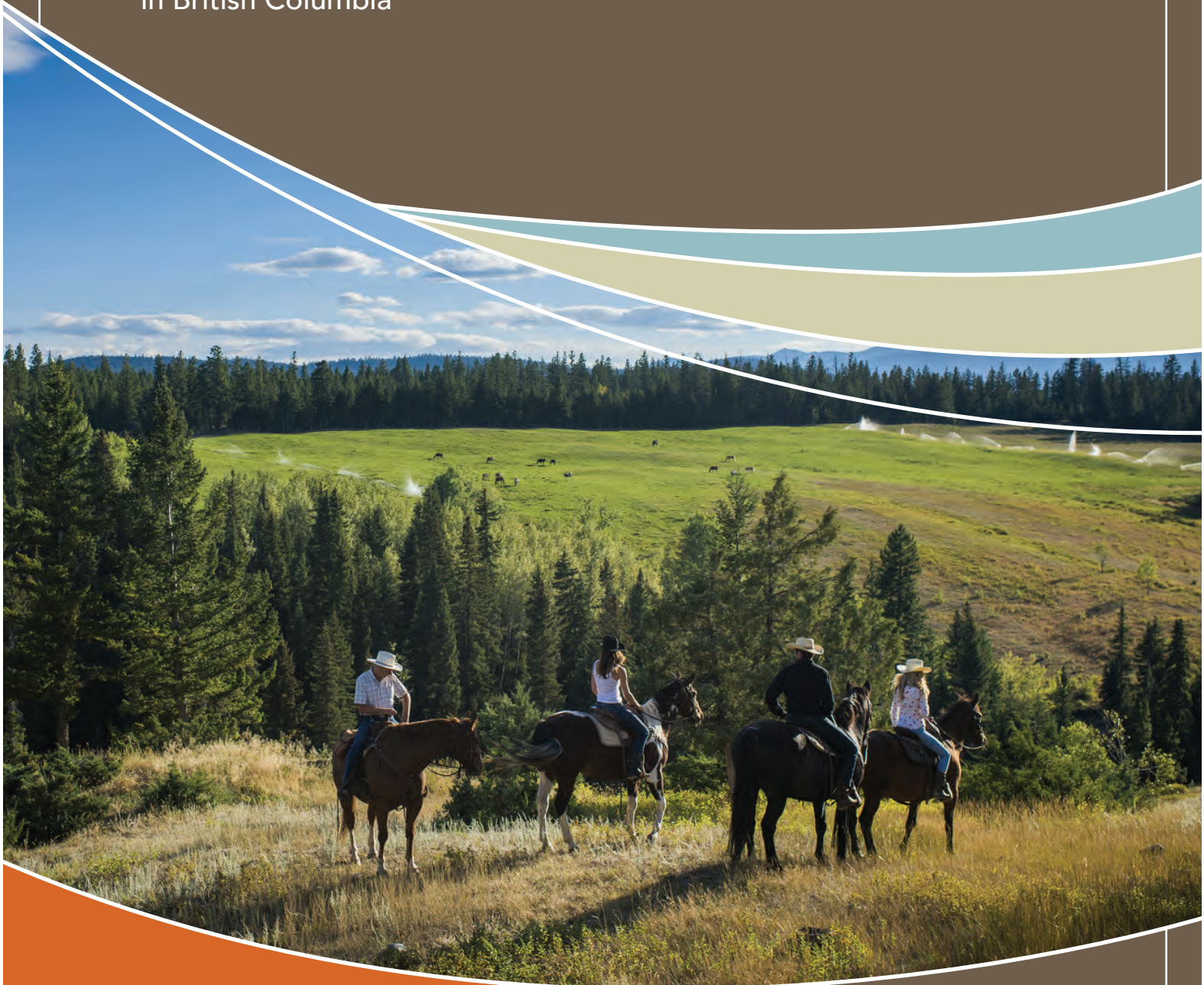


RECRUIT, RETAIN & TRAIN:

Developing a **Super, Natural** Tourism Workforce
in British Columbia



It's the perfect storm - rapid industry growth, a declining youth population, and the largest number of people in history about to retire and leave the workforce.

In British Columbia, the tourism industry ranks as one of the largest sectors of the economy, as measured by revenue generation and employment. Annual revenues in 2017 exceeded \$18 billion, with 6.1 million international overnight visitors and 302,700 tourism-related jobs. Development and expansion of world-class product offerings and sustained, focused marketing efforts are projected to stimulate annual revenue growth levels of 4-6% through to 2028 with job growth swelling to over 350,000.

