide-ENG.pdf](http://www.careersintrades.ca/all/EmployerRecognitionGuide-ENG.pdf))
  - **Employer Profiles** ([www.careersintrades.ca/resources](http://www.careersintrades.ca/resources))



- **Testimonial letters** from employers or organizations that champion apprenticeship in your region – ask them to write you a short testimonial on the advantage of registering an apprentice. See **APPENDIX E** for examples and sample wording for a testimonial – they might help guide your employer testimonials in terms of messaging. Remember, the employers who register apprentices are your best advocates, so make sure their experiences are highlighted in your visits!

## Meeting Protocol

*“When I drop-in to visit an employer, I usually keep my coat on. That way, the employer doesn’t feel like I’m going to stay forever, and is more willing to talk to me.”*

Promoting apprenticeship can be considered “selling” an idea or a concept. To be successful and obtain buy-in from your audience, in this case an employer, there are a couple of things to keep in mind:

- **Ask questions and listen** – An employer’s time is limited, and to get their attention, you must show that you understand their business and their particular needs. If you don’t take the time to ask questions, you may waste their time by focusing on things they already know or do not require. For instance, start the conversation by asking them if they have previously registered an apprentice before launching into a speech on the ins and outs of apprenticeship.
- **Focus on building a rapport** – Try to focus on what you have in common, and especially, build trust by showing the employer that you understand what they do and want to help them.
- **Be empathetic** – Understand the reasons behind a decision not to support apprenticeship. At the end of the day, this person is trying to run a business the best way they know how, and forcing an idea on them will not work to your advantage.
- **Bring someone with you** – Not everyone does it, but in some cases it might be a good idea to bring an employer who has already registered an apprentice, or a colleague who is particularly knowledgeable about the field in which the person you are visiting works in order to support your message and talk about their experiences.

### The “Pitch” CHECKLIST

- Know your message*
- Know your audience and identify the type of presentation you will make*
- Prepare your messages and resources*
- Meet with employers regarding apprenticeship*



## Follow-Up Initiatives

Just because the meeting is over, doesn't mean your work is done! In fact, cultivating relationships moving forward is key to successfully engaging employers in the future. Although your resources are limited, following up is most often a critical step of the process – and one that is, unfortunately, often overlooked!

If you are successful in getting someone to register an apprentice, your work is just starting! Field officers have offered some of the following advice:

- **Send a thank you note** – Recognize their commitment to apprenticeship by sending them a formal thank you note.
- **Guide them through the process** – Registering an apprentice and going through a formal government process is often daunting for employers and apprentices alike. Convey a commitment to seeing this through for the employer, and make it known that you are prepared to invest the time and energy it takes to get them from interest to actually registering an apprentice.
- **Be available** – Make sure they have your coordinates and assurance that you want to help.
- **Manage expectations** – Explain at the onset what the process is and what they can expect in terms of time and budget commitments
- **Be proactive** – Don't always wait for the questions to come to you. Instead, try reaching out to employers whenever you can to confirm progress and identify any issues or challenges
- **Close “the loop”** – Make sure that employers are aware of all costs and schedules, as well as the progress of the apprentice. If possible, try meeting with apprentices and employers at the same time in order to establish a case management system, and confirm your central role in the relationship.
- **Try to work training schedules around “downtimes”** – Understand the business of the employer, and try to identify training schedules that would best accommodate their constraints.

If an employer has decided not to register an apprentice at the moment:

- **Send a thank you note** – This is a small gesture that takes little commitment on your part, but that has a positive impact on the receiving side.
- **Jog their memory in the future** – Whenever new training is taking place, new rules or changes to communicate, consider sending them a note.
- **Make a plan** – Put a note in the database to remind you to visit them in the future. Their situation may have changed.

See **APPENDIX F** for an example of a thank you notes to be sent.

### Following Up Checklist

- Send a thank you note to all employers that you have visited*
- Be proactive, available and customer-service oriented for those who have agreed to register an apprentice*
- Make a note to follow up with those who have decided not to register an apprentice*



## APPENDIX A - Tip Sheet on Organizing Employer Information

1. Identify the **types of information** you will need. For example, **basic information** you could collect includes:

- Company
- Contact person
- First Name; Last name; Title of main contact within the company
- Mailing address
- Telephone
- Fax
- Email
- Website
- Number of employees
- Types of trades
- Secondary contact person within the organization

In addition, consider identifying **information that can help you sort and prioritize** the companies on your list at a later date. This information could include:

- **Category of Prospect** – This information can help focus your energy. For example, a simple scale can be employed to prioritize employers numerically (1, most important category of prospect, to 3, least important category of prospect).
  - **Registered Apprentices in Past** – This information can provide you with a simple way to quickly consult your list for a critical piece of information.
  - **History or Log of Previous Contacts** – This information can help keep your list evergreen by providing a historical record of the last meeting, number of meetings, or the date of the last known contact with this person/company.
  - **Notes** – This information could include any particular likes, dislikes, objections or past successes, as well as any other data pertinent to this particular employer.
2. **Select a software tool** that works best for the needs of your organization. While programs such as Word, Excel and Access provide users with ways of organizing their contacts, some are more functional than others. For instance, Word might be good for a simple database, but tools such as Excel and Access help to not only organize, but search and re-organize lists with your changing needs.

### Important !

**Make sure that you respect provincial/territorial and federal privacy legislation when compiling this information.**





## APPENDIX C - Sample Letter of Introduction

Date  
Full Name of Employer  
Business Name  
Address  
City, Province, Zip Code

**Re: Opportunities to strengthen business through apprentice registration**

Dear [Insert name]:

My name is [insert name] and I work for [insert name of organization]. Our mandate is to reach out to employers in order to help them understand and benefit from apprenticeship. As you may be aware, apprenticeship has not only the potential to strengthen your business, but also provides a young person with the hands-on experience and mentorship they need to grow in their career as a skilled tradesperson.

