MAKING THE CONNECTION:
EFFECTIVE WAYS TO LINK TRAINING NEEDS TO ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS
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The opinions prepared by: Allan Bailey and Lynette Gillis, Ph.D., CTDP, Centre for Learning Impact, in partnership with the Canadian Society for Training and Development.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

This knowledge gathering project was initiated to explore the perception that small and medium-sized employers (SMEs) typically lack the necessary skills, resources, and organizational needs assessment (ONA) tools to identify their critical training needs. The project sought to identify existing organizational needs assessment tools and to establish the current state of their adoption and usage by SMEs. The project then examined how such tools can be better used to ensure formal and informal training solutions address the right employee skills and improve job performance, productivity, and business results.

The project began with a literature review to identify promising organizational needs assessment practices and tools, followed by a broad scan of Canadian organizations and national training-related networks to identify additional ONA tools in current use. Using focus groups and interviews, the project also sought to explore reasons for current low adoption rates of existing tools, to offer suggestions to encourage greater levels of uptake, and to help SMEs maximize the potential of ONA tools to enhance business outcomes through training.

Thirty-four ONA tools were identified. They included tools designed to assess training needs for business improvement (Business Impact ONA) as well as tools intended specifically to assess training needs for Essential Skills. All tools were reviewed and eleven were identified as “Promising Organizational Training Needs Assessment Approaches”—the most appropriate tools with the greatest potential to help SMEs.

Findings

SMEs have limited awareness of skills and training needs: Focus group feedback suggests SMEs generally do not have a well-informed understanding of their training needs and their workforce’s skills profiles. In general, SMEs recognize the need for Essential Skills training, new technology training and training in mandated areas such as compliance and safety. However, they have a more limited awareness of how training might be linked to productivity challenges and business outcomes.

- **Low awareness or use of ONA in SMEs:** The project found most SMEs are unaware of currently available ONA tools and models. Additionally, it found that formal needs assessments are rarely conducted in SMEs, even though training professionals advise their use. The few SMEs that actually conduct organizational needs assessments mostly do so in an ad hoc, informal manner that may lack the rigour to identify priority issues or improve learning, job performance, or business outcomes.

- **Few ONA tools available for Business Impact:** The scan identified several successful Essential Skills ONA models but very few Business Impact ONA tools to help SMEs choose training solutions to improve productivity and business results. Again, few SMEs either use or are aware of specific Business Impact ONA approaches that can help them better link their learning efforts to productive outcomes.

- **Little evaluation of ONA effectiveness:** The literature review found very little research attention has been directed at evaluating ONA models and comparing their relative merits, validating their effectiveness, or identifying best uses.

- **Barriers to ONA adoption in SMEs:** Focus groups identified key barriers to ONA adoption including the fact that existing Business Impact ONA approaches are too time consuming, cost too much to do, and are, consequently, impractical for SMEs. Another barrier is the complexity of existing ONA tools. Most SMEs would require outside expertise to guide the selection, implementation and interpretation of results of currently available Business Impact ONA approaches.
Next Steps for Knowledge Exchange

To encourage wider adoption of ONA tools and practices (including the 11 “promising” ONA tools identified in this study), focus groups offered the following suggestions:

- **Build a best-practices tool:** Given the relative complexity of existing Business Impact ONA tools, several key informants suggested developing an easy-to-use, best-practices ONA tool tailored to the needs of Canada’s SME community. Such a tool would adopt and leverage the most useful features of the existing ‘promising’ ONA models documented by the knowledge gathering project.

- **Awareness activities:** Several key informants suggested a high-level awareness program be developed and presented at conferences and events to communicate to senior-level SME stakeholders the significant potential business benefits of using ONAs. The development of workshops and materials to give HR and training professionals the skills and knowledge needed to select and use ONA tools to identify their critical training requirements was also proposed.

- **Industry networks and partnering:** Key informants suggested the initiation of peer-to-peer networking or partnership arrangements to facilitate mentoring activities and sharing of expertise and best practices. Such arrangements might leverage the expertise and reach of national organizations such as the Centre for Workplace Skills, sector councils, Chambers of Commerce, Canadian Society for Training and Development, and the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters.

- **Government facilitation:** Consideration should also be given to using facilitated support models patterned after the Manitoba and Nova Scotia provincial governments’ initiatives that offer a blend of financial support and/or professional expertise and facilitation to help SMEs implement organizational needs assessments in their workplaces.
OVERVIEW

This report describes the results of the final phase of a knowledge gathering project undertaken by the Centre for Workplace Skills to identify and document Canadian and international practices in organizational training needs assessment for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

SMEs typically lack the resources to develop and implement their own training methodologies or conduct research on their own to discover effective organizational needs assessment practices. To this end, the aim of this project has been to create an inventory of effective practices, together with their objectives, methods and results, to help small to medium-sized businesses enhance their own needs assessment approaches.

More broadly, the project has sought to communicate why organizational needs assessment is important; to explore and explain the linkages between needs assessment, training and successful execution of business strategy; and to identify useful tools appropriate to the specific needs of SMEs.

It is also hoped the knowledge gathered in this project will be useful to those who influence training decisions, both internally to the organization (supervisors, managers, and human resources professionals) and externally (training providers, consultants, and decision-makers at various levels of government).

In this Report

Part One: Introduction to Organizational Needs Assessment

In the first phase of this project, information was gathered: to determine the scope of practices to be included under the term needs assessment; to determine the level of usage in SMEs; and to identify exemplary practices emerging from training and development literature. Part One of this report summarizes key findings of this literature review.

Part Two: Useful Tools, Models, and Practices

In the second phase of the project, 34 organizational needs assessment tools, resources, models or practices were identified and evaluated for relevance and applicability to SMEs or scalable to SMEs. (See Appendix A for List of Promising Organizational Needs Assessment Practices.)

Of those practices reviewed, 11 were selected as potentially useful tools or practices for SMEs and documented with case reports. Full summaries of each practice appear in the Centre for Workplace Skills Best Practices Database.

Part Three: Core Issues for Promoting Organizational Needs Assessment

In the final phase of the project, focus groups and key informant interviews were conducted to gather knowledge relating to seven core questions concerning the use of organizational needs assessment. Part Three summarizes the results— synthesizing key observations and providing highlights of useful practices from case reports.

Part Four: Next Steps for Knowledge Exchange

The report concludes with suggestions for sharing promising practices to maximize their uptake in the SME community.
What is it?

The value of “needs assessment” is widely acknowledged, though the literature reveals a multiplicity of definitions and a broad range of models or practices to which the term applies.