The tourism industry must change its paradigm about the recruitment, retention and training of current and potential workers to ensure the industry thrives in British Columbia. The most effective way to ensure this is through collaborative action.

British Columbia's Tourism Human Resources Strategy has been developed to meet industry's vision:

A thriving and skilled workforce that delivers exceptional experiences to our guests.

Over the next five years, the tourism and hospitality industry will focus on four interdependent and overarching goals:

1. BC's tourism industry attracts and retains a sufficient number of appropriately skilled employees that support the growth of the industry.
2. BC's tourism industry has access to the right training at the right time.
3. BC's tourism industry makes evidence-based workforce development decisions through relevant, current, and reliable research.
4. BC's tourism industry stakeholder efforts and resources are well-coordinated to achieve optimal return on tourism workforce investments.



Photo credit: Destination BC Blake Jorgenson



Photo credit: Tourism Richmond

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Front/back cover photo credit: Destination BC Blake Jorgenson

BACKGROUND

In 2003, due to a projected labour shortage, workforce development planning was identified as one of four key pillars required for the tourism industry to reach its goals under the provincial growth strategy. Industry, educators and government formed a task force to research current and emerging HR issues and develop strategies to address them. The result of this work was the creation and implementation of a five-year Human Resources Action Plan and the establishment of an industry-led and demand-driven Human Resource Development (HRD) coordinating organization – go2HR – to oversee implementation of recruitment, retention, training and development initiatives. It also established and implemented an industry governance structure.

In 2012, the HR Action Plan was revisited, updated and renamed the Tourism Labour Market Strategy (TLMS). The updated TLMS benefited from the accomplishments achieved since 2003, and also took into account shifts in the socio-political, economic and tourism/hospitality industry environments. Since 2012, the TLMS has been the roadmap for go2HR and its industry stakeholders and partners to implement the strategies and activities necessary to address labour market challenges in BC. A TLMS Evaluation Framework was also developed and implemented shortly after the 2012 update.

In 2019, the TLMS was again revisited and updated and continuing challenges were identified, including:

- a declining youth population and aging workforce;
- a shortage of skilled workers;
- ineffective or absence of good HR practices by employers;
- small business owner/operators that don't have time nor resources or expertise in HR;
- seasonality;
- a need for accessible and affordable training options in regional, remote and rural areas of the province;
- stiff competition for workers from other provinces or sectors with lower living costs or higher wages;
- increased need to look at immigration and alternative labour pools; and
- negative perceptions or low awareness about tourism and hospitality jobs and viable careers.

New challenges have also arisen, such as housing, transportation, climate change, and emergency preparedness.

Understanding labour market conditions is critical for tourism employers. Past practices and norms were developed when there was a shortage of work and a surplus of workers. Today, and continuing until 2028, the conditions are the reverse. There is a shortage of workers and a surplus of work. Going forward, employers must change their perspective on how they view and manage their workforce. HR strategies must emphasize the need to shift paradigms about recruitment, retention and training of staff.

Understanding labour market conditions is critical for tourism employers.



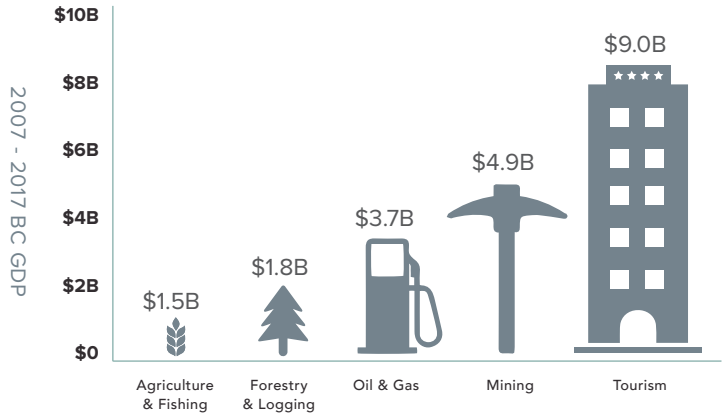
Photo credit: Destination BC Patrice Halley

THE IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM TO BRITISH COLUMBIA'S ECONOMIC WELL BEING

In 2017, tourism generated an estimated \$18.4 billion in revenue, an increase of 8.4% from 2016. It also generated \$1.2 billion in provincial tax revenue, which includes tax revenue from the range of businesses involved in tourism, such as hotels, gas stations, restaurants, and attractions, to name only a few.

