

Dufferin Youth Event

Executive Summary

In the 2009 TOP Report, the Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin (WPB) identified the challenge that “Youth now entering the workplace have different expectations of the workplace and its culture which is leading to problems in workplace retention”. In order to begin addressing this challenge, WPB decided to explore what expectations youth have of the workplace. It is hoped that, by identifying these expectations, employers and youth programs can pursue and develop information and policies that speak to youth and their concerns, address any issues that may be contributing to workplace turnover and create a stronger workforce for Dufferin County.

WPB held a small focus group with youth to determine what their expectations for the workplace were. On November 17, 2009, 7 youth from the Step Up program with Job Connect participated in a facilitated discussion around workplace expectations. All of the youth have been employed in at least one job since leaving secondary education.

The topics covered in the discussions are outlined below along with some of the comments that the youth provided.

- Educational Expectations
 1. Almost all of the youth are looking at pursuing some form of training in the next year or two.
 2. The Grade 10 Careers course offered in high school should be moved to the latter half of high school.
 3. Career information needs to be delivered by people who are credible, respectful and personally know about the jobs that youth are considering.
- Workplace Expectations
 1. The youth determine where they are willing to work based upon the experiences of their friends with specific employers. They often share this information with their networks through social networking sites and texting.
 2. Youth expect their bosses and co-workers to have many of the traits that they look for in their friends. They see these people as “borderline friends”.
- Personal Skills Assessment
 1. Youth rank their skill levels fairly high. The lowest skill rankings were in Computer Use, Finding Information and Job Task Planning & Organizing.
- Local Labour Market Expectations
 1. Youth have a limited view of what positions and sectors exist in the Dufferin County labour market. This limited view reflects the workplaces where they and their friends have found work.
 2. Youth are aware that they need at least a high school diploma in order to get a sustainable job in Dufferin County.

- Information Sharing Expectations
 1. Information for youth should first and foremost be visual and easily passed along to friends.
 2. Youth want to know the standard things about their potential employers and the positions that they offer (pay, hours, duties). However, they also want to know about accident rates, hiring/firing rates, supervisor's expectations, career path opportunities and the financial health of the company.
 3. Youth were adamant that the people who run employment and career exploration programs, and the information that was made available through these programs, have a personal connection to them and be professional in appearance.