Needs assessment has been widely accepted as the first step in any organizational or human resource development intervention; its value for justifying training or for ensuring accountability is rarely debated. Many perceive it as the most critical phase of the training process because, if it is performed successfully, it will positively impact the other phases of the training process (Elbadri, 2001, in Iqbal and Khan, 2010)—and more generally organizational effectiveness (van Erde, Tang and Talbot, 2008).

Yet in spite of the importance universally attributed to needs assessment, there is a paucity of widely-agreed upon definitions, terminology, or even taxonomies of practice. As Leigh, Watkins, Platt, and Kaufman observed in their comprehensive review of models, “just about any approach to finding direction gets called needs assessment” (2000, p.87).

The literature often distinguishes needs assessment from performance analysis (though there is frequently overlap between these terms and much discussion about their meaning). Both terms focus on investigation, problem-solving and decision-making to connect performance interventions to business outcomes and organizational strategies.

Performance analysis, however, usually precedes needs assessment. In performance analysis a business problem or opportunity is identified and the gap between current and desired business results is investigated. Information from various sources is gathered to understand the root cause of the problem or to determine drivers or barriers to successful performance. In performance analysis, both training and non-training solutions are considered. Non-training solutions might include, for example, a change in policy, compensation, technology implementation, or job or process redesign.

Needs assessment—or training needs assessment—typically begins when training is determined to be the solution or part of the solution to closing a business performance gap. The training solution adopted could involve either a formal or an informal learning solution. Either way, needs assessment is an important first step, investigating what skills and knowledge employees need to acquire and what workplace behaviours need to be established to achieve the desired business results. Training needs assessment also examines—in considerable detail—what will be taught, to whom, how, when, and where.
The term “organizational needs assessment” as broadly defined in the literature (Moseley and Dessinger (2010) can include:

- **Knowledge and Skills Assessment**—used to prescribe appropriate interventions to close knowledge and skills gaps.
- **Job and Task Analysis**—used to obtain detailed knowledge about the scope, responsibilities, and tasks for a particular job, role or job function.
- **Competency Assessment**—used to identify the knowledge, skills, attitudes for jobs or job functions that enable employees to perform effectively to the standards expected (i.e., the competencies).
- **Strategic Needs Assessment**— used when performance improvement needs are linked to an organization’s business strategy or to ensure that human resource interventions add value to the organization.

In order to maintain a focus on those training and human resource solutions that are more clearly linked to improving business outcomes, this project uses the term “Organizational Needs Assessment” synonymously with Moseley and Dessinger’s fourth approach, Strategic Needs Assessment—in other words, needs analysis undertaken with the express goal of helping organizations improve strategic or business outcomes.

**How much needs assessment is being done?**

The general consensus of authors and researchers in this field is that formal needs assessment does not take place in many organizations, even though most training professionals advise its use. In its place, a more informal process is used that may or may not address the priority needs or consider other solutions besides training.

According to Rossett and Czech (1995), most organizations recognize the value of needs assessment for their training offerings, but do not devote the time and resources they believe they should to the process. Pursuing felt needs, or wish lists, for training often takes precedence over engaging in formal assessment practices. According to Rossett, needs assessment “attracts more heat than light” (Rossett, 1999).

Bowers et al. (1998) concur, maintaining that training interventions are usually designed on the basis of common sense instead of needs assessment. Similarly, others have observed senior and/or line management at many organizations either avoid needs analysis, practice it half-heartedly, or even show resistance to training (Cheng and Dawson, 1998, in Iqbal and Khan, 2010).

Erffmeyer, Russ and Hair (1991) point out, unlike actual delivery of training programs, needs assessment takes place behind the scenes, is not very visible, and attracts little managerial attention—hence, use of informal judgement techniques are more common.

**Common Barriers to Needs Assessment**

- Leaders often prefer a quick fix.
- *Time is in short supply.*
- Analysis is even less interesting to leaders in organizations than training is.
- There is little history in the organization of analyses that have made noticeable dents in what matters.
- Your customers think they know what they need.
- The measurements don’t match.
- People don’t know what analysis is.
- Analysis isn’t easy to do.
- Analysis takes time and time is in short supply.

(Rossett, 1999)
Others attribute the lack of needs assessment to deeper organizational issues. Bates, Holton and Naquin (2000) note because of budget restrictions, low staffing levels, and other operational barriers, many top and mid-level managers become accustomed to operating in day-to-day survival mode without conscious thought of future goals and objectives.

In smaller organizations in particular, training decisions tend to be made more ad hoc and be reaction driven (Johnston and Loader, 2003, in van Erde, Tang and Talbot, 2008).

An additional problem for smaller organizations is that traditional needs assessment models tend to be complex and inflexible. They require users to implement all parts of the model at once—often an impractical or impossible task. To facilitate their implementation, Bates, Holton and Naquin (2000) argue that model developers need to provide practitioners with practical strategies for phasing in the models—identifying which components to implement first or which components are most critical.

Why is it so important?

**SME Snapshot: Training is vital to success, growth, employment, and the economy**

There are more than 1 million registered businesses in Canada with between one and 500 employees. Small to medium-sized organizations contribute to almost 43 per cent of Canada’s gross domestic product (GDP) and accounted for more than 60 per cent of new jobs in Canada between 2008 and 2009. (Centre for Workplace Skills 2011)

Among the key challenges for small to medium-sized businesses is managing growth and maintaining a skilled and qualified workforce to stay competitive in a business environment marked by increasing global competitiveness and technological sophistication. As a result of skills shortages, for example, 59 per cent of small businesses have had to pass up new business opportunities (Canadian Federation of Independent Business 2008).

As a result of higher costs of training and other perceived barriers, SMEs are almost half as likely to offer training compared to larger companies. It is clearly important, therefore, to encourage SMEs to invest more in training in order to enhance their competitiveness and maintain growth. (Bailey 2007)

Organizational needs assessment tools can play a critical role in ensuring whatever funds firms do invest in training deliver maximum results. A recent Canadian study, Investing in People®, revealed that one of the most difficult exercises for management, HR, and training professionals was to identify their organization’s critical business measures and align training with the firm’s bottom-line goals. (Bailey & Gillis 2010) The study concluded that this “inability to link training solutions to business outcomes was the leading barrier to success (of training programs).”

Employing an effective needs assessment approach can give stakeholders the information and insight they need to minimize the risk of wasted training investments and the failure to achieve expected business outcomes. (Rossett 2009) (Broad & Newstrom 1992). When properly conducted, needs assessments offer a systematic process to help organizations identify learning and performance gaps and attune their training efforts to the needs of the business. According to Dr. David Vance, former Chief Financial Officer and Chief Learning Officer of Caterpillar Inc., by more carefully managing learning investments, organizations can realize “improvement in effectiveness and efficiency that is huge and immediate” (Vance 2010).

