



Need for Training-Apprentices

By Dario Rossit

Apprenticeship Training- who needs it? Who wants it? Is there a need? Apprenticeship training is the education of teaching and learning a trade, a job, a career. Without apprenticeship training, we can not pass along the tricks of the trade. Ever hire someone to come into your home to do some work and when the day finally arrives and the hired hand working in your home is doing a task, that you think you could never do on your own, your thoughts turn to "I could have done better than that".

There are some tasks that you need to have a professional do the work. Someone with experience, someone with the proper tools and someone who knows the rules, regulations and codes to ensure that the job is well done and safe.

Apprenticeship is the same as an internship that a lawyer would have to serve, the same as in-residence doctor that a new med student would have to complete. It is the passage of knowledge from one experienced individual to another, hopefully younger, eager to learn student who has a passion to pursue a career that will not only provide food on the table, but a rewarding career that will make one proud. In order to start an apprenticeship, one must be sixteen years of age, find someone who is willing to train them and have graduated from secondary school. Usually students who graduate are seventeen or eighteen years old when they leave high school.

There is one other option that only a few take advantage of and that is the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP). The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities that oversees apprenticeship training provides Ontario School Boards with grant money to set up an apprenticeship pathway for high school students, prior to graduating. This allows students to start an apprenticeship as soon as they turn sixteen years of age. If a student is thinking of entering an apprenticeable trade, it is a great opportunity to see if this is the path of choice or career that they would want prior to exiting high school. If they take a course in say auto service and don't like it, they can still change their mind and pursue another path. While the student experiments with this trade, they would still get a credit(s) towards

their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). The advantage of starting an apprenticeship early has many benefits. As mentioned, they can always change their mind with no loss. A student who is registered as an apprentice with an employer, would have 75% of their tuition paid for by the MTCU and a seat purchase (spot at the college) for the following semester at the college level. A student who would start the apprenticeship at sixteen would be in grade eleven when entering apprenticeship and if the student were to continue this pathway, by the time they are graduating from secondary school, they would almost be half through their apprenticeship. If a student were to attend a college for two years for the same apprenticeable trade, they would have to pay their own tuition and then start their apprenticeship training with a willing employer almost four years after they could have started it in grade eleven.

To add to the benefits, the student would not only not have to pay the high costs of tuition, but would qualify to get grant money for every level of training they attain. Most apprenticeable trades have 2-3 levels of training. The employer also gets grant money as well. An employer can apply to get up to \$ 40,000.00 over 4 years to train an apprentice. A student can apply for \$ 4,000.00 -\$ 6,000 on top of the regular pay they would earn, after completion of the apprenticeship.

Why then is there a shortage of Apprenticeship Training?

The Windsor-Essex County area has had some very successful apprenticeship training programs in the past. With a Manufacturing based economy, there used to be a few companies that had their own training. Hallmark Tool, Windsor Mold, Centerline, Saturn Tool. There used to be a Government funded program Moulding Youth for Industry. The Windsor Essex Catholic School Board used to have a program in partnership with St. Clair College-Metal Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (MOYAP).

With the downsizing, closure of plants, these Apprenticeship

Programs seized to exist. There were no jobs to fill and the word on the street was that there was no future in the manufacturing jobs. This type of thinking spread to the hospitality sector as well. Students who had an interest in a cooking or hairstyling apprenticeship could not get parental consent for them to get the training while in secondary school.

When these parents were asked "WHY" they would respond that Windsor was a dying town and people were leaving the Essex County area. I don't doubt some people have left our area. I also believe that some people have moved into our area. Where do these people eat? Who cuts their hair? And now we have Tool shops advertising in the local paper looking for apprentices. The School Boards are being called to see if they have any apprentices. Do they? Their numbers have dropped dramatically. In order for a student to consider starting an apprenticeship, that student would have to apply in grade ten at option selection time for the following school year which is in January/February of each year. If accepted the student would start in school classes the following September and if successful would start the work placement part of the apprenticeship the following February. What will the employers do in the meantime? If they are advertising now for apprentices, they will have to wait a year before they can get someone with a few skills and a desire to pursue a career in this trade.

Our area is about to explode with job opportunities with the university and college Construction expansions. The border access route, yes, it will happen, the need for more seniors residences and eventually more new housing. The stimulus money that the governments have granted to put people back to work will have spin off jobs that will require some sort of skills and trades that help build a community.

I urge parents and students to learn more about apprenticeship and be informed when making a decision about the future education and post secondary jobs. For more information about apprenticeship, one can visit <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/training/apprenticeship/appren.html>

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