In addition, tourism contributed \$9.0 billion Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to BC's economy. This level of GDP was the highest in BC amongst the main resource sectors of mining, oil and gas, forestry and logging, and agriculture and fishing. A key benefit of the industry is its potential to contribute to the economic, environmental and social health of most communities in BC.

GDP BY PRIMARY RESOURCE INDUSTRY



In 2018, tourism employment represented 12% of BC's labour force.

TOURISM'S LARGE AND GROWING WORKFORCE

There were an estimated 19,170 tourism-related businesses across the province, serving local, provincial, interprovincial and international guests. These companies provided 302,700 jobs in 2018, representing 12% of BC's labour force. The number of jobs generated by tourism and hospitality is projected to be over 350,000 by 2028, creating 106,000 job openings due to industry growth combined with the replacement of employees exiting the industry:

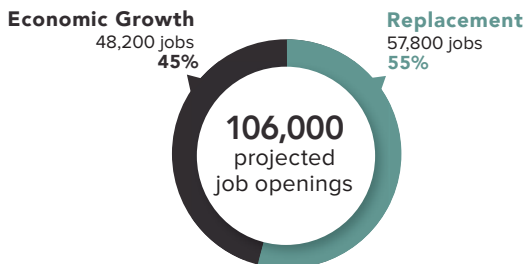


Photo credit: Destination Canada Brian Caisie

These job openings include:

-  **46,400**
Food and Beverage Services
-  **14,600**
Accommodation
-  **25,500**
Recreation and Entertainment
(Adventure Tourism, Outdoor
Recreation and Attractions)
-  **19,400**
Transportation and Travel Services

The top occupations that will be in demand in the next decade include management, skilled and front-line occupations:

TOP DEMAND OCCUPATIONS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

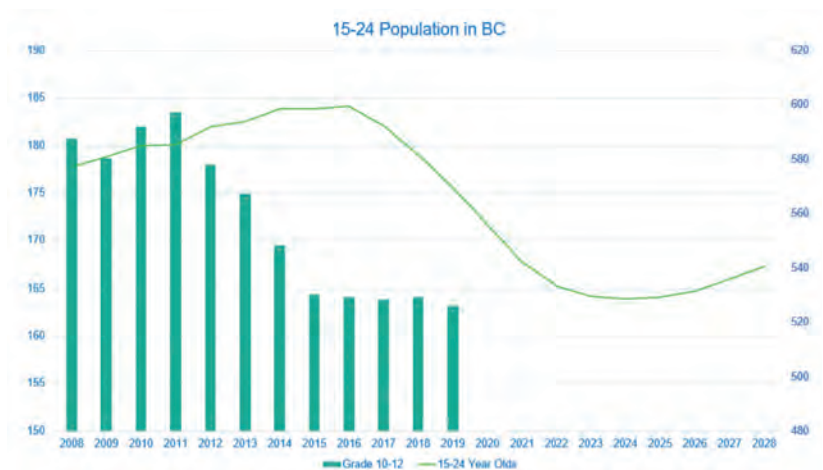
Management and Supervisory	 Restaurant and Food Service Managers: 7,600 jobs
	 Chefs: 2,700 jobs
	 Accommodation Service Managers: 2,600 jobs
	 Food Service Supervisors: 1,600 jobs
Skilled Occupations	 Cooks: 9,800 jobs
	 Bus Drivers: 3,800 jobs
	 Program Leaders/Instructors in Recreation & Sport: 3,000 jobs
	 Taxi and Limousine Drivers and Chauffeurs: 2,500 jobs
Front-line/Entry Level	 Food Counter Attendants & Kitchen Helpers: 11,500 jobs
	 Food and Beverage Servers: 8,100 jobs
	 Light Duty Cleaners i.e. Housekeeping: 3,500 jobs

TOURISM WORKFORCE CHALLENGES: A SUMMARY

Where are we going to find these workers and how are we going to keep them? This issue goes far beyond the need to recruit, retain and train workers. Based on extensive research and industry stakeholder consultation, as well as comprehensive research as part of the Destination Development planning done by Destination BC, the following unique characteristics of the tourism industry present additional challenges for tourism employers.

Changing Demographics

About a third of the BC tourism industry's workforce is between the ages of 15 and 24, making our industry the biggest employer of youth, and twice as reliant on young workers as other sectors in the province. However, the 15-24 year old population in BC is declining at a significant rate and does not stabilize and start to grow again until 2028. At the same time, there are record numbers of baby boomers retiring and exiting the workforce. As demand for workers continues to grow, we need to explore and be open to using the skills and talents of new and different labour pools.