This project has been initiated to examine the current status of organizational needs assessment. It also explores how organizational needs assessments can help small and medium-sized organizations optimize the value of their training expenditures and ensure that these investments contribute to productivity, business strategy, and sustainable growth.
PART TWO:
USEFUL TOOLS, MODELS, AND PRACTICES

The central goal of this project is to identify promising organizational training needs assessment tools, resources, models and practices “that have a clear link to the achievement of business objectives (e.g. improving productivity, quality, or product/ process/ service innovation or reducing costs).” It might be argued, of course, that all types of needs assessment approaches are intended in some way or another to improve business results. This project, however, placed a special focus on identifying those needs assessment practices that explicitly seek to address training or job performance gaps having a direct impact on business results or organizational (strategic) outcomes.

In order to expand the search beyond the existing literature, the project sought to identify organizational training needs assessment tools, practices, or approaches that may currently exist within organizations but have not yet have come to the attention of the wider business or training communities. A request for needs assessment tools or practices was communicated to a targeted group of organizations and training and industry networks across Canada. Organizations contacted included the membership of the Centre for Workplace Skills, the Canadian Society for Training and Development, the Evaluation Community of Practice for the Canadian federal government, the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, the Alliance of Sector Councils, etc. The population canvassed included large organizations as well as small to medium-sized firms.

The response to the request, however, did not elicit a large number of additional needs assessment models. The scarcity of returns corroborates some general themes identified in the literature research and the consensus of opinion gleaned from numerous interviews conducted in the course of research. The results further suggest that in reality, robust, formal needs assessments are rarely carried out for a variety of reasons cited in Part Three of this report (lack of knowledge, resources, time, etc.). Rather, needs assessments—if they are conducted at all—are more likely to be carried out in an ad hoc, informal manner and few organizations report having a standardized process. It is important to emphasize that this is a general finding and is the case in even the larger and more sophisticated organizations, not just in the SME community.

Appendix A of this document provides a listing of models, tools, and practices identified both through the literature review, the canvassing effort, and other key informant interviews. While case studies or applications of the models or practices are common in the literature, there is little information available to help evaluate effectiveness, efficiency or the relative value of one model over another. No specific model or tool is identified in the literature as being the most effective or the most widely used. Additionally, it should be noted that most of the case studies described in the literature were conducted in large organizations.

While many needs assessment models and tools have been suggested and some implemented, little research attention has been given to comparing their relative merits, validating their effectiveness, or identifying best uses.

As Bates, Holton, and Naquin comment in their review of needs assessment research: “the literature on training needs assessment is not a particularly deep or scholarly literature, though many case studies are documented” (p. 254).

The review, however, did suggest that most of the existing organizational needs assessment methodologies adhere to a similar process—providing users with guidance in differentiating ‘needs’ from ‘wants’ (nice-to-have), selecting information sources, collecting information, analyzing and synthesizing data, identifying priority needs, and reporting results. Three basic steps can be identified in most models: 1) gather data to identify needs; 2) determine which needs can be met by training and development; 3) propose solutions (Brown, 2002).
The needs assessment models listed in Appendix A were carefully reviewed to identify those that have greatest potential to help the core audience for this project—the micro-sized and small employers (between one and 99 employees) who are “unlikely to have specialized in-house resources to assist with the needs assessment.” The goal of the review was to identify and document the organizational training needs assessments approaches that show the most promise as a tool to help SMEs achieve business objectives. Bearing in mind the limited resources and access to evaluation/training expertise of most SMEs, it was considered important to select and highlight only those models that are simple enough and prescriptive enough to help non-specialists—those without specific training and development expertise.

Simplicity: Many needs assessment models reviewed for this project, although excellent and authoritative, were considered to be too academic, theoretical, or unwieldy to be of practical value in the time-constrained, resource-limited environment of the SME work setting. This selection process, therefore, sought to identify credible models most appropriate and accessible to non-specialists and preferably written in clear, layman’s language. With this consideration in mind, a number of otherwise competent and valid needs assessment textbooks, articles, and models were excluded from the list of promising needs assessment exemplars.

While simplicity is critical, the selection process also maintained a lower boundary that excluded models or approaches that provided too little descriptive detail to help the non-specialist carry out a needs assessment without additional assistance.

Prescriptive: An important criterion, therefore, was to include in the definition of promising those models that were judged to be prescriptive—i.e., to contain sufficient accompanying narrative to help novice users to understand the process and be able to effectively plan the assessment, implement it, or analyze and interpret its results.

The following models and tools met these criteria for being promising organizational needs assessment approaches.

### Promising Organizational Training Needs Assessment Approaches

| **ABC Life Literacy Canada: Collaborative Needs Assessment** | Paper-based Tool: A systematic way of identifying all workplace needs. It shows how basic skills and other needs fit into the big picture and provides a step-by-step description of the needs assessment planning and implementation process. | ABC Life Literacy Canada (1994)  
| **OLES: Essential Skills Organizational Needs Assessment** | Paper-based Tool: Provides a framework for conducting a basic essential skills assessment. Helps determine if skills gaps are impacting the organization’s performance and which skills may need upgrading. | Office of Essential Literacy & Skills, HRSDC  
[www.hrsdc.gc.ca/essentialskills](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/essentialskills) |
| **THRC: Skills Planning and Knowledge Networks ONA Tool** | Paper-based Tool: Guide to help organizations align learning and performance initiatives to the business goals or needs of the organization, department, or business unit. | Textiles Human Resources Council  
[www.thrc-crhit.org](http://www.thrc-crhit.org) |
| **CARSability** | CARSability is an online, cost-effective assessment tool designed to identify training gaps in automotive related occupations. Locates appropriate training and can provide management with detailed results. | Canadian Automotive Repair and Service Council (CARS)  
www.carsability.ca |
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<td><strong>An Industry Specific Needs/Skills Assessment Model</strong></td>
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| **CME: Business Results Through Essential Skills and Literacy** | Paper-based Tool: Guidebook provides practical information for those considering the examination of, and possible investment in, the skill sets of their workforce. | Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters  
www.cme-mec.ca/pdf/Business_Results_Through_Essential_Skills_and_Literacy.pdf |
| **CIPD: Identifying Learning Needs in Organizations** | Book Chapter: Standard approaches for identifying and prioritizing the critical learning needs at five levels: legislative needs, organizational needs, job performance, job needs, individual needs. | Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2006)  
www.cipd.co.uk |
| **An ONA Partnership Model: Nova Scotia and a Manufacturing Company** | A partnership in workplace education program supported by the government of Nova Scotia includes a range of literacy upgrading programs for Nova Scotia employees identified by an organizational needs assessment. | Nova Scotia Department of Education  
www.gov.ns.ca |
| **Advisor Enterprise Training Planning System** | Electronic Tool: A web tool for effective training strategies. Includes alignment to organizational goals: who, what, when, and why to train. | Electronic Tool  
BNH Expert Software  
www.bnhexpertsoft.com |
| **CFI: Business Impact Mapping** | Workshop-Guidelines: A systematic decision-making process to help organizations align their learning and HR investments with critical business outcomes and strategic goals. | Gillis, L. & Bailey, A.  
Centre for Learning Impact  
www.cfl.ca |
| **Learning Effectiveness Measurement (LEM)** | White Paper: A methodology that provides a framework for measuring the value of training, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and guiding sound investment decisions. | Spitzer, D (2007) Amacom  
www.ametrico.com |
This project originated against background awareness that “an organizational training needs assessment linked to the business strategy is a vital prerequisite for any effective training program.” Recognizing the importance of this fact, sector councils and federal and provincial governments in the past have developed tools and resources to encourage SMEs to conduct training needs assessment. In spite of these efforts, however, anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that the uptake of such tools and the use of systematic training needs assessment among SMEs are low.

