



BC CDA Career Summit Dinner

Pan Pacific Hotel, Vancouver

Monday, March 5, 2012

Participants: *Sean Aiken, Norm Amundson, Tony Botelho, John Coward, Tannis Goddard, Lindsay Goodridge, Brenda Graziano, Sally Halliday, Sue Hanley, Jeff Harris, Phil Jarvis, Ken Keis, Suzanne Klinga, John Krumboltz, Norm Leech, Denise Lloyd, Carole MacFarlane, Roberta Neault, Sarah Nelson, Deirdre Pickerell, Gregg Taylor.*

What follows is a brief summary of issues discussed. It doesn’t do justice to many of the ideas shared. From your recollection of the discussion please add substance to what you contributed and heard before we share this broadly on the [Career Summit Blog](http://public.careercruising.com/us/en/blog/bl/2012/02/career-summit-at-cannexus12/).

* The status quo is unacceptable. At a time when employers are having increasing difficulty finding the talent they need to be productive and competitive, too many students have no idea where they will land when/if they graduate, and too many adults are unemployed or underemployed. Economic prosperity is the only way out of the debt communities, provinces, even countries are in. Prosperity is only possible if we get the right talent in the best possible places. We can’t afford to have students graduate with no idea where to land in the work world. We need them to graduate into good entry level jobs in which they are happy and productive. We can’t afford to have talent on the sidelines, or in the wrong jobs, and we can’t afford to have companies suffocating due to lack of talent.
* We need to get employers “who get it” to the table. Cisco and some large mining companies offer good examples. Career practitioners are in the centre of a circle with students and adult career seekers, with orbiting satellites of stakeholders including parents, employers, public policy makers, and community organizations. Harmonized engagement of all stakeholders is the key to sustainable whole-community solutions.
* Parents care deeply about their children’s success but need the knowledge and tools to help constructively. They need to learn about the Perfect Storm and they need access to good resources. Current career information resources like Career Cruising are now essential, but they tend to portray career paths as logical and linear, and focus on existing careers. More attention needs to be given to the fact that many careers that will be open to today’s students when they graduate do not yet exist, and typical career journeys now involve more meandering and manoeuvering than linear pathways.
* Students don’t understand the urgency of preparing themselves for success beyond education by discovery their passion and purpose and beginning to explore career and life scenarios in which they can lead purposeful, authentic lives. They, too, need to hear about The Perfect Storm.
* Many employers are represented directly or indirectly by the organizations represented at this summit. Many of them would welcome the opportunity to get together to explore whole-community career and workforce development approaches. We need to create opportunities to bring willing employers that are already good models and supporting career development for their current and potential employees into the dialogue.
* Having older students mentor younger students then become mentors for older students once they have landed successfully in the workplace is an “organic” way of growing community involvement in career development.
* Successful federal government workforce development initiatives in the past (CLFDB, LMDAs) have been discarded. The German model of active employer, union, and community involvement in vocational and technical education and trades training could be replicated in Canada.
* Adults ask students in primary school what they want to be when they grow up. They should be asking, “What are you passionate about?” “What are your unique interests, skills and talents?” “How can you make the world a better place?”
* The myth that a university degree is the only route to success and happiness remains pervasive, despite the fact that we have a growing number of Progress Impeded New Entrants (PINEs), young people who have completed university yet cannot land satisfactorily in the workforce. Many register in community college or trades training to get a credential that will open doors to employment. Many graduates carry a heavy student loan debt load with uncertain employment prospects, thus face many uncertain years of debt repayment.
* It was good to see educators, employers, policy makers and career practitioners come together at last Fall’s 21st Century Learning Conference in Banff. It is hoped that the next 21st Century Learning Conference will be in British Columbia in 2012 and will engage a broad cross-section of B.C. stakeholders.
* Community, innovation and hope are the three essential ingredients in helping all citizens connect with their authentic selves then connect with employment opportunities.
* The U.S. has the Reserve Officer Training Program just as Canada has the Regular Officer Training program. Both provide subsidized university studies in return for an obligation to serve a period of time in the military after graduation. The Canadian Forces now offer subsidized community college studies leading to an obligation to serve in one of a dozen or so military trades for a period of time. Companies concerned about not being able to find qualified talent might consider subsidizing education and training programs for promising potential future employees on the same basis. If all students have thoughtfully prepare ePortfolios it become possible to identify those students who are dreaming of doing what a particular company is seeking.
* Introducing youth and adults to potential future employers while they are still in school gives them a viable answer to the question, “Why should I learn this?” and enables employers to create a pipeline of potential future talent. It was even suggested that once connections have been made with employers it may be in some students’ best interest, particularly First Nations students, to skip additional years of education which, it was suggested, tend to be largely wasted time. Perhaps the employers could make arrangements to provide relevant elements of missed curriculum on the job site.
* Sports teams have always used scouting and recruiting networks effectively. As the Perfect Storm grows, and companies become increasingly anxious about where their future talent is going to come from, they will have to consider creating their own local scouting networks and “stocking the pond” locally. ccInspire makes this possible in communities ready to make a whole-community commitment to career and workforce development.
* The education system needs to prepare students for early success in family, community and career. At its core it should be about discovering one’s passion and purpose. It must include helping all students develop informed dreams of the life they want to lead as an adult, and equipping them with the essential 21st century skills they need to step directly out of school into successful lives. The curriculum is now driven by core academic prerequisites for university entrance, despite the fact that most students won’t, and shouldn’t, go to university immediately after high school. Moreover, many of those who do graduate from university, often with massive debt before they earn a dollar, have no idea what to do next.
* The most massive change in most career practitioners’ and job developers’ memories is now occurring in the employment sector in British Columbia. At the same time, there is massive unrest in the education sector. This may be an excellent opportunity to radically improve the way we match talent to opportunity for citizens of all ages and for businesses.

We realize Career Cruising is just one organization in a cast of many doing their best to help Canadians enjoy success in their careers and lives, and businesses find the talent they need to thrive. Let us know how we can support your efforts to make a difference, and please help us achieve our goal of a deeper level of implementation of our ccEngage resources. Over 100,000 Canadians from primary students to those planning their retirement access our programs each and every day. Due to the lack of priority accorded to career development, in many cases their interactions are too superficial to effect the real change in their lives we seek. Challenge your staff to get full value from the ccEngage tools they are using. We are more than ready to provide free online orientations, training and support to anyone using or contemplating using our products.

We will follow-up on these themes with most of you in coming months. Don’t hesitate to contact us if you see opportunities for collaboration. You can reach anyone on the Career Cruising team by calling (toll-free) 1-800-965-8541 or emailing: info@careercruising.com. Visit our great new website at: [careercruising.com](http://www.careercruising.com).