Tourism Businesses in Regional, Remote or Rural areas

Because BC is such a vast province, many tourism businesses are located far from the more heavily-populated urban areas. As a result, these regional, remote or rural areas have a limited number of skilled and qualified workers living in their communities. This problem is intensified by a lack of available or affordable housing and public transportation options, and difficulty in accessing reasonably priced, effective training. These areas generally have older populations, making it more difficult to recruit for entry-level positions.

Seasonality

The current industry trends and the nature of tourism products in BC make it difficult for some employers to offer year-round, full-time employment, and also to entice seasonal workers to return year after year. The pressure is greatest in rural or remote areas, and on weather-dependent sectors such as snow sports, where the length of the tourism season – and staffing levels – is determined by climate conditions and more recently by climate change.

Small Businesses

More than 75% of tourism and hospitality operators in BC are small businesses with less than 20 employees. This makes it very difficult for these owners and managers to effectively implement and maintain human resource and training initiatives. They often do not have the structure, resources, or tools for the human resources development, training and practices that promote long-term employee development and engagement

Awareness and Perception of Jobs and Careers in Tourism

Typically students, parents, teachers, career counsellors, older workers and others see the tourism industry as a great place to get experience or a summer job, but are not aware or supportive of the long-term potential for a rewarding career. Changes in perception are needed to see tourism as a place to stay, not just a place to start.

Labour and Skills Shortages

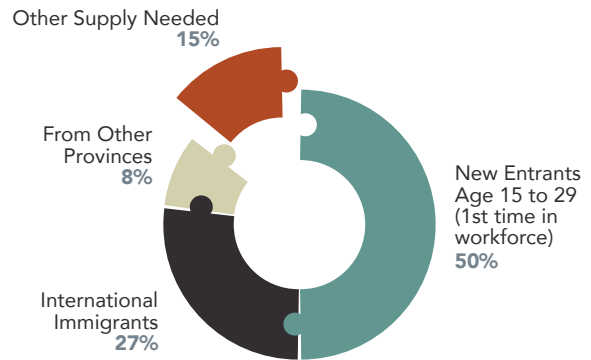
Labour market projections from both private and public research all point to one thing – the demand for skilled workers in BC will be greater than the supply in the next decade. This may be regional, sector-specific, occupational or more widespread, but it will cut across all industry sectors in the province. In addition to normal attrition, research indicates that there will be a significant number of job openings in tourism due to growth of the sector.

Labour Policy

The BC Labour Market Outlook projects that 50% of the labour supply will be new workers entering the workforce for the first time. International and interprovincial migration will add a further 35% of labour supply, leaving a 15% shortfall where other supply of workers needs to be found. Municipal, provincial and federal legislation and policy in many cases creates barriers, instead of assistance,

to employers in accessing the workers they need. Tourism employers need to ensure their input is provided on all employment-related legislation and policy on topics such as immigration, EI, CPP, social assistance, and funded employment and training programs.

LABOUR SUPPLY 2018-2028



Competition for Workers

The challenge of changing workforce demographics is being faced by almost every industry sector in BC, which means keen competition for skilled and qualified workers from a shrinking talent pool. This is compounded by the lure of competitive wages and lower living costs from other prosperous regions and provinces. Tourism employees are particularly attractive recruits because of their high level of customer service skills.

Industry Culture

Generally speaking, tourism and hospitality has not traditionally considered human resources and training to be a key business imperative. If this is not addressed, the human resource challenges in the next decade will certainly have a negative impact on the bottom line of individual businesses and the provincial economy.

Management Development

Most leaders in today's tourism and hospitality industry worked their way up the ranks. They started in front-line positions and have been promoted to increasingly senior positions, often without any formal training or experience in supervision and management. Related to this is a lack of awareness of and access to relevant training for all managers and supervisors, especially for those new to the role. Because there needs to be a large scale paradigm shift in management thinking, relying on passing on human resource practices from one generation to the next is simply not good enough anymore.

Aligning Education and Industry

BC has a strong tourism education system, with graduates in demand within tourism and other industries. Students in technical and trades training programs, such as culinary, have high employment rates within their chosen occupations. However, there are some areas that require better alignment of content and/or delivery models with the needs of industry. Specifically, small and rural operators are looking for more accessible programming (e.g., location, cost, time). A strong tourism training system also depends on a higher, more consistent participation by employers in activities such as industry advisory committees and work experience/co-op programs. In addition, recent provincial curriculum changes in the K-12 system place an emphasis on career education that starts at the kindergarten level. The industry needs to ensure that content and teaching resources about jobs and careers in tourism are included in the curriculum development.