The project sought to better understand the reasons why SMEs rarely employed needs assessment tools or strategies. Is it lack of awareness? Is it limited appreciation of the importance of using needs assessments? Or do SMEs simply lack capacity and/or resources?

The Centre for Workplace Skills developed seven core questions as a framework for a series of interviews and focus group sessions to fully explore these issues with SMEs as well as with professionals in the wider communities of trainers, evaluation specialists, and human resource development practitioners.

Core Questions

1. How well do micro-sized and small employers actually understand the organizational training needs and skills profile of their workforce?

2. What tools, resources, models and practices are available to assess their training needs?

3. Why are the uptake of tools and use of systematic training needs assessment low among SMEs?

4. What barriers or obstacles (real or perceived) are there to using a systematic training needs assessment or the tools, resources, models, and practices?

5. What are the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders, including the role of government, in supporting the use of organizational training needs assessments?

6. What key messages need to be developed to convince SMEs of the value and importance of organizational training needs assessment?

7. What actions, supports or resources are required to: (i) improve the uptake among SMEs and (ii) embed organizational training needs assessment as an essential and critical business process?
How well do micro-sized and small employers actually understand the organizational training needs and skills profile of their workforce?

There was a general consensus among participants that small employers do not have a well-informed understanding of their training needs and their workforce’s skills profiles. The focus of training in SMEs is often in areas where training is a necessity—mandated areas such as compliance training and health and safety training. The need for other types of training is often overshadowed by a perception that the time and resources required are too intensive for SMEs to undertake. Also, there is often limited recognition of how training may be linked to everyday productivity challenges.

Several participants noted small firms often have no training capacity to monitor such requirements. Even organizations with human resources personnel may still have a poor understanding of their workforce skills profiles and training needs. Often competition for available budgets and the pressures of day-to-day operations leave little extra time or resources for such reflective, analytical activities.

Others suggested the degree of awareness may also depend upon the industry rather than the size of the firm. For example, in industries governed by extensive certification requirements or safety regulations, there is often a well established culture of training and ongoing awareness of skills requirements.

Moreover, in certain industries, such as in manufacturing, there is recognition that a certain level of Essential Skills is required by all shop floor employees (e.g., reading and interpreting documents).

Several participants noted that changing workplace technology is a key driver for training, even in organizations in which training might formerly have played only a minor role. Continuing trends of technology change combined with continuing patterns of global competitiveness appear certain to increase pressures for more SME training and organizational needs assessment capabilities in the future.

“*It is a very confusing landscape of what is available.*”

“There are tools available on the Internet. But most firms have no knowledge how to access these tools or how to interpret them.”

“The Dacum process of occupational profiles helps assess training needs, but it takes three days per person—too much time.”

“Our sector council has tools, but companies themselves don’t.”

“We need to continue to educate, provide supports, and let people know there are tools to help them; the more support given to SMEs, the better our future will be.”
What tools, resources, models and practices are available to assess their training needs?

According to a majority of participants, tools and practices may exist, but most SMEs are rarely aware of what tools are available or how and when they should be used. Quick assessments are available on the Internet, but SMEs lack guidance about how to use or interpret them.

Some participants noted that there seems to be no single method or tool to suit every company. Training needs assessment can take place on three levels: organization, task, and individual. Questions may arise: when to do an organizational needs assessment, a task analysis, or individual assessments?

Again, time, resources, and available in-house skill sets represent the chief barriers. For example, although organizational analysis based on company strategy is essential to make certain that training is aligned with business realities, such analysis is seldom conducted. Such longer and involved needs assessment processes are often seen as impractical for SMEs.

A few participants pointed to the wider availability of excellent Essential Skills planning and assessment tools as a possible model for other business- or strategy-oriented needs assessment tools. Others referred to the variety of tools developed by the Sector Council program as a model of how organizational needs assessment tools might be developed and made available to SMEs.

Why are the uptake of tools and the use of systematic training needs assessment low among SMEs?

And

What barriers or obstacles (real or perceived) are there to using a systematic training needs assessment or the tools, resources, models and practices?

When asked to address reasons for low adoption and barriers, participants further amplified several of the key themes and barriers that surfaced during discussions of the previous two core issues.

Taken together, participants’ comments expressed an amalgam of concerns centring on issues of cost of tools, awareness, and fears about the negative consequences of investing in training. In short, SMEs perceive that they don’t have the time, money, or expertise to conduct a full training needs assessment. In the words of one training manager:

“Employers don’t know the tools that are out there; most think needs assessment has to be a long process and use lots of resource time that they can’t spare.”

“There is a lack of awareness of the organizational needs assessment tools that are currently out there.”

“Individual assessments may be too costly for SMEs.”

“The tools are not practical enough or are too complicated for SMEs.”

“Organizational Needs Assessments need to be simple and easy to access.”

“It’s hard to find just-in-time needs assessment materials.”

“In the non-profit sector, we steer away from assessing needs we can’t afford to address.”
from a small firm, “People don’t know about (available needs assessment tools). People are too busy, so they’ll use only whatever they already know or have time for.”

Some participants expressed concerns that existing corporate models were too difficult and time-consuming to learn and implement. “A lot of organizational needs assessment tools are designed by people who don’t know what really goes on in the workplace. Existing tools are not practical enough or are too complicated for SMEs.”

Several expressed a need for new organizational needs assessment models that are quick and easy to use and, ideally, don’t require an HR or training background to implement. “Organizations are always looking for ways to improve, so make tools easier to use, more visible, and help SMEs understand their value.”

