

Marketing Workplace Literacy



Laubach Literacy Ontario



Laubach Literacy Ontario

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Introduction

Laubach Literacy Ontario is pleased to offer you this module on Marketing Workplace Literacy. Workplace literacy has a higher profile now than perhaps ever before. Ontario is experiencing a constricted labour market which means that there are more jobs available than people to fill them. As a result, employers are hiring individuals who have less than the desired level of skill and so are interested in potentially working with adult literacy agencies to address skills gaps.

Also, the nature of skills needed to perform effectively in the workplace have changed and continue to evolve. Continuous learning is becoming an expectation of, and an asset for, employees and job seekers alike.

As a result, adult literacy agencies are increasingly being drawn into the world of providing workplace literacy. This reality represents a change for many adult literacy agencies that, historically, have welcomed all individuals who came to them to seek service. Workplace literacy though often means that adult literacy agencies seek out partnerships with employers who see upgrading needs among their employees. Marketing to employers is very different than marketing to employment and social service agencies. We will explore some of these differences in this module.

This site will be used to house information, resources and templates related to each of the initiatives to support the Community of Practice process.



[Enhancing and Expanding Digital Delivery](#)



[Integration of LBS Service to Support Apprenticeship](#)



[Integration of LBS Service to Support Better Jobs Ontario](#)



[Underrepresented Groups](#)



[Workplace Literacy](#)

Resources: In 2022/2023, Literacy Link South Central (LLSC) and Literacy Link Eastern Ontario (LLEO) received Skills Development Funding to execute a Workplace Literacy project. Through this project, four [webinars](#) were developed and delivered to the Literacy and Basic Skills field.

Topics included:

- Marketing to Employers
- Organizational Needs Assessments
- Workplace Literacy Program Delivery
- Workplace Literacy Evaluation

While these webinars provide a good starting point, we know there is much more to share about workplace literacy in each of the four areas noted above. The goal now is to make each of these topic areas more fulsome as learning materials/workbooks for LBS agency managers and practitioners. This module will expand upon Marketing to Employers.



Ready for Workplace Literacy?

Is it necessary for every adult literacy agency in Ontario to participate in workplace literacy delivery? The simple answer is no. Our goal though in providing you with this workbook is to guide those who are interested through the steps of engaging an employer in skills development and delivering training that is based on identified employer needs.

So how do you know if you are ready to engage in workplace literacy?



Comparing LBS to Workplace Training

It has been observed that LBS practitioners tend to sell themselves short. They may believe that they don't have the skills they need to deliver workplace literacy. This table is designed to show that most, if not all, LBS programs already have most of the skills they will need. They will just be delivering with a "twist."

Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS)	Workplace
Goals set by Learner related to 5 goal paths identified by the funder (MLITSD)	Goals set by Employer
Learners identified/referred	Employees identified/referred
Learners assessed initially	Employees assessed initially
Learners trained	Employees trained
Learners assessed ongoingly	Employees assessed ongoingly
Learners assessed at end of training	Employees assessed at end of training
Report to MLITSD	Report to Employer
Evaluation of learner/LBS service provider	Evaluation of employee/training provider

LBS practitioners already know how to support others in setting goals. In an LBS program, they support learners. In the workplace, they will support the employer - as well as employees. LBS practitioners are accustomed to getting referrals from other organizations. When it comes to workplace literacy, the referrals come from a particular workplace. Assessment and training happen in both arenas. In our day-to-day lives, we spend some of our time reporting to MLITSD. In workplace literacy, our main accountability is to the employer. The good news here is that employers usually don't have a lot of demands when it comes to reporting!

And just as surely as we would evaluate within our LBS programs – both learner progress and the overall success of programming, so too will we apply the same principles in the workplace.

Check-In

Before we get started, we encourage you to take a few moments and reflect upon (and potentially complete) this table which identifies several areas of preparing for and marketing workplace literacy.

Area of Workplace Literacy Marketing	What Our Agency Has Done
Finding employers	
Understanding the Skills for Success connection	
Identifying your key messages	
Being employer-centred	
Making the “ask”	
Introducing an Organizational Needs Assessment (ONA)	
Finding professional development opportunities for staff	
Collaborating to meet employer needs	

Case Studies

There can be a real difference between talking about workplace literacy and showing workplace literacy in action. Our goal is to show it in action using case studies. Below, you will find two case studies that will be used to illustrate some of the finer points in this module on Marketing Workplace Literacy.

Case Study #1: Employer A

A local brake manufacturer with a large workforce of approximately 180 employees recently hired personnel who lacked manufacturing experience. Employer A hired these “lower-skilled” employees because of a “tight” labour market in which workers were scarce. They made employee retention their top priority because of the labour shortage. Employer A wants their staff and the community to know they offer excellent wages and benefits and emphasize on-the-job learning as part of a “culture of learning” at their workplace.

Case Study #2: Employer B

A local recycler (Employer B) with over 150 employees has many new Canadians on staff. Most of their recent hires have limited English language skills and have never worked in Canada. Employer B faces a tight labour market and wants to retain its employees. Like Employer A, they are committed to maintaining a competitive workplace that offers employees excellent wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement.

Employer B believes that on-the-job training is necessary to encourage a “culture of learning” at their workplace. They have many employees, including native English speakers, for whom they want to provide skills training.



