

# General Manager's Report

By now the 2008 issue of the Chamber's Buyers Guide has been delivered to your business or residence. If you haven't received a copy please contact the Chamber office and we will be pleased to send you a copy. As always, this book is a handy all-in-one reference guide featuring our Chamber members in the yellow pages. By shopping a Chamber member first you are assured that you are dealing with a local, reputable business that places value on delivering quality products and services. Not in the book? Please call our office to ensure that we list you in the 2009 edition.

**General Manager's Desk**

**Sue Walker**

Halton Hills Home & Leisure Show is returning April 17-18, 2009. The Home & Leisure Show is a 2-day consumer show taking place in the Acton arena. This is your opportunity to meet 2,000+ potential new customers, face-to-face. At our last Home & Leisure Show, consumers said they wanted to see more landscapers, home renovators and electronic businesses. Book now for discounted rates and special promotional opportunities.

I encourage you to take some time off this summer and visit our local pick your own farms, local festivals or hike some of our great trails. Our summers are too short not to get out and enjoy some of Halton Hills best kept secrets.

Contact the Chamber at 905-877-7119 or through our website at [www.haltonhillschamber.on.ca](http://www.haltonhillschamber.on.ca)

# The Workforce Crisis

The Canadian Workforce is changing in age distribution, ethnic makeup, background, lifestyle and motivation. The employment deal is also changing, no longer an exchange of loyalty for security, but a multi-faceted give-and-take between employee and employer. And shortages are looming on the near horizon. As workforce growth slows, the Baby Boom retirement wave begins, and education fails to keep pace with the demands of the new jobs.

Employers will need to add new measures to the per-formance dashboard if they're going to anticipate and proactively overcome the challenges presented by this workforce crisis. Employers will need more sophisticated and detailed information to understand both present and potential employees. If you don't believe this is an issue that will impact you, here is a quick check.

A common myth about the impending workforce crisis is that the issue is about an anticipated talent shortage. The issue is much larger than one could imagine. Canada has never had such a large proportion of older workers in the workforce, or a generation as large as the baby boomers preparing to retire. The growth rate of the labor force has never dropped and stayed so low in our history. We never before relied so heavily on intellectual rather than physical labor.

So what does this impending workforce crisis mean to you and your business? If we break the crisis down to its simplest elements, you have a supply and demand problem. As a leader, you must have a ready supply of skills and talent to implement and sustain the execution of your business strategy and achieve your performance goals. The issue won't just be about achieving business goals; it is much broader with even greater implications to your business.

1. Do you anticipate a productivity issue, if your organization cannot get the workers needed or if young workers are continually turning over?
2. Are you noticing an increase in style clashes between managers, employees, or even between your senior team members?
3. Are you facing a loss of critical knowledge when those who truly understand your business, the customers, and the organization retire at once?
4. Are you facing the challenge of losing your top executives and/or performers to retirement?
5. Do you anticipate a tremendous brain drain on your institutional memory due to retirement and potential departure of super contributors?
6. Do you know what actions you can take to prevent the pilfering of your top executives and super performers by competitors and other companies who could benefit from your institutional knowledge?
7. Do you have a workforce strategy in place to meet the challenges of the impending workforce crisis?

There is serious doubt whether ready-made, already qualified, locally available candidates will form a large enough labor pool to meet a company's needs. So, you will have to change your thinking about how you manage your workforce. You are going to have to anticipate your labor and skills needs in the context of the longer-term trends.

Will you be prepared when your employees think and act quite differently than their parents, grandparents and previous generations?

Some of the first tactics you need to take are the retention of key employees, increasing the level of engagement of existing employees, changing how you select new employees, changing your approach for developing new hires, and tapping new sources of labor and skills.

Are you prepared?

*Wendy Hue, PCC, CSP  
Partners in Progress  
[www.partnersinprogress.ca](http://www.partnersinprogress.ca)*

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