Other participants, however, maintain the belief that SMEs will continue to need guidance to determine which assessment tool is right for them based on the type of company, occupation, sector, and job level they are addressing.

Key informants stressed that needs assessments, like any other business or change initiative, requires a champion at the executive level in order to be given priority in terms of time and resources.

Apart from issues of needs assessment costs and complexity, several focus group contributors raised a more fundamental issue—do most organizations really appreciate the value of training in the first place? One focus group member posed the question: “How do we assess the cost of training? How do we assess if the training is worth it? This is a critical issue which has profound implications not just for the future success of individual SMEs, but also for regional and national productivity and economic growth. Many participants noted that smaller enterprises (and sometimes employees) have yet to be convinced of training’s importance to near term success—even the very survival of their organizations. The responses from several contributors made it clear that training too readily gets pushed aside in the face of other pressing day-to-day business challenges.

- “Any training that takes workers away from the workplace is considered a cost, not an investment.”
- “We’re too busy, so training gets pushed aside.”
- “Training is frequently seen as a negative—a ‘have to do’ activity.”
- “SMEs don’t currently see lack of training as a barrier to business success.”
- “Employers fear their trained workers will go elsewhere or expect more money.”
- “Training is not always welcomed by employees. There can be a great deal of fear and resistance.”

Within any prospective initiative to support or promote the benefits and values of organizational training needs assessments, it would seem prudent to include a component dedicated to helping SMEs better understand the long-term competitive advantages of building training into the business culture.

“**In the past, the PEI government sponsored free organizational needs assessment, but we’re only applying band aids on arterial wounds.**”

“**Government needs to be involved because SMEs can’t do this without government support, but it has to be nimble and solution-focused.**”

“**Industry is hesitant to accept the advice of government; it’s more successful to have peer-to-peer knowledge or ‘championing’ by another business.**”

“**SMEs don’t read the government reports on needs assessment; these reports need to be made more digestible.**”

“**There is a critical role for national standards for the skill requirements and implications of new technologies.**”

“**In the future, more and more onus will be shifted to the employee to learn the skills they need; workers will be expected to be always looking for new and better ways to add value to the company.**”
5 What are the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders, including the role of government, in supporting the use of organizational training needs assessments?

Some contributors noted that, in recent years, governments have been reducing funding for HRD and training to SMEs, rather than giving more help. To a number of focus group participants, however, outside support is clearly required; many SMEs need external funding support to enable them to absorb some of the cost of training as well as the time, resources, and expertise required to assess training needs.

Several expressed the opinion that any support provided has to be nimble, solution-focused, and presented in easy to understand language. SMEs would prefer to get help without dealing with layers of bureaucracy; they prefer a quick fix that is no-cost yet meaningful to them. And, as much as SMEs know they require government help, some participants noted there is still a reluctance to have government involved in their affairs and potentially impeding their ability to operate at the speed of business.

Any tools developed need to be clearly helpful to the SMEs themselves, not the government or other outside agency. If businesses invest in training and don’t see obvious results, they will be reluctant to invest again.

In Quebec, the provincial government legislates a percentage of payroll be spent on training. While this approach is not necessarily espoused, some participants felt the Quebec initiative suggests other useful fiscal support alternatives might be used instead of penalties—e.g., tax incentives, Employment Insurance contributions to employee salaries while they are in training.

Several contributors recommended the initiatives implemented by the Manitoba and Nova Scotia provincial governments. Both governments provide a mix of financial support, professional expertise, and other forms of assistance to help local SMEs conduct organizational needs assessments and training, predominantly in support of Essential Skills training initiatives.

This model was praised for its potential contribution to improving the robustness of local and regional economies. Some participants also saw this approach as an ideal way to model the organizational needs assessment processes and, at the same time, transfer the best of these practices into the workplace.

Several participants suggested that efforts to enhance the use of organizational training needs assessment would benefit from partnerships with existing national or regional institutions and organizations. Such arrangements could help control costs and at the same time enhance the reach of any such initiatives.
PART THREE:
CORE ISSUES FOR PROMOTING ORGANIZATIONAL TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

One participant pointed to past positive experiences with educational sessions for SMEs provided by the Chambers of Commerce in Nova Scotia. Several contributors noted the Sector Council program, with its successful record of contribution to SME training, is a logical model for the development, promotion, and dissemination of organizational training needs assessment tools, models, or approaches.

To some, the Sector Council archetype is appealing because it draws together like-minded, private sector organizations with mutual knowledge sharing interests: “While industry may sometimes be hesitant to accept advice of government, there is greater likelihood of success when it’s a peer-to-peer arrangement, or business is championing such activities.”

One participant whose organization has had considerable success working with the Sector Council and other networks stressed the critical importance of partnerships. “We have made terrific gains over the past few years in identifying our gaps and how they can be addressed. We’ve been very fortunate. But we could never have achieved the successes we’ve had without these partnerships.”

This sentiment was echoed by another participant, “You need a ‘family approach,’ similar to the sector councils.” Another participant contributed to the same peer-to-peer theme, “SMEs need mentorship from others who have done it (organizational needs assessment)—but it must be organic and should leverage the power of sharing success stories.”

6 What key messages need to be developed to convince SMEs of the value and importance of organizational training needs assessment?

As addressed previously, a chief barrier to communicating the value of organizational training needs assessment is the apparent low level of awareness of the importance of having a learning culture. It might appear that any efforts to promote organizational needs assessment’s value must in some way be predicated upon demonstrating and reinforcing the message of training’s intrinsic business and economic value.

One participant identified the need to promote both Essential Skills and training in order to bridge existing skills gaps with local labour. “There is a shortage of skilled labour in Nova Scotia. But it’s impossible to continuously bring in foreign workers. We must be more creative in raising awareness in identifying basic skills shortcomings and raising the bar in terms of working knowledge.”

Businesses must have ways to quickly and cheaply integrate knowledge about who, what, when, and why to conduct training. Any needs assessment tool must clearly show the link between training and meaningful productivity measures. Expertise from other industries and sectors could be shared through informal learning opportunities.

“It would be great if HRSDC could develop tools for organizational needs assessment and could provide a way to share this kind of knowledge and lessons learned.”

“SMEs need to contribute to what a new tool actually looks like; only then will they champion it.”

“Something like the OLES Essential Skills Organizational Needs Assessment (2009) would be useful.”

“You need continuous consultation with the industry: Where are their pressure points? Illustrate the impact on their bottom line of not adapting.”
7 What actions, supports or resources are required to (i) improve the uptake among SMEs and (ii) embed organizational training needs assessment as an essential and critical business process?

In addition to the partnership and promotional initiatives suggested previously, it seems clear that SMEs need opportunities to access existing tools and share best practices in training and in training needs assessment.

