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Follow-up on the Education Summit

As *Hot off the Press* reported previously (HOTP, January 22, 2007), seven representatives from leading schools and technical institutes in six nations met in New York City in August 2006 to discuss *The Value of Education*. Organized by Heidelberg and chaired by Brian Ellis, Marketing Manager at Heidelberg Canada, in this second instalment, discussions continue on the challenges and opportunities facing education and training in the printing industry.

Panellists included Frank Cost, Rochester Institute of Technology – College of Imaging Arts and Sciences (USA); André Dion, Quebec Institute of Graphic Communications (Canada); Dr. Abhay Sharma, Ryerson University – School of Graphic Communications Management (Canada); Les Claridge, School of Printing and Publishing, London College of Communication (UK); Manoel Manteiga de Oliveira, Escola Senai Theobaldo de Nigris (Brazil); Ir. Halim Azhar Mohd Yatim, Industrial Technical Institute N.T.S. Arumugam Pillai (Malaysia); Erich Steiner, Hochschule der Medien (Germany).

Brian Ellis introduced the discussion by asking “What is the real value of education?” Panellists responded by exploring four themes in a wide-ranging discussion:

responsiveness of training

value of education and training

fostering a learning and training culture

recruiting and retaining young people

Below are some of the comments from panellists on these four themes. Click [here](#) for the full article. Write to Brian Ellis at brian.ellis@heidelberg.com to take part in this discussion.

Responsiveness of training

Frank Cost: “[...] We have yet to exploit the possibilities offered by the Internet in order to convey knowledge. Our training still clings persistently to the notion that trainees should come to us in the classroom.”

André Dion: “We have to learn to translate industry changes into syllabuses and learning materials more quickly.”

Dr. Abhay Sharma: “We [...] need to think more carefully about what we teach and how we teach it.”

Erich Steiner: “[...] we should further intensify and broaden our continuous cooperation with the industry to combine academic knowledge and the needs of industry for the benefit of both sides.”

Value of education and training

Manoel Manteigas de Oliveira: “Companies appreciate well-trained employees since they prove extremely valuable. [...] good employees, i.e. qualified employees, ensure that customers are satisfied. They are the basis for company success in every industry.”

Ir. Halim Azhar Mohd Yatim: “It’s important that students receive basic knowledge in order to be able to comprehend exactly what a machine is capable of. Simply pressing buttons can only function to a certain extent [...] it is equally important that employees are not only able to control the machine, but also possess knowledge relating to it.”

Fostering a learning and training culture

Frank Cost: “We will be forced to part company with many “learning habits” in the future. [...] I [...] find the conservative attitude to training in the industry rather frustrating.”

André Dion: “[...] on the one hand, employees have to learn to carry on educating themselves. However, on the other hand, companies have to send their employees to training courses and demand that they participate in further training programs. [...] Knowledge and education are the keys to lasting corporate success.”

Recruiting and retaining young people

Dr. Abhay Sharma: “The industry currently requires high numbers of well-trained young people, but unfortunately, there are not enough students interested in joining up [...] Opportunities for professional development in the print media industry are often significantly better than in other sector, but young people don’t bear this in mind when thinking about possible professions.”

Erich Steiner: “The graphic arts industry in Germany is also troubled by a lack of young personnel for management positions [...] Forty percent of the managing directors in this sector are 55 years plus and 12 percent are 60 years plus. It’s thus going to be difficult to replace these managers in the future [...] Changes in technology, business and society mean that our universities must keep pace with society’s metamorphosis into an information-based society.”

Manoel Manteigas de Oliveira: “I am convinced that the printing industry has a fundamental role to play in the development of youth and adult education, both now and the future, despite the increase in electronic media.”

Training and Learning Spending Stagnant in Canada

On May 1, 2007, the Conference Board of Canada released its report entitled *Learning and Development Outlook 2007: Are We Learning Enough?* The document summarizes the results of its ninth biennial survey of Canadian organizations on their approaches to training, learning and development.

While Canadian organizations spend an average of \$852 per employee on training, learning and development, the level of investment has not changed significantly over the past decade. Moreover, when the amount is adjusted for inflation, expenditures are in fact 17 percent lower than they were a decade ago.

Other findings, based on the 258 responses received, include the following.

Respondents spent 1.8 percent of their payroll on training, learning and development.

Employers provided 25 hours of training, learning and development annually per employee, down 10 percent from two years ago.

Fourteen percent of respondents do not track the training, learning and development they provide.

Knowledge-based organizations in the not-for-profit sector, professional services and financial services spent the most on training, learning and development, while industries such as wholesale/retail, education and health and construction spent the least.

Management personnel received the lion's share of training, learning and development budget – 44 percent.

On-the-job learning is not well tracked or monitored and may be occurring more frequently than reported. Respondents said that 42 percent of all learning occurs informally.

As the report summary states, "In an increasingly knowledge-based, competitive and globalized economy, a skilled workforce drives organizational success. Failure to invest in, evaluate and maximize TLD will limit organizations' capacity to attract, retain and develop the talent needed to survive and thrive."

The full 76-page report can be purchased from the Conference Board of Canada, at a cost of \$975. Go to www.conferenceboard.ca for further details.