Infrastructure: Housing and Transportation

Lack of available and/or affordable housing has come up frequently as a serious challenge, and for some has reached a crisis state, for tourism employers throughout the province as they attempt to attract employees to their community. Most recently this has emerged as a major theme in the research done by the Destination Development strategy. Addressing the challenge is complex and involves various policy tools and levels of government. The sharing economy impacts the situation by removing some long-term accommodation from the rental pool. Bylaw and zoning changes as well as incentives or charges for the private sector could affect rental development. Various housing studies need to be shared and utilized to develop solutions that apply to different areas of BC. In addition, as employees move to more affordable areas in their region, transportation (public and private) challenges arise that present more roadblocks for employers to ensure their employees can get to and from work, especially for shifts that start early in the morning or finish late at night.

Duplication of Efforts by Industry Groups, DMOs, Government, Educators, Economic Development

As labour shortages and other HR challenges become more acute, there is increasing pressure by stakeholders



Photo credit: Eagle Wing Whale Watching

Students in technical and trades training programs, such as culinary, have high employment rates within their chosen occupations.



Photo credit: Destination BC Andrew Strain

of various organizations to take action. Consequently there is a myriad of labour market studies, recruitment pilots, career awareness activities, research, advocacy and other activities being undertaken by industry sector groups, destination marketing organizations (DMOs), government (provincial and federal), economic development regions, trust basins, national sector councils and the like. Consideration should be given to aligning, coordinating or even just communicating the efforts of private and public stakeholders to achieve the optimal return on the resources invested in HR and workforce development for tourism.

VISION

What will BC's tourism labour market look like in the next five years?

A thriving and skilled workforce that delivers exceptional experiences to our guests.

How will we achieve the vision for BC's tourism labour market?

Over the next five years, the tourism and hospitality industry will focus on four interdependent and overarching goals:

- BC's tourism industry attracts and retains a sufficient number of appropriately skilled employees that support the growth of the industry
- BC's tourism industry has access to the right training at the right time
- BC's tourism industry makes evidence-based workforce development decisions through relevant, current, and reliable research
- BC's tourism industry stakeholder efforts and resources are well-coordinated to achieve optimal return on tourism workforce investments

Our results will be measured using the THRS Evaluation Framework.



Photo credit: Jessica Whelan



Photo credit: Tourism Vancouver Suzanne Rushton



Photo credit: Destination BC Ryan Creary

A MADE-IN-BC TOURISM HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY

The BC Tourism HR Strategy has been developed and updated to support and align with the industry’s vision for growth and sustainability. British Columbia successfully markets itself as a “Super, Natural” destination, and has the product to prove it. With our goal of world class visitor experiences, the HR strategy focuses on the importance of the “human element” in successfully delivering the visitor experience. The actions include addressing the industry’s unique labour market pressures and challenges; addressing gaps and capitalizing on opportunities in training and education programs; providing a range of HR and training tools across the province; and raising awareness and changing perceptions about jobs and careers in tourism.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ACTIVITIES

Organization and Coordination

Strategy: Improve and expand leadership and collaboration among industry, government and other stakeholders on the execution of the THRS

- Identify and confirm a THRS coordinating body and define roles and responsibilities of other key stakeholders
- Collaborate with Indigenous Tourism BC to align, integrate and support the Indigenous Tourism BC Labour Market Strategy
- Engage tourism associations, regions, private and public secondary and post-secondary education institutions, training providers, government agencies, unions and others to participate in and/or lead aspects of the THRS
- Coordinate the development of a common industry position on key issues related to the recruitment and retention of staff, including affordable housing, availability of relevant training, immigration pathways for students and temporary foreign workers, workforce participation by under-represented groups, etc.