One participant suggested developing a continuously updating ‘library’ of practical organizational training needs assessment models. “There should be an annotated bibliography of tools out there that organizations could link to their strategic plans, depending on the kinds of challenges they’re facing.” Another participant concurred, “It would be great if HRSDC could develop tools for organizational needs assessment and could provide a way to share this kind of knowledge and lessons learned.”

One participant suggested a strategy of leveraging the best features of existing models to create a best practices exemplar that could be used by all Canadian SMEs. “We could perhaps indentify the successful features of the best five or six existing organizational needs assessment models and build a single best practices model that is no-cost, meaningful and will provide a guide to SMEs to help figure out where to go next—whether the solution is a training or non-training initiative.”

Several participants suggested there may be value in ensuring that current and future training and development specialists, and human resource professionals, have the requisite skills, competencies, and expertise to conduct effective needs assessments. Academia and training communities could play an important role by ensuring that organizational training needs assessment models and practices are embedded into all training and human resources curricula. One participant, also a university instructor, commented, “It’s all about who you have in your organization running the instructional design process. We’re trying to teach the importance of needs assessment in the universities.”

**Characteristics of a Useful Organizational Training Needs Assessment Tool for SMEs**

**Ideally, such a tool must be:**

- Easy to understand and practical to use
- Derived from peer and industry collaboration
- Clearly related to current business challenges and strategies
- Linked to both employer and employee measures of success
- Useful for any level of job or any role in the business
- Free of charge
- Available through networks that SMEs use routinely (not necessarily government)
- Given without conditions (i.e., without expectation of reporting back to the provider or funder)
- Focused on training for future needs like collaboration, ability to process knowledge, adaptability, creativity
- Available on mobile devices with ongoing support
CONCLUSION

SMEs’ Understanding of Organizational Needs Assessment Tools and Skills Profiles

Many small and medium-sized organizations—even those with HR departments—have a poor understanding of their training needs. Many SMEs do not invest in training as a result of internal competition for budgets and low priority placed on skills improvement. Those that do train typically focus on mandated areas such as compliance, health and safety or upskilling for new workplace technologies.

The level of training activity may depend on the type of industry rather than the company size. Firms with extensive certification or regulatory requirements often have more robust learning cultures. In some industries, such as manufacturing, there is recognition of the importance of Essential Skills training.

Awareness of Organizational Needs Assessment Models and Resources

To most SMEs, needs assessment methodology and tools represent a “confusing landscape.” Typically, firms are unaware of what tools are available or how and when they should be used. In particular, there is little knowledge of how to use needs assessment tools to align training to a company’s strategy or business goals. There is, however, broader awareness and appreciation for the widely available Essential Skills planning tools and approaches developed by sector councils and the federal and provincial governments.

Low Uptake of Organizational Needs Assessment Tools: What are the Barriers?

There is wide agreement on low adoption of organizational needs assessment tools in SMEs. Key barriers include the lack of time, money, or expertise to conduct a full training needs assessment. Most small firms view such analysis as too difficult to execute—too long, involved, and impractical.

To overcome these barriers, quick and easy to use organizational needs assessment tools should be developed. Such tools should be made more visible and accessible to the SME community. It is also important to raise awareness by demonstrating the value of such tools. In addition, SMEs will likely still need help and guidance in selecting and using organizational needs assessment tools in their workplaces.

A more critical barrier to organizational needs assessment use is that many SMEs do not fully appreciate training’s value or its importance to business success. Training is often overlooked given the day-to-day pressures of business. This poses perhaps the greatest challenge to wider adoption of organizational needs assessment tools in SMEs.

Roles and Responsibilities for Supporting Organizational Needs Assessment

There was strong consensus that SMEs will need more support if wider adoption of training and organizational needs assessment practices is contemplated. Some pointed to provincial initiatives like the Quebec government’s training incentive legislation. Others commended Nova Scotia and Manitoba’s initiatives supporting Essential Skills training in SMEs.
While government support is clearly welcome, there is some agreement that support should not introduce additional bureaucracy that may impede the speed of business. Any support must be solution-focused and nimble. Any fiscal support should be incentive-oriented, not penalty-driven.

Others suggested exploring partnership arrangements facilitated through national networks and institutions. Such approaches might model similar previous successes, involving Sector Councils, the Chambers of Commerce, etc., to develop and disseminate organizational needs assessment tools and facilitate their use in the SME workplace. There was strong support for peer-to-peer ‘support networks’, drawing together like-minded industries to share best practices, success stories, and mentoring activities. Some opine that strong partnerships are critical to their successful workplace implementation of effective training.

**Key Messages to Promote Organizational Needs Assessment with SMEs**

To promote adoption of organizational needs assessments, it is essential to communicate training’s business value—its critical role in enhancing organizational strategy, business outcomes, and economic growth. If consideration is given to developing an organizational needs assessment tool, the effort must highlight the connections between training and business results. It is essential also to continue to promote Essential Skills activities to close existing skills gaps and raise the bar on basic capabilities in the workplace.

**Actions Required to Improve Organizational Needs Assessment Uptake and Embed as Practice**

There is support for the development of an easy to use organizational needs assessment tool to help SMEs align their training with their organizational strategy and business needs. It was suggested that a ‘best practices’ tool could leverage the top features of existing organizational needs assessment models and be provided free of charge to Canadian SMEs.

There is support for providing organizational needs assessment training and facilitation support to help SMEs implement organizational needs assessment tools in the workplace. Several suggested that the knowledge of needs assessment practices and assessment models be embedded into all academic training and human resources curricula.

There is also support for a continuously updating ‘library’ of practical organizational needs assessment tools, models, and practices to support the adoption and implementation of such tools in SMEs.
A. Building Awareness: Why Do Organizational Needs Assessment?

This project identified two general categories of organizational needs assessment tools designed to help firms improve business results through training. The most prevalent category, Essential Skills, is aimed at helping firms achieve success by identifying basic skills gaps and the training required to close such gaps. The second class of organizational needs assessment tools, Business Impact tools, is designed to help firms identify and address any type of training issues linked to bottom-line results.

**The Promise:** Several of the Essential Skills and Business Impact tools identified, while not necessarily easy to use, can do an excellent job of helping employers identify Essential Skills gaps and aligning those needs with business results. They can bring invaluable benefits to Canadian SMEs by helping ensure the dollars they invest in training are aligned to the business and drive performance, productivity, and key business results. They can help SMEs ensure the right training is implemented with the right learners at the right time to derive the greatest benefit from their investment.

**The Problem:** Although the existing organizational needs assessment tools can do much to help SMEs achieve success, there is surprisingly little awareness that such tools exist or that they can help firms strengthen their competitiveness and enhance business performance.

