

NOW HIRING HAMILTON RESOURCE GUIDE

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ESSENTIALS



THIS IS A SECTION OF A LARGER REPORT. READ THE FULL REPORT AT NOWHIRINGHAMILTON.CA



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Workforce Development Essentials

There exist many opportunities for employers to not only provide additional value-added training and opportunities for existing employees, but also to shape the qualifications of prospective employees through designing training modules and micro-certifications in partnership with local training institutions. Below are a number of essential considerations employers ought to make when evaluating their own workforce development practices.

The recommendations below reflect key themes identified in the Now Hiring Hamilton Project, and are reflective of focus group and survey data, as well as best practices as determined by industry professionals.

To access additional resources that support the development of your organization's workforce development strategies, please visit www.nowhiringhamiltonresources.ca

Alternative Credentialling

Alternative credentials, also commonly referred to as micro-certifications, are flexible and granular forms of post-secondary training of specific skills and competencies that are developed and offered in a partnership between one or more postsecondary institutions and one or more employers, that may be tailored towards a specific need. They are far shorter in duration than traditional post-secondary credentials, and often focus on specific micro-skills that are essential to successfully performing the duties of specific jobs. They are designed to help bridge the skills gap between academics training and on-the-job competency requirements.

Alternative Credentialling Benefits to SMEs:

- Reflective of the needs of the current workforce;
- Are responsive to employer needs and they can be created and completed rapidly;
- Can focus on very specific aspects of industry as they can be tailored to specific tasks;
- Can be used to fill workforce skill gaps by providing up-skilling in a just in time manner;
- Can be less expensive than full traditional postsecondary programs for employers subsidizing education; and,
- Examples include: introduction to HTML; bookkeeping; technical machining training; climate change management systems; etc.

Identifying particular skills needs within a given sector that traditional certifications do not necessarily prepare candidates for are critical starting points for assessing whether an alternative credential partnership can be explored with a local training institution. Participating in shaping alternative credentialling programs will result in better prepared workers for entry level positions in a specific employment sector.

Collaboration with Local Training Institutions

As identified above, alternative credentials or micro-certifications are a great way for employers to participate in shaping the workforce and skills they need to fill important employment roles.

Employers are encouraged to connect with local colleges, universities, and training facilities to understand what partnership options are available and how employers can directly inform the training programs offered at a given institution. Establishing partnerships with training institutions not only facilitates the certification and validation of required competencies that may be complimentary or an alternative to formal qualifications, but also creates a talent pipeline between employers and qualified talent.

- Individual organizations or collectives of organizations with similar workforce development needs should pursue collaboration with local research and training institutions to shape program offerings for prospective employees.
- Collaboration with local institutions will facilitate long-term talent pipelines of required talent, but also permits program adaptations to changing needs and rapid upskilling opportunities.
- Beyond entry level employment skills acquisition, alternative credentials also provide great opportunities to build on existing skill sets with additional certifications specific to employer needs.
- Funding opportunities are available in conjunction with training partners to help assist with program design and implementation.
- Empowers employers to create unique credentialing opportunities specific to organizational needs.

Skills for Success in the Workplace

To maximize productivity, ensure employee competency, and minimize resources spent on repeatedly recruiting for the same positions, employers ought to invest in their staff by providing them with the opportunities to acquire and demonstrate their skills for success in the workplace.

Providing prospective employees with the requisite skills to succeed early on and throughout their employment does require some investment, but the gains are realized through productivity and workforce stabilization. Moreover, providing opportunities for employees to improve upon their existing skills demonstrates investment in their labour and results in greater employee commitment to and belief in their contributions towards the success of the organization.

- Communicate opportunities to job seekers to acquire the requisite skills needed to fulfill employment duties through partnerships with local training institutions.
- Identify core competencies or skills required for successful employment performance and facilitate acquisition of those skills.
- Providing upskilling opportunities for employees where applicable and offer incentives to complete upskilling training. Demonstrates an investment in them as an employee and facilitates higher productivity and workplace commitment.
- Assess how the Nine Essential Skills factor into successful performance of a given role and evaluate opportunities to train these skills.

Where employers invest in their employees and particularly in skills acquisition essential to successful performance, employers can expect a few key return on investments:

- **Productivity:** enhanced cycle times and process improvement.
- **Quality:** less errors means better quality and delivery.
- **Customer Satisfaction:** setting and training expectations toward service delivery creates a culture of customer satisfaction.
- **Employee Absenteeism and Presentism:** employees who feel prepared and valued will be more productive.
- **Employee Hiring and Retention:** employees will want to work and stay in an environment that supports them with training and continuous improvement.
- **Profit:** "our people are our product," and a good product leads to more profit.