Strategy: Align the THRS with provincial, regional and local tourism strategies and plans

- Ensure the tourism sector is represented at and participates in all labour market initiatives
- Develop, implement and communicate regional HR plans as part of broader regional tourism plans
- Strengthen alignment between labour market development and destination development, management and marketing at the provincial, regional and community levels

Policy, Research and Evaluation

Strategy: Provide input to all levels of government to help formulate/revise employment or labour market-related legislation, regulation and policy

- Monitor proposed changes in legislation or policy such as immigration, employment standards, labour code and workers compensation; gather industry feedback and provide input where relevant
- Communicate changes in employment-related legislation or policy to industry; assist employers in interpreting these changes

Strategy: Manage, monitor and communicate the results of the THRS Evaluation Framework on an ongoing basis

- Update the THRS Evaluation Framework
- Conduct research and release results on an annual basis

Strategy: Support the gathering and maintenance of tourism labour market information

- Work with the Labour Market Outlook branch of the BC Government on obtaining, analyzing and communicating labour market information
- Support sector and national compensation studies and research
- Facilitate collaboration amongst all stakeholders engaged in data tracking to ensure alignment of efforts and strategies
- Use labour market data and indicators to inform and/or evaluate tourism HR strategies and initiatives
- Manage, monitor and communicate the results of the THRS Evaluation Framework on an ongoing basis

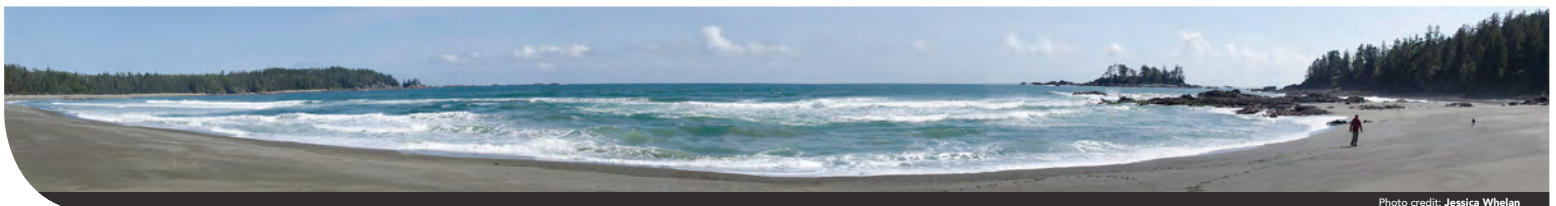


Photo credit: Jessica Whelan

Strategy: Help employers with labour and skill shortages

- Monitor and communicate gaps between labour supply and demand and the impact on the industry
- Provide tools, resources and information to assist employers in filling their staffing needs
- Connect employers with job seekers and students – locally, provincially and nationally – including outreach to equity-seeking groups such as people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, new immigrants, and others

Strategy: Increase awareness and change perceptions about tourism jobs and careers

- Engage key stakeholders in initiatives to improve the image of tourism jobs and careers
- Provide career awareness tools and resources that are customized for targeted talent pools such as youth, students (including international students), baby boomers, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, and new immigrants
- Provide access to job and career information for influencers such as parents, teachers, employment agencies, career counsellors and the general public
- Highlight the importance of tourism jobs in developing essential, transferrable workplace skills such as communication, teamwork, and customer service.
- Ensure tourism and hospitality jobs are featured, and teacher resources provided in all career education curriculum in the K-12 and post-secondary systems

Strategy: Identify and help address the unique labour market challenges faced by small businesses, seasonal and/or rural tourism operators.

- Coordinate best practices roundtables or roadshows in smaller communities throughout the province
- Provide a one-stop shop online portal for HR information, resources and tools
- Provide HR information via technology such as webinars or livestreaming
- Establish a call centre help desk for employers
- Foster partnerships between summer and winter employers for exchange of seasonal workers

Strategy: Promote the use of progressive human resource practices by tourism employers

- Identify and communicate best practices and ROI related to human resource management for a range of business types, sizes and locations throughout BC
- Identify and/or provide tools, resources, or workshops that will help employers increase employee engagement and reduce unwanted turnover
- Recognize and showcase employers who utilize effective human resource practices
- Inspire employers about the opportunities and obligations related to being the first and largest employer of youth
- Engage and support the industry in retaining employees by creating and continually improving healthy and safe workplaces
- Support employers in creating inclusive and accessible workplaces

Strategy: Encourage employer involvement and investment in training

- Facilitate communication and engagement between tourism employers and training providers
- Provide employers and employees with information about available training options, funding, resources, programs and best practices
- Support employers in accessing relevant supervisory and management skills training for their staff

Strategy: Align training and education programs with industry needs

- Identify and communicate current and anticipated employer training needs to training providers, funders and other stakeholders
- Champion the creation of flexible, short-term, modular training to meet industry needs, especially for remote, rural and/or seasonal employers
- Ensure that the appropriate certifications and associated programs are available to support the needs and standards of the tourism industry
- Maintain industry engagement in the provincial industry training and apprenticeship system



Photo credit: Jessica Whelan

SOURCES

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