Develop brief presentations, 30 to 60 minutes, to be delivered at trade shows, conferences, annual industry meetings and events. The presentation, directed at business owners, employers and labour, should cover the key points from this report: the importance of training (both formal and informal), how training should align to business needs and strategy (the chain of impact), and how to use and adopt organizational needs assessment tools to assess training needs.

The session should highlight the best practice organizational needs assessment tools/models for: Essential Skills: (OLES, CME Business Impact & Essential Skills, ABC ONA), Business Impact (LEM, A-model, Business Impact Mapping), and Occupational Skills Assessment and Testing (CARSability).

A key feature of the awareness presentation should be the case stories of how such tools are implemented, as told by the employers involved. According to our focus group participants and key informants, impactful stories—stories that: 1) present problems and opportunities they identify with, 2) occur in a business climate they see as similar to their own, and 3) offer solutions that are compatible in scope and scale with what they too, can implement—are most relevant, especially when delivered by business peers in industries or sectors similar to their own.

**Relevance is key.** SME business owners are “pulled” when the conversation focuses on strategies for dealing with their particular “pain points”—the business challenges that keep them up at night.
B. Developing Know-how & Train the Trainer

As the project’s findings demonstrate, most organizations have great difficulty using existing organizational needs assessment models. Simply understanding the chain of impact that connects training programs with job performance and business or strategic outcomes is an issue. As the literature shows, inability to align training with business outcomes causes not only ‘scrap training’ and wasted budgets, but also results in missed opportunities to improve performance.

Even for those firms that seek to employ needs assessment tools to improve their performance, there exists, as many key informants reported, widespread uncertainty about how to use such tools effectively—in all sizes of organizations and industries, not just SMEs.

“There are tools available... But most firms have no knowledge how to access these tools or how to interpret them.” — a very common sentiment among key informants

As many key informants suggested, SMEs need a great deal of help if they are to develop and maintain a viable learning culture and make informed decisions about training. SMEs need: i) information on what needs assessment tools are available, (covered by the Best Practices Database and other awareness initiatives); ii) training on how to use these tools; or iii) help implementing and conducting the needs assessment. Many organizations may never be able or motivated to use organizational needs assessment without some facilitation or mentoring.

Offer workshops to help SMEs learn which organizational needs assessment models to use and how to use them.

Develop and deliver organizational needs assessment workshops designed to help SMEs understand the value of these tools, which tools are appropriate to their needs, and how to use these tools to identify their critical training requirements.

Workshops would be most effective if done with groups who share similar business problems or challenges (i.e., within a sector or area of business). Such workshops could be conducted at conferences, association meetings, or other business gatherings where appropriate audiences are in attendance. The use of YouTube videos highlighting workshop elements, housed with the tools in the database, might further encourage interest and uptake.

Develop and deliver an organizational needs assessment implementation-facilitation clinic and support service.

Develop a hands-on, interactive clinic designed to mentor an organization through an organizational needs assessment. Such a service would be of value to small firms with limited internal resources. The service would provide support, and as the needs assessment progresses and the SME takes more control of the process, the facilitator/mentor’s role is reduced to providing advice as needed.

Provide outreach: train a network of organizational needs assessment trainers/facilitators. Identify compatible national organizations/networks. Train the trainers.
The network (or skills-broker) model would see the Centre for Workplace Skills identify a compatible national organization or network to become the organizational needs assessment training and/or facilitation service provider. This model (used, for example, by Literacy Canada in their current Financial Literacy program) would position the Centre as the author/developer of the initiative; the partner organization would leverage their existing network(s) to extend the program’s reach. Because of its obvious benefits, such an outreach model might develop a partnership with organizations such as CME, Chambers of Commerce, CFIB, or CSTD (Chapter Network).

**Develop other outreach partnerships.**

Other potential outreach partnerships might include:

**Provincial Government Support.** Manitoba and Nova Scotia provincial governments provide financial assistance, professional expertise, and other forms of support to help local SMEs conduct organizational needs assessments and training. The strategy was praised for contributing to the improvement of local and regional economies. While predominantly supporting Essential Skills training initiatives, the model might be applicable in other domains of training or for specific industry sectors.

**Sector Councils.** With their successful record of contribution to SME training, sector councils may be well situated and highly motivated to develop, promote, and disseminate organizational training needs assessment tools, models, or approaches.

**C. Develop an Exemplary Organizational Needs Assessment Tool**

In reviewing existing organizational needs assessment tools, it was clear Canadian SMEs have available a number of excellent Essential Skills organizational needs assessment tools. As addressed elsewhere, the key concern is awareness. There are much greater issues, however, with the availability and accessibility of the Business Impact organizational needs assessment tools. Awareness of the existence, availability, or importance of such tools is extremely low—almost negligible.

Perhaps a greater problem is that most of the Business Impact organizational needs assessment tools in their current form are forbiddingly complex and, as such, essentially inaccessible to all but the most experienced training professionals. This is in sharp contrast to the consensus of opinion among the project’s key informants that SMEs will have little interest in tools or models that are too complex.

Several focus group participants suggested an option of developing a simpler Business Impact organizational needs assessment for use by the SME community. Such a tool would serve industry well. It would provide immediate help to individual organizations to improve the business impact of their training investments. Perhaps more important, it would draw much needed attention to the substantial advantages to be gained from aligning training to business strategy.

**Develop an easy-to-use Business Impact organizational needs assessment tool.**

The project’s review of the best of the existing organizational needs assessment tools suggests that developing a useful, easy-to-use Business Impact organizational needs assessment is an entirely practicable and viable option. The essential elements of such a tool already exist in the more effective organizational needs assessment models such as the OLES Essential Skills ONA; the CME ONA; THRC Skills Planning and Knowledge Networks ONA; and the CFLI Business Impact Mapping model. It is worth noting, each of these tools on their own can provide good value to SMEs. However, each of them has particular limitations that rule them out as an accessible, easy-to-use stand-alone organizational needs assessment tool for non-specialists.

