

## **SUMMARY**

### **Recruitment Strategy for the Sea-to-Sky Region**

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The following is a summary of the key points in the report '*Recruitment Strategy for the Sea-to-Sky Region*' by Bernie Lalor-Morton of Focus Forward Coaching and Consulting. The full report has recommended strategies and actions around all of these key recruitment areas.

#### **Introduction:**

A complete strategy that focuses on a number of possible candidate groups, especially those traditionally underrepresented, is required to solve the crucial demand for workers. The strategy is dependant on a number of factors; however mainly it will require a coordinated and collaborative effort on behalf of each community. The corridor can neither rely on the reputation it once enjoyed nor continue to believe that workers will come because they are solely attracted by the lifestyle. Maintaining the status quo in recruiting will no longer serve the business community. Attracting more workers to the region requires a proactive, outreach approach.

Other issues that need to be addressed and acknowledged in order for the strategy to be successful include the negative perception the tourism industry has as a viable career path. Many believe that tourism jobs are low paying and that there is no future. The second issue is the high cost of living associated with living in the corridor. The lack of affordable housing is an issue facing every community in the Sea-to-Sky Corridor.

#### **Corridor Recruitment Team**

A main recommendation brought forth in this report is the creation of a Corridor Recruitment Team (CRT). The role of this team would be focused on six key result areas in recruiting: Aboriginal people, foreign workers, post-secondary students, immigrants residing in Canada, youth, and other people within Canada. A planned and organized strategy that is the responsibility of a Corridor Recruitment Team (CRT) dedicated to bringing more skilled and low skilled workers to the region will be essential to success.

The following outlines in general terms the scope of responsibility of the Corridor Recruitment Team:

- Traveling within Canada and various countries to recruit workers on behalf of local employers, especially small and medium sized businesses, well in advance of the start of the season.
- Ensuring that the message about the benefits of working and living in the Sea-to-Sky corridor is part of the Tourism Career Awareness Program (TCAP) already being delivered within the high schools by go2.
- Developing relationships with post-secondary institutions in BC and across Canada so there is more penetration into the BC post-secondary system. The CRT has the opportunity to partner with the Centres for Leadership and Innovation at both Vancouver Community College (VCC) and Capilano College.
- Developing key messages that clarify the benefits of a career in tourism and the benefits of living in the corridor. The message needs to be managed and one that everyone in the corridor believes in and spreads.

### **High-level Strategies and Goals:**

The strategy presented was divided into six key result areas and is a multi-tiered approach highlighting the variety of recruitment needs businesses face. It includes strategies for short-term seasonal workers, long term seasonal workers and permanent full and part time workers drawn from Aboriginal people, foreign workers, post-secondary students, youth, immigrants residing in Canada, and other people within Canada. The key result areas recommended are as follows:

- To increase the number of aboriginal people, from Squamish and Lil'wat Nations, working in the tourism industry in the corridor and to develop strong long lasting relationships between Squamish and Lil'wat Nations and the communities of Squamish, Whistler and Pemberton.
- To recruit more foreign workers by lobbying for change to:
  - Extend the Working Holiday Visa program from one year to two years
  - Increase the number of Working Holiday Visa workers to the corridor
  - Increase the number of Temporary Work Visas given to foreign workers
- To increase the number of post-secondary students seeking work and working in tourism in the corridor. This would include encouraging more co-op placements and attracting more students to work in the corridor during study breaks and part time.
- To increase the number of immigrants living elsewhere in BC, particularly urban areas, to re-locate in the corridor. Targeting immigrant groups in the lower mainland, as a source of labour, is an important aspect of the overall strategy as these groups are both skilled and low skilled and already have achieved working status in Canada.
- To increase the number of young people who have been living in the corridor to stay and work in the tourism industry. The focus of this section of the strategy is two-fold: encouraging young people to work part-time during school and to promote the benefits of pursuing a career in tourism and returning to the area after post-secondary graduation.
- To recruit workers from other parts of Canada that are experiencing higher rates of unemployment including various age ranges especially retired and semi-retired workers

The full report presents a set of recommendations around each of these bullets above. These suggestions will be taken into consideration by the Steering Committee as the draft plan is being completed.