Given your work in the area of [insert sector/trade] and the increasing difficulty in finding qualified, skilled and enthusiastic employees, I thought you might be interested in learning more about how registering an apprentice can work for you and your organization.

I have witnessed time and again the value that apprentices bring to a business. The benefits for the employer are countless and include:

- **Increasing competitiveness and profitability** of your business through smart hires
- **Creating a collaborative work environment** where training and mentorship go hand-in-hand to produce outstanding results
- **Ensuring a workforce that is sustainable for the future** of your business – A key issue for Canadian employers given the demographic shifts that are creating critical shortages in skilled labour that will continue in the coming years.

I have enclosed some materials further explaining apprenticeship including the regulations, registration process, and ultimately, the benefits to your organization.

I welcome the opportunity to sit down and discuss how participating in this dynamic program can benefit your business and its growth. I thank you in advance for your time and consideration and look forward to meeting, at your convenience, in the near future.

Sincerely,



## APPENDIX D - Sample Telephone Script

### Introduce yourself and state the purpose of your call

*“Hi, my name is (your name), I am calling from (your organization) and I would like to speak to the hiring manager if he/she is available. The purpose of my call is to discuss opportunities for apprenticeship within your business.”*

### Scenario A: You are transferred and/or are speaking to the hiring manager in which case you commence your pitch

Re-introduce yourself and re-state the purpose of your call once your target is on the phone. Before delving into your pitch, ask a few questions to gauge your target’s experience with and/or interest in registering an apprentice such as:

- Do you currently have apprentices working in your business?
- Have you considered hiring apprentices in the past?

### Apprenticeship pitch:

*Employers are often not aware of the **resource** that is available to them through apprenticeship. Hiring apprentices makes good business sense. Apprenticeship really is a win-win situation for all involved: the apprentice receives on-the-job experience and mentorship to grow in their trade while the employer receives smart, qualified and enthusiastic employees that help strengthen the business.*

*Given your work in the area of [insert sector/trade] and the increasing difficulty in finding skilled employees, I thought you might be interested in learning more about how registering an apprentice can work for you and your organization.*

*I appreciate you are busy, but if you are interested, I would like to set up a time to come speak to you about this issue in person. In the meantime, I can send you some materials that you can review at your convenience. [request mailing address]*

Thank you for your time and I look forward to meeting with you.

### Scenario B: You are told that the hiring manager and/or business is not available and/or interested in apprenticeship

*I understand you may not be interested (or available to discuss) in apprenticeship **at this time** and I certainly do not want to take up your time but do you think I could send you some information that you can review at your convenience and perhaps we can follow up at a later date. [Request contact name and mailing address and thank the caller again for their time]*



## APPENDIX E - Testimonial Examples & Template

Below are sample testimonials regarding the value of apprenticeship (source: [www.careersintrades.ca](http://www.careersintrades.ca) website):

*“Apprentices are the first link to the success of Canadian businesses. They are eager and want to learn, greatly contributing to productivity and a quality product. Once they are certified, they become the main stay of our business as skilled journey persons. Supporting apprenticeship ensures that industry will have a strong workforce well into the future. Without qualified employees, I simply wouldn’t have a business.”*

**Don Oborowsky, President and CEO, Waiward Steel Fabricators Ltd.**

*“The advantages of apprenticeship to employers are many, not the least of which is they can initiate each apprentice to new tasks on their equipment using their own methods. Safety procedures can be monitored and customized to a specific workplace, thus reducing the risk of accidents.”*

**Valerie Overend, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST), Facilitator, Women in Trades and Technologies (WITT)**

*“A skilled trades career presents a world of opportunity, and youth must be exposed to the possibilities. It is important that parents, educators and industry representatives present these opportunities to youth in order to compel them to investigate the options.”*

**Allan Bruce, International Representative, International Union of Operating Engineers**

*“The Chamber has a clear understanding of the importance of promoting skilled trades and apprenticeship and encouraging all of our members to be actively involved in training apprentices.”*

**Nancy Hughes Anthony, President and Chief Executive Officer, The Canadian Chamber of Commerce**

*“Apprenticeship offers employers the closest thing to creating a ‘turn-key’ product.”*

**Gerald Brown, President, Association of Canadian Community Colleges**

**Below is some sample wording to help you build your testimonials:**

I was hesitant to hire an apprentice before because \_\_\_\_\_. However, I changed my mind and decided to register an apprentice because \_\_\_\_\_

Having an apprentice has affected my business by \_\_\_\_\_

I would recommend registering an apprentice because \_\_\_\_\_.



## APPENDIX F - Sample Thank-You Letter

Date  
Name  
Business  
Address  
City, Province, Postal Code

Dear [Insert name],

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me on [insert date] to discuss potential opportunities for registering an apprentice for your business. Armed with strong qualifications, an impeccable work-ethic and enthusiasm for the trades, apprentices have contributed to making Canada's businesses more profitable, competitive and sustainable. Employers have also found registering apprentices to be a rewarding experience as they are able to train and mentor a new generation of skilled tradespeople.

As discussed in our meeting, there are numerous resources available to employers free of charge to assist you through the process of registering an apprentice. Please visit our website for information on apprenticeship and easy to use tools and resources: (insert website)

I look forward to our continued dialogue on the issue and if you have any questions please do not hesitate to call. Thanks again for your time and interest.

Best regards,

[Sign name]

[Enter full coordinates]





Canada

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