It is recommended that the tool be brief and spare in design. Several key informants noted the significant drawback to the otherwise excellent tools in existence is that they are too lengthy, unwieldy, and daunting for the busy, time-constrained environment of the SME community. Although a prospective tool should be completely self-contained, a brief, optional companion handbook could be developed. The handbook would amplify and elaborate the tool’s methodology and provide richer context to the organizational needs assessment process.
# Appendix A:
## List of Promising Organizational Needs Assessment Practices

**Legend:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost of Tool/Article:</th>
<th>F – Available Free</th>
<th>P – Purchase Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level/Type of Analysis:</td>
<td>O – Organizational</td>
<td>J – Job Performance Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Expertise:</td>
<td>1 – None required</td>
<td>2 – Some Expertise Recommended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Description:</td>
<td>Model or practice more fully described in CWS database</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model, Practice, Approach (Title)</th>
<th>Country/Region</th>
<th>Type of Analysis</th>
<th>Cost: Free (F) Purchase (P)</th>
<th>SME Ready</th>
<th>Level of Expertise</th>
<th>Scalable for SME</th>
<th>Case Description</th>
<th>Assessment/Details</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. Needs Assessment Models Suitable for SMEs</strong></td>
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1. **ABC: Life Literacy Canada: Collaborative Needs Assessment**
   - Cda
   - ES
   - Cost: Free (F)
   - SME Ready: Yes
   - Level of Expertise: 2
   - Scalable for SME: Yes
   - Case Description: Paper-based Tool: A systematic way of identifying all workplace needs. It shows how basic skills and other needs fit into the big picture and provides a step-by-step process through planning and conducting.
   - Source: ABC Life Literacy Canada (1994)

2. **OLES: Essential Skills Organizational Needs Assessment**
   - Cda
   - ES
   - Cost: Free (F)
   - SME Ready: Yes
   - Level of Expertise: 1
   - Scalable for SME: Yes
   - Case Description: Paper-based Tool: Provides a framework for conducting a basic essential skills assessment. Help determine if skills gaps are impacting the organization’s performance and which skills may need upgrading.
   - Source: Office of Essential Literacy & Skills, HRSDC,
     - [www.hrsdc.gc.ca/essentialskills](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/essentialskills)

3. **THRC: Skills Planning and Networks ONA**
   - Cda
   - O,J,I
   - Cost: Free (F)
   - SME Ready: Yes
   - Level of Expertise: 2
   - Scalable for SME: Yes
   - Case Description: Paper-based Tool: Guide to help organizations align learning and performance initiatives to the business goals or needs of the organization, department, or business unit.
   - Source: Textiles Human Resources Council
     - [www.thrc-crhit.org](http://www.thrc-crhit.org)
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<tr>
<td>CARSability: An Industry Specific Needs/Skills Assessment Model</td>
<td>Cda</td>
<td>O,J,I</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>CARSability is an online, cost-effective assessment tool designed to identify training gaps in automotive related occupations. Locates appropriate training and can provide management with detailed results.</td>
<td>Canadian Automotive Repair and Service Council (CARS) <a href="http://www.carsability.ca">www.carsability.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Manufacturers &amp; Exporters: Business Results Through Essential Skills and Literacy</td>
<td>Cda</td>
<td>ES, O</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Paper-based Tool: Guidebook provides practical information for those considering the examination of, and possible investment in, the skill sets of their workforce.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cme-mec.ca/pdf/Business_Results_Through_Essential_Skills_and_Literacy.pdf">www.cme-mec.ca/pdf/Business_Results_Through_Essential_Skills_and_Literacy.pdf</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba: Building a Better Workplace</td>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>ES</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Paper-based Tool: A brief list of potential survey questions designed to help organizations identify Essential Skills gaps or requirements.</td>
<td>Workplace Education Manitoba <a href="http://www.wem.mb.ca">www.wem.mb.ca</a></td>
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<td><strong>II. Needs Assessment Models Scalable for SMEs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Training Needs Assessment: Understanding what employees need to know</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>O,J,I</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Journal Article: A 3-level Organization-Task-Person (OTP) framework. Organizational analysis looking at factors such as safety incidents, lost workdays, turnover rates, grievances, etc. Task and person analyses are also conducted.</td>
<td>Cekada, Tracey L., Professional Safety March 2010 <a href="http://www.asse.org/professionalsafety/docs/F1Cekada_0310.pdf">www.asse.org/professionalsafety/docs/F1Cekada_0310.pdf</a></td>
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### III. Advanced Needs Assessment Models & Resources

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<tr>
<td>29. The growing concept and uses of training needs assessment</td>
<td>Eur</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Journal Article: This paper attempts to make a contribution towards understanding of TNA through a systematic literature review of training needs assessment, and training needs analysis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>32. Seven Cures to Skipping the Needs Assessment</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>OJ</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Journal Article: Describes the process for ensuring that those conducting ONA confirm that any proposed solution responds to a training issue and not to other, non-training problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model, Practice, Approach (Title)</td>
<td>Country / Region</td>
<td>Type of Analysis</td>
<td>Cost: Free (F)</td>
<td>SME Ready</td>
<td>Level of Expertise</td>
<td>Scalable for SME</td>
<td>Assessment/Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>Object-Oriented Performance Improvement</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>Journal Article: An object-oriented framework that explores required changes in needs analysis and design thinking in order to improve training cost-effectiveness and return on investment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B: BIBLIOGRAPHY


This report was prepared with guidance of an Advisory Committee comprised of experts and practitioners in the fields of continuing education, work-related learning and human capital, and other key partners. The Centre for Learning Impact would like to extend thanks to all Advisory Committee members and key partners who contributed their time and knowledge to this project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paul Bélanger</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Université du Québec à Montréal; Director, CIRDEP/UQAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saul Carliner</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>Concordia University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Clipsham</td>
<td>Director, Commercial &amp; Consumer Policy</td>
<td>Canadian Manufacturers &amp; Exporters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margan Dawson</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Association of Workplace Educators of Nova Scotia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paula Demone</td>
<td>Planning and Development Officer</td>
<td>Workplace Education Services, Government of Nova Scotia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy Evans (ex-officio)</td>
<td>Director, Program Development, WPD</td>
<td>Human Resources and Skills Development Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Gardener</td>
<td>Manager, Strategic Policy, Alberta Works Programs</td>
<td>Alberta Human Services - Workforce Supports Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rick Hutchins</td>
<td>Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills Specialist</td>
<td>National Adult Literacy Database Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Kelly</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Textiles Human Resources Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron Koslowsky</td>
<td>Vice President, CME Manitoba</td>
<td>Canadian Manufacturers &amp; Exporters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Francois Lamontagne</td>
<td>Manager, Skills and Employment Branch</td>
<td>Human Resources and Skills Development Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melissa Lansing (ex-officio)</td>
<td>Policy Analyst</td>
<td>Human Resources and Skills Development Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellyn Lyle</td>
<td>Manager of the Centre for Education Research</td>
<td>University of Prince Edward Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin Millar</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Centre for Education &amp; Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conrad Prince</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>HR Council for the Non-Profit Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathieu Senécal</td>
<td>Directeur Général</td>
<td>FormaPlus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas Watt</td>
<td>Associate Director, Organizational Effectiveness and Learning</td>
<td>The Conference Board of Canada</td>
</tr>
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