Finding Employers

If you have determined that your agency is ready for workplace literacy delivery, the next logical step is to find an employer who has skills upgrading needs. This can actually be a challenging undertaking for many adult literacy agencies. After all, there are many employers out there of different types and sizes, representing a variety of sectors. What is an adult literacy agency's best route to finding an employer?

Sometimes, employers come to adult literacy agencies seeking services either for an individual employee or for a group of employees. Often though, employers become caught up in the day-to-day operations and upskilling entry-level employees can swiftly become a low priority item. However, the good news is that with minimal targeted effort, you can find employers for whom employee upskilling is desired.

Within your Program

The most obvious way of finding employer contacts is to look within your existing LBS agency or program. Don't forget that approximately one third of LBS learners are already working, so that means they are already directly connected to employers! You might find that you have more than one employee from a particular workplace participating in your LBS agency already. We know that word of mouth is a very effective referral mechanism, so when an employee of a particular workplace finds their way to an LBS agency and begins to experience skill building in a positive way, they may talk

about their success with coworkers and the word spreads. You, or staff within your agency, may also have contacts with employers who may be interested in or need to provide upskilling opportunities to existing employees.

Tutors are also a potential source of employer contacts. Thanks to previous experience or through taking tutor training, program tutors are already predisposed to noticing potential skills challenges within a workplace and they can offer adult literacy programming as a potential solution to employers with whom they have contact.

Many community-based agencies in LBS also have Boards of Directors. It may be that individual board members own their own businesses or have connections to other businesses or business associations. With their heightened understanding of adult literacy and its impact, tutors may also be able to put your agency in contact with employers who would be interested in finding out more about local skills development programming.

The point here is that you may have many marketing opportunities without even leaving the individuals who are associated with your current program!

Your Regional Literacy Network

Every adult literacy agency in Ontario has a regional network that provides it with support. Most, if not all, regional literacy networks have experience in either delivering Organizational Needs Assessments (ONAs) to employers or they have supported local adult literacy agencies in developing this capacity. An ONA, just as a reminder, is an Organizational Needs Assessment – the process by which an individual employer's skills upgrading needs are determined and communicated to local LBS agencies that can respond.

Another major way that regional literacy networks can support workplace literacy development and programming is through Literacy Service Planning (LSP). LSP meetings, the annual LSP process and the resulting plan are designed to communicate community needs to adult literacy providers and to ensure that community needs, including those of employers, are met in a streamlined and coordinated fashion.

Workforce Planning Boards

Much like adult literacy networks, there is a Workforce Planning Board that covers every part of Ontario. Workforce Planning Boards can be an excellent source of employer contacts as they are frequently in discussion with employers, both individually and collectively. Many Workforce Planning Boards conduct an annual survey of employers which contains questions for employers about skills development needs. For example, Workforce Planning Boards may ask local employers if they are interested in contacting local adult skills development programs. If so, the results to this question can

provide the regional network in your area with some promising leads for workplace literacy programming. If your Planning Board(s) conduct(s) an annual survey of employers and they don't ask questions about skills development needs, there is an opportunity for you as an adult literacy agency or for your regional network to ask for such questions to be included. Not only would doing so support your adult literacy agency and the adult literacy community, but it would also provide important Labour Market Information for the Planning Board and agencies interested in local Labour Market Information.

Employment Services

Employment Services (ES) are an important component of Employment Ontario. Employment Services along with LBS and apprenticeship form Employment Ontario. Rather than reinvent the wheel, you may wish to collaborate with local employment service agencies to assess employer needs regarding workplace literacy. For example, job developers are in constant contact with employers as they seek to place job seekers in meaningful job opportunities and as they work to support job seekers to maintain these roles.

Economic Development

Economic Development Offices are often overlooked as a potential connection to employers who are seeking to upgrade employees or attract employees with the necessary skills to be successful in various positions. The role of economic development is often to support current businesses in expanding or to entice new businesses to the community. A key factor in a company's decision to expand, open or relocate is the availability of local talent.

An LBS agency may glean significant insights from talking to Economic Development Officers about employer needs. In addition, Economic Development Officers may benefit from knowing that local adult upgrading agencies can support existing and new employers by preparing employees and job seekers with strong foundational (often sector-specific) skills.

Community Projects

If LBS agencies and regional literacy networks are looking to expand their employer contacts, they do not always need to start this search from scratch. The Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) funds numerous projects from different sources (Skills Advance Ontario, Skills Development Fund, etc.) designed to build the skills of local job seekers and employees. It may not be necessary for LBS to always create new partnerships and relationships to promote upskilling. We advise LBS agencies and networks to build their awareness of local employment-related projects because it may be possible to incorporate skills development to support some of these projects. For

example, some LBS agencies have worked with Skills Advance Ontario (SAO) or Skills Development Fund (SDF) projects to ensure that participants of such projects have stronger digital literacy skills to support them in their ongoing learning.

Over time, LBS can build relationships with local stakeholders and these relationships can evolve and strengthen. For example, one regional literacy network in Ontario built a relationship with a local LiUNA organization (supporting construction craft apprentices) through which they did individual assessments with pre-apprentices and worked with a local adult literacy agency to design and deliver a math upgrading program. Once this relationship was established, LiUNA turned its attention to members who were not involved in apprenticeship but who were struggling to maintain their positions as security guards, custodians, or employees in light manufacturing because of weak foundational skills. LBS – because of the existing relationship with pre-apprentices – was naturally sought out to brainstorm how to meet the needs of this new population which meant working with specific employers in the industry. The point here is that LBS agencies do not have to constantly develop new relationships because there may be opportunities to capitalize on existing relationships and explore additional employee needs.

Employer Groups

It can be daunting and resource intensive for LBS agencies to think about connecting with individual employers. After all, doing so would require a significant investment in human resources. The good news is that there are other ways to access groups of employers all at one time – through employer associations. Every small town probably has a local Chamber of Commerce which represents a one-stop method of connecting with multiple employers. There are also other employer associations that are specific to particular sectors such as branches of the Canadian Manufacturers Association. And don't forget service clubs such as Rotary, Optimist and the like. Often LBS agencies will go to service agencies to ask for funding. There is nothing preventing an LBS agency from talking about what it can offer in terms of workplace literacy since many service club members are employers. After all, we are looking to work smarter, not harder.

Employer Sourcing Tool

In a perfect world, your LBS agency or network would take a strategic approach to engaging employers. If you send out 500 invitations to employers and 10 say they are interested (a 2% response rate), you may be overwhelmed. And likewise, if you try to contact all the potential groups listed above simultaneously, it may be difficult to track your efforts. Here is a chart you may want to use/revise to take small, but trackable, steps to engage employers:

Source	Method of Contact (email, phone, mailed letter, etc.)	Date of Contact	Employers Contacted (with contact information)	Response	Next Steps
Contacts from within your program					
Regional Literacy Network					
Workforce Planning Board(s)					
Employment Services					
Economic Development					
Community Projects					
Employer Groups					
Other					
Other					

This tool is useful to track employers who **may** be interested in discussing their training needs, and it can help you determine where to focus your energy and resources.

Case Studies

Let's return to our case studies to see how LBS agencies can leverage connections to find employers who might be interested in workplace literacy training.

Case Study #1: Employer A

A local brake manufacturer (Employer A) with a large workforce of approximately 180 employees recently hired personnel who lacked manufacturing experience. Employer A hired these "lower-skilled" employees because of a "tight" labour market in which workers were scarce. They made employee retention their top priority because of the labour shortage. Employer A wants their staff and the community to know they offer excellent wages and benefits and emphasize on-the-job learning as part of a "culture of learning" at their workplace.

Finding Employers: Employer A approached the Workforce Planning Board in your area. Over the years, your regional literacy network has been developing stronger relationships with the Workforce Planning Board, so the Planning Board approached your regional literacy network who brought up the need at a Literacy Service Planning meeting. The Planning Board staff mention that Employer A seems interested in building the math and communication skills of their employees.

Case Study #2: Employer B

A local recycler (Employer B) with over 150 employees has many new Canadians on staff. Most of their recent hires have limited English language skills and have never worked in Canada. Employer B faces a tight labour market and wants to retain its employees. Like Employer A, they are committed to remaining a competitive workplace that offers employees excellent wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement. Employer B believes that on-the-job training is necessary to encourage a "culture of learning" at their workplace. They have many employees, including native English speakers, for whom they want to provide skills training.

Finding Employers: A member of your Board of Directors was at a Chamber of Commerce event and met the manager of Company B. The manager and your director struck up a conversation and your director mentioned it's possible that your LBS agency may be able to address at least some of the skill development needs of Employer B, where there are definitely some English language development needs.



Skills for Success

One question we have heard from LBS agencies is how do you talk about skills with employers? There are an infinite number of skills that employers might need, and many employers have specific technical skills that are outside of LBS agencies' comfort zones and mandates.

One approach is to talk about the Skills for Success. The Skills for Success are relatively new. LBS is most familiar with the nine Essential Skills which have been the foundation of job descriptions in the National Occupational Classification (NOC) system. We know the Essential Skills better as:

- Reading Text
- Writing
- Document Use
- Computer Use
- Numeracy
- Oral Communication
- Thinking
- Continuous Learning
- Working with Others

In 2022, the Canadian federal government reviewed the nine Essential Skills to determine how relevant they were to current workplace needs. As a result of this review, several changes were made (see chart on next page).

Essential Skills	Skills for Success
Reading	Reading
Writing	Writing
Document Use	Numeracy
Math/Numeracy	Digital Skills
Computer Use	Communication
Working with Others	Collaboration
Continuous Learning	Problem Solving
Oral Communication	Adaptability
Thinking	Creativity and Innovation

So, what changed?

- Document use was removed from the list.
- Computer use was expanded to refer to all digital technology.
- Oral communication was expanded to communication to allow for multiple forms of communicating.
- Thinking was altered to problem solving out of respect for the increased reliance upon problem solving skills in the workplace.
- Two new skills were added. The first skill added is Collaboration and the second skill is a combination of Creativity and Innovation. Together, these changes reflect the changing nature of skills required in Canada's workplaces by showing an increased emphasis on the need for soft skills in the workplace.

Many of the changes to the Essential Skills that resulted in the Skills for Success were made because of feedback from employers.

Employers as an Audience

According to Skills for Success foundational document *Research report to support the launch of Skills for Success: Structure, evidence and recommendations*, “With...rapidly evolving skill requirements, employers face challenges finding workers with the right combination of social-emotional, digital, and literacy skills.”

The report goes on to show the strong relationship between Skills for Success and employers by identifying several criteria that each skill had to meet and elaborating on how that skill connected to work or employers. To be included as a Skill for Success, skills had to be:

- **work-focused** and **transferrable**, meaning “All skills in the framework should be applicable to the majority of occupations in the Canadian labour market.”
- **durable or enduring** – the definitions and constructs of all skills should be responsive to evolving labour market needs.”
- **teachable/learnable** – all skills in the framework should align with the learning objectives and contexts of employment training.

The [Skills for Success Implementation Guidance: Final Report](#) identifies these audiences:

- Funders
- Training organizations
- Employers
- Practitioners
- Mentors, supervisors, and community members

Note that the third audience is employers. And this same report goes on to illustrate Guiding Principles and Promising Practices to highlight the specific roles that each audience can play to ensure that Skills for Success implementation addresses learner and employer needs. On page 4 of the *Skills for Success Implementation Guidance: Final Report*, a chart is provided that outlines the Guiding Principles by stages of training and different audiences. Here is an excerpt of what it says about employers:

	Entry	Engagement	Assessment	Learning Transfer
Employers	Minimize the opportunity cost of training	Align skills training with business priorities and job requirements	Facilitate a data-driven approach to workforce development	Facilitate industry-wide accreditation of Skills for Success

Digging a little deeper, the chart above suggests employers can do their part to encourage the development of Skills for Success by making training easier to access for employees. To increase

engagement in learning, employers need to make sure that skills training is directly related to the workplace. Under assessment, the suggestion is for employers to glean and use data from their evaluations of training. And last, but not least, all audiences have a role to play in facilitating learning transfer. Employers can do their part by facilitating wide-spread accreditation of Skills for Success.

The above illustrates that LBS agencies are on the right track when it comes to providing workplace literacy training. Through such training, they can bring training onsite and make the training easier for employees to participate in. They can contextualize the learning so that it relates to and uses authentic learning materials from the workplace. LBS practitioners may wish to bear in mind that employers are motivated by data-driven approaches, so tracking the learning that is happening will be important. And LBS agencies need to be watching for accreditation processes initiated by or implemented by employers or employer associations.

This excerpt from the *Skills for Success Implementation Guidance: Final Report* provides compelling evidence of why there is a natural fit between employers and training organizations like LBS agencies:

“Employers and training organizations: Employers, industry associations, and other sectoral groups provide or support sector-based skills development initiatives aligned with their own talent acquisition and workforce development goals. Training organizations design and offer specific forms of training. They are key to prioritizing training investment and ensuring skills development strategies and directions are aligned with work and social needs. Employers and training organizations are well placed to address barriers and strengths at the organizational level”. (Page 12)

We can probably all agree that the nature of work is changing and that we need to rethink our approaches to workforce development – both for adult learners who come to LBS agencies with the goal of employment and for those adult learners LBS agencies may serve directly within a workplace.

Case Studies

Now, let's see how Skills for Success impacts our two case studies.

Case Study #1: Employer A

A local brake manufacturer (Employer A) with a large workforce of approximately 180 employees recently hired personnel who lacked manufacturing experience. Employer A hired these “lower-skilled” employees because of a “tight” labour market in which workers were scarce. They made employee retention their top priority because of the labour shortage. Employer A wants their staff and the community to know they offer excellent wages and benefits and emphasize on-the-job learning as part of a “culture of learning” at their workplace.

Employer A approached the Workforce Planning Board in your area. Over the years, your regional literacy network has been developing stronger relationships with the Workforce Planning Board, so the Planning Board approached your regional literacy network who brought up the need at a Literacy Service Planning meeting. The Planning Board staff mentions that Employer A seems interested in building the math and communication skills of employees but is uncertain what this kind of programming might look like.

Skills for Success: Given MLITSD’s focus on Skills for Success, you have attended a webinar and a podcast on workplace literacy. You remember that using authentic workplace materials can really enhance the outcomes of training as well as help employers see the benefit of skills development training for employees. You file this information away in the back of your mind.

Case Study #2: Employer B

A local recycler (Employer B) with over 150 employees has many new Canadians on staff. Most of their recent hires have limited English language skills and have never worked in Canada. Employer B faces a tight labour market and wants to retain its employees. Like Employer A, they are committed to remaining a competitive workplace that offers employees excellent wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement. Employer B believes that on-the-job training is necessary to encourage a “culture of learning” at their workplace. They have many employees, including native English speakers, for whom they want to provide skills training.

A member of your Board of Directors was at a Chamber of Commerce event and met the manager of Company B. The manager and your director struck up a conversation and your director mentioned it’s possible that your LBS agency may be able to address at least some of the skill development needs of Employer B. There are definitely some English language skills development needs.

Skills for Success: You have a staff meeting to discuss this potential opportunity. Given that there are large numbers of employees for whom English is their Second Language, one of your staff asks if you could offer training that offers some sort of recognition or certificate. If your LBS agency and Employer B can reach an agreement about the needs for workplace literacy training, you know you are going to want to document the outcomes of the training in a meaningful way.



Marketing

What do employers say about marketing?

The Skills for Success are still quite new and LBS agencies are working hard, along with adult literacy agencies across Canada, to understand how to integrate them into programming effectively. In this module, we are concerned primarily with marketing workplace literacy to employers. The research behind the development of the Skills for Success showed that “Employer representatives participating in the focus group also noted challenges accessing information about the training in advance, to assess its quality and alignment to their organizational needs.”

What does this mean for LBS agencies?

So, employers are saying they have challenges accessing information about training to assess its quality and alignment to their organizational needs. What might this mean for your LBS agency and how you market your services?

Most LBS agencies market their services through a variety of means, such as:

- Social media
- A website
- Brochures and pamphlets
- Community presentations
- Word of mouth

How much though does the average LBS agency contextualize their message(s) according to the marketing medium they are using? And why would how you market matter?



Customizing Marketing

What do employers say about marketing?

Research further identified that employers find “...information flow is usually just one way...but they (employers) might need a more customized answer.” This idea of customizing messaging can seem a bit far-fetched. After all, it can be difficult enough just to develop a flyer that explains your agency and what your agency can do, let alone customize it to different audiences. But take a moment to think

about if/how you could customize information about the training you can and do offer. We'll get you started with some ideas under social media.

What does this mean for LBS agencies?

How do you currently provide information about your training to potential learners and the community at large?	How could you customize information you send out this way?
Social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find out where employers are on social media – what platform(s) do they use? • Look at key message’s employers post about and what hashtags they use. Use the same hashtags in your posts. • Identify who employers interact with online (follow their social media). Some employers have a “follow back” policy. If you follow them, they’ll follow you!
Website	
Brochures and pamphlets	
Presentations	
Word of mouth	
Other	

Case Studies

Let's take a look at how we can use information about marketing to employers to engage our companies in our case studies.

Case Study #1: Employer A

A local brake manufacturer (Employer A) with a large workforce of approximately 180 employees recently hired personnel who lacked manufacturing experience. Employer A hired these “lower-skilled” employees because of a “tight” labour market in which workers were scarce. They made employee retention their top priority because of the labour shortage. Employer A wants their staff and the community to know they offer excellent wages and benefits and emphasize on-the-job learning as part of a “culture of learning” at their workplace.

Employer A approached the Workforce Planning Board in your area. Over the years, your regional literacy network has been developing stronger relationships with the Workforce Planning Board, so the Planning Board approached your regional literacy network who brought up the need at a Literacy Service Planning meeting. The Planning Board staff mention that Employer A seems interested in building the math and communication skills of employees but is uncertain what this kind of programming might look like.

Given MLITSD's focus on Skills for Success you have attended a webinar and a podcast on workplace literacy. You remember that using authentic workplace materials can really enhance the outcomes of training as well as help employers see the benefit of skills development training for employees. You file this information away in the back of your mind.

Marketing: You would like to set up a meeting with Employer A. Before you even contact them, you decide that you need to know more about their business. After all, you don't know anything about manufacturing brakes! You notice that this company also has facilities in several other parts of Ontario. On the website, under “Training,” you notice that the training that is discussed sounds like it's only for upper management.

Case Study #2: Employer B

A local recycler (Employer B) with over 150 employees has many new Canadians on staff. Most of their recent hires have limited English language skills and have never worked in Canada. Employer B faces a tight labour market and wants to retain its employees. Like Employer A, they are committed to remaining a competitive workplace that offers employees excellent wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement. Employer B believes that on-the-job training is necessary to encourage a “culture of learning” at their workplace. They have many employees, including native English speakers, for whom they want to provide skills training.



A member of your Board of Directors was at a Chamber of Commerce event and met the manager of Company B. The manager and your director struck up a conversation and your director mentioned it's possible that your LBS agency may be able to address at least some of the skill development needs of Employer B. There are definitely some English language skills development needs.

You have a staff meeting to discuss this potential opportunity. Given that there are large numbers of employees for whom English is their Second Language, one of your staff asks if you could offer training that offers some sort of recognition or certificate. If your LBS agency and Employer B can reach an agreement about the needs for workplace literacy training, you know you are going to want to document the outcomes of the training in a meaningful way.

Marketing: You know that your LBS agency may not be able to meet the needs of all employees. What if these employees need ESL? What if the employer asks about assessing foreign credentials? You attended a webinar recently that talked about the increasingly diverse workforces in Ontario and the need for inclusivity. You begin to reflect on what your LBS agency can do in these areas or who you may be able to partner with in the community. The Local Immigration Partnership comes to mind.



Identify your Message

As an LBS agency manager, you are accustomed to marketing adult literacy services to community agencies, social services, employment services etc. However, marketing to employers requires a unique approach. Time is money!

Words to Describe Skills Development

Generally speaking, we do not recommend you market “literacy” to employers. Realistically, the word “literacy” carries a stigma and may be off putting to some employers who like to think of their employees as being “literate.” Of course, the range of skills covered by the word literacy is significant, but these nuances are not always fully understood by individuals who do not work in the LBS field.

So how are you supposed to talk about literacy without using the word literacy? We suggest that you use other descriptors to talk about what it is you can do for employers – words like skills development, communication skills, math for the workplace, and supervisory skills. Some LBS agencies have framed literacy as part of professional development, and it is the term professional development that is used when communicating skill-building opportunities to employees and employers.

Benefits to Employers

There are several benefits of workplace training for employers:

Improved productivity: By providing training to employees, employers can help them become more efficient and effective at their jobs, which can lead to increased productivity and profitability.

Enhanced skills and knowledge: Training can help employees stay up to date with new technologies, industry best practices, and changes in regulations. This can be especially important in industries that are rapidly evolving.

Increased safety: Training can reduce mistakes and increase overall workplace safety.

Higher retention rates: Employees who feel that they are learning and growing on the job are more likely to stay with an organization for the long term. This can help reduce the cost of employee turnover.

Greater employee satisfaction: Training can help employees feel more valued and fulfilled in their work, which can lead to higher levels of employee satisfaction and engagement. It can help improve communication between all groups in a workplace.

Better company reputation: Companies that are known for investing in employee training and development are often seen as more attractive places to work, which can help improve the company's reputation and make it easier to attract top talent.

What Services Can You Provide?

The key messages you want to share with employers may depend on the services you think you can provide them. What are your agency's strengths? What services or types of programming do you provide? Digital literacy? Soft skills? Math? One-on-one assessments? We suggest you brainstorm a list. And if you provide targeted programming, it might be useful to identify the length of programming you have ready to go.

We know that many employers will have employees for whom English is not their first language. And some employers will be increasingly reliant upon hiring English as a Second Language (or ESL) employees. While ESL is a system that differs from LBS, you may wish to think about the extent to which you can serve learners who may identify as being ESL. What are your currently agency policies around supporting ESL learners? Are there ESL services in your community? Do they support delivery in the workplace?

Often employers are as unaware of ESL programs and services as they are about LBS. While you do not need to provide ESL programs and services, it might be helpful for you to be aware of any such programs and services that exist in your community. Employers are not keen on service silos, so it

might be better to say, “Well, we don’t provide foreign credential assessments, but we know who does!”

What Is Your Value Proposition?

There is a lot of training available to employers. Private and corporate training divisions abound, and they present themselves and their offerings in very professional ways. So how do LBS agencies compete with that?

Here are a couple of suggestions. Surprisingly, most employers only offer training to management. It is much less likely that frontline or entry-level employees receive training apart from the basics such as WHMIS or First Aid. Some employers are surprised to even hear that the types of training LBS agencies can provide are useful and appropriate for entry-level or frontline workers.

Employers as Customers

LBS programming is well known for being client - or learner-centred:

Learner-centred: LBS service providers respect learners and provide a supportive learning environment. They help learners to set achievable goals and develop a learner plan to achieve them.

Source: LBS Service Provider Guidelines

One of the key differences between workforce and workplace literacy is that in workforce delivery, the learner drives the learning. When it comes to workplace literacy, it is the employer who primarily drives the learning. Employers and their needs are at the heart of development and delivery. However, this doesn’t mean that employees don’t also benefit from training through workplace literacy.

Individualized Approach

LBS agencies create individualized training programs and are adept at customizing learning materials to reflect specific needs. LBS agencies can apply these same techniques – individualization and customization – to a workplace and, in doing so, set themselves apart from other typical trainers for the workplace. Since few other trainers address foundational skills, LBS agencies can make the argument that by providing foundational skills to employees, any other training that is offered is going to be received better and employees will learn more effectively.

Holistic Approach

Another area where LBS agencies have significant experience is in recognizing barriers to learning that differ from adult learner to adult learner. This degree of customization rarely happens in corporate training – the type of training during which every employee gets the same booklet and the same information, regardless of how it lands. LBS can offer the identification of wraparound services and recognition for different learning styles among employees.

Contextualized Materials

And speaking of contextualized materials, LBS programs have a solid track record of producing, sharing, and using contextualized learning materials and curricula. Doing so is embedded in the task-based approach that drives the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF).



Create an Impact Statement

Contextualization has come up a couple of times. It's important to customize for employers because they (like most people) are very sensitive to their time is being wasted...So while you may have impact statements – based on your LBS agency's vision or mission – this impact statement may need to look and read differently.

We invite you to think of these questions:

Impact Statement Exercise

What is unique about your LBS agency?	
What change(s) do you envision your agency making or contributing to?	
What are your advantages?	

Sample Impact Statement: Our goal is to improve the overall system. Investing in the employee is investing in the organization. We see the bigger picture while supporting the individual.

Not sure if you got it right? Share it with an employer or two and get some feedback!

Case Studies

Let's now look at how developing your agency's key messages can attract employers.

Case Study #1: Employer A

A local brake manufacturer with a large workforce of approximately 180 employees recently hired personnel who lacked manufacturing experience. Employer A hired these "lower-skilled" employees because of a "tight" labour market in which workers were scarce. They made employee retention their top priority because of the labour shortage. Employer A wants their staff and the community to know they offer excellent wages and benefits and emphasize on-the-job learning as part of a "culture of learning" at their workplace.

Employer A approached the Workforce Planning Board in your area. Over the years, your regional literacy network has been developing stronger relationships with the Workforce Planning Board, so the Planning Board approached your regional literacy network who brought up the need at a Literacy Service Planning meeting. The Planning Board staff mention that Employer A seems interested in building the math and communication skills of employees but is uncertain what this kind of programming might look like.

Given MLITSD's focus on Skills for Success you have attended a webinar and a podcast on workplace literacy. You remember that using authentic workplace materials can really enhance the outcomes of training as well as help employers see the benefit of skills development training for employees. You file this information away in the back of your mind.

You would like to set up a meeting with Employer A. Before you even contact them, you decide that you need to know more about their business. After all, you don't know anything about manufacturing brakes! You notice that this company also has facilities in several other parts of Ontario. On the website, under "Training," you notice that the training that is discussed sounds like it's only for upper management.

Identify your Message: You decide that there are two things your LBS agency can do that might make working with your agency attractive to this employer. You have expertise in providing training on foundational skills – the kinds of skills that other skills can be built on top of. And your agency and your regional network are very well connected with other LBS agencies and support organizations around the province. If you can work with Employer A, Employer A would have a competitive advantage and one to share with other Employer A sites around Ontario.

Case Study #2: Employer B

A local recycler (Employer B) with over 150 employees has many new Canadians on staff. Most of their recent hires have limited English language skills and have never worked in Canada. Employer B faces a tight labour market and wants to retain its employees. Like Employer A, they are committed to remaining a competitive workplace that offers employees excellent wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement. Employer B believes that on-the-job training is necessary to encourage a “culture of learning” at their workplace. They have many employees, including native English speakers, for whom they want to provide skills training.

A member of your Board of Directors was at a Chamber of Commerce event and met the manager of Company B. The manager and your director struck up a conversation and your director mentioned it’s possible that your LBS agency may be able to address at least some of the skill development needs of Employer B. There are definitely some English language skills development needs.

You have a staff meeting to discuss this potential opportunity. Given that there are large numbers of employees for whom English is their Second Language, one of your staff asks if you could offer training that offers some sort of recognition or certificate. If your LBS agency and Employer B can reach an agreement about the needs for workplace literacy training, you know you are going to want to document the outcomes of the training in a meaningful way.

You know that your LBS agency may not be able to meet the needs of all employees. What if these employees need ESL? What if the employer asks about assessing foreign credentials? You attended a webinar recently that talked about the increasingly diverse workforces in Ontario and the need for inclusivity. You begin to reflect on what your LBS agency can do in these areas or who you may be able to partner with in the community. The Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) comes to mind.

Identify your Message: After a couple of phone calls and a meeting with your Local Immigration Partnership, you consider your impact statement. You believe that there is value in presenting to this employer that your LBS will support the employer not only in addressing employee needs that fall under the LBS umbrella, but that you can also support employees with other wraparound supports they may need.

Making the Ask

Hopefully, at this point, you will have one or more employers who are interested in finding out more about what your LBS agency can do for them. That's the first step. Now, it's time to make the "ask." At this point, you may want to work a few more key points into your conversation with them.

Emphasize Investment

As not-for-profit organizations, most LBS agencies are accustomed to reaching out to community partners and hoping that the other party will see the value of partnership. LBS agencies have some additional key messages they can share with employers to encourage employers to partner with adult upskilling organizations.

You can suggest that partnering with an LBS agency will not only support the employer's employees, but also enable the employer to make a difference in the community. By working with an LBS agency, an employer is:

- Raising the profile of the LBS agency and the cause it promotes (continuous learning)
- Increasing adult skill levels in the region
- Contributing to the reduction of poverty
- Increasing the amount of skilled labour in the region

Be Exclusive

It's important to note here that LBS agencies have the right to either say "no thank you" to an employer or to restrict themselves to working with select employers. You want to work with employers who either share your philosophy of the value of skills development or who, with some additional conversation, you believe will get to that understanding.

LBS agency services (like assessment) are not to be used to weed out employees with weaker levels of skills. Consider what attributes you might be looking for in an employer.

Ways to Market

When you are marketing and preparing to make the "ask", you may choose to do so one on one with employers or you may choose to present to a group of employers. Here are some ideas for how you might approach employers:

- **Host an event** – Consider a breakfast meeting or an after-work get-together. Employers are usually easier to engage at the beginning or at the end of a workday.

- **Provide an employer lunch** – If you are going to try to attract employers in the middle of the day, you might want to offer them something to eat. While employers may be busy, they still need to eat!
- **Do a lunch and learn over Zoom** – This approach, while less personal, has the added advantage of reducing travel time to and from an event.
- **Get on the agendas for business associations** – This suggestion goes back to working with organizations that support a group of businesses. It can be an efficient way of getting your message out to many employers.
- **Collaborate!** – It may not be necessary for you to market to employers on your own. Consider working with other LBS agencies in your community to craft messages and do outreach.

The Bottom Line

We often hear about employers' bottom lines, but LBS agencies have bottom lines, too. Targets to reach, limited resources...

So, when the question of cost comes up, how will you deal with it? You may think you don't have to iron out costs from the get-go, but we are talking about marketing in this module. It may be necessary to specify in your marketing materials if your workplace literacy services are going to be free or not.

Case Studies

Let's review how to make the "ask" with our two case studies.

Case Study #1: Employer A

A local brake manufacturer with a large workforce of approximately 180 employees recently hired personnel who lacked manufacturing experience. Employer A hired these "lower-skilled" employees because of a "tight" labour market in which workers were scarce. They made employee retention their top priority because of the labour shortage. Employer A wants their staff and the community to know they offer excellent wages and benefits and emphasize on-the-job learning as part of a "culture of learning" at their workplace.

Employer A approached the Workforce Planning Board in your area. Over the years, your regional literacy network has been developing stronger relationships with the Workforce Planning Board, so the Planning Board approached your regional literacy network who brought up the need at a Literacy Service Planning meeting. The Planning Board staff mention that Employer A seems interested in building the math and communication skills of employees but is uncertain what this kind of programming might look like.

Given MLITSD’s focus on Skills for Success you have attended a webinar and a podcast on workplace literacy. You remember that using authentic workplace materials can really enhance the outcomes of training as well as help employers see the benefit of skills development training for employees. You file this information away in the back of your mind.

You would like to set up a meeting with Employer A. Before you even contact them, you decide that you need to know more about their business. After all, you don’t know anything about manufacturing brakes! You notice that this company also has facilities in several other parts of Ontario. On the website, under “Training,” you notice that the training that is discussed sounds like it’s only for upper management.

You decide that there are two things your LBS agency can do that might make working with your agency attractive to this employer. You have expertise in providing training on foundational skills – the kinds of skills that other skills can be built on top of. And your agency and your regional network are very well connected with other LBS agencies and support organizations around the province. If you can work with Employer A, Employer A would have a competitive advantage and one to share with other Employer A sites around Ontario.



Making the Ask: As Employer A has at least expressed an interest in discussing training, you send an email to the head of Human Resources. You emphasize that everyone needs training in today’s labour market and that providing such training can increase employee retention. After a follow-up email, the head of HR agrees to meet with you.

Case Study #2: Employer B

A local recycler (Employer B) with over 150 employees has many new Canadians on staff. Most of their recent hires have limited English language skills and have never worked in Canada. Employer B faces a tight labour market and wants to retain its employees. Like Employer A, they are committed to remaining a competitive workplace that offers employees excellent wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement. Employer B believes that on-the-job training is necessary to encourage a “culture of learning” at their workplace. They have many employees, including native English speakers, for whom they want to provide skills training.

A member of your Board of Directors was at a Chamber of Commerce event and met the manager of Company B. The manager and your director struck up a conversation and your director mentioned it’s possible that your LBS agency may be able to address at least some of the skill development needs of Employer B. There are definitely some English language skills development needs.

You have a staff meeting to discuss this potential opportunity. Given that there are large numbers of employees for whom English is their Second Language, one of your staff asks if you could offer training that offers some sort of recognition or certificate. If your LBS agency and Employer B can reach an agreement about the needs for workplace literacy training, you know you are going to want to document the outcomes of the training in a meaningful way.

You know that your LBS agency may not be able to meet the needs of all employees. What if these employees need ESL? What if the employer asks about assessing foreign credentials? You attended a webinar recently that talked about the increasingly diverse workforces in Ontario and the need for inclusivity. You begin to reflect on what your LBS agency can do in these areas or who you may be able to partner with in the community. The Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) comes to mind.

After a couple of phone calls and a meeting with your Local Immigration Partnership, you consider your impact statement. You believe that there is value in presenting to this employer that your LBS will support the employer not only in addressing employee needs that fall under the LBS umbrella, but that you can also support employees with other wraparound supports they may need.

Making the Ask: You think that there are several employers locally who have many employees with limited language skills. You suggest to the CEO of the Chamber of Commerce that the Chamber host an employer lunch that you and the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) could present at. The CEO knows that retention of employees is a concern for many employers and agrees. You emphasize that the idea is not to promote a “one size fits all” type of training, but that your agency and the LIP are interested in addressing specific needs of employers that fall within your respective mandates. The event is scheduled, Employer B attends, and the manager of Employer B approaches you after the presentation to ask about next steps.



Organizational Needs Assessments

When you approach an employer about workplace literacy, you will want to introduce the idea of an Organizational Needs Assessment (ONA) – what you will do to determine skills development needs.

Overview

The process of conducting an ONA is not a set one. It probably won't be linear, even if you set out with that intention!

It could include several meetings, tours, interviews, conversations, correspondence, etc.

Each employer you deal with will have a different approach, a different way of doing things, and a different level of knowledge, requiring flexibility on your part as you work through the process.

The steps we are walking through today are meant to provide guidance only. In some cases, you won't need to do all of the steps. In other cases, you may do the steps in a different order.

Our next module in this series – Module 2 – is all about conducting Organizational Needs Assessments, so we won't dig deeply into the process of doing so here. It is enough to perhaps plant the seed with an employer that now that the employer is interested in building skills among their employees and

they are interested in working with your LBS agency, there are still a few more things to determine, such as:

- What kind(s) of training will be delivered?
- How long will the training be?
- How will training be delivered?
- What else do you need to know about employee skill levels and how can you find this information out/accommodate different skill levels?
- Will employees be paid for any of their time in training?
- Will the training be mandatory or optional?
- How will the training opportunities be communicated to employees?
- How will the training be paid for?
- What kind of documentation/paperwork will be required? (The answer will depend on whether the training is being offered with LBS funding or on a fee-for-service basis)

Does One Size Fit All?

When it comes to Organizational Needs Assessments, one size does not fit all. We suggest you consider ONAs through the lens of scalability. Will an ONA take the same amount of time with a small employer that has ten employees as it will in a large manufacturing setting with 1000 employees? Definitely not. And some employers will identify multiple needs (math, communication, and soft skills training) while others may only need some specific digital support (assisting employees with using Zoom, for example).

Whether you are working with a large employer or a small one, you will want to make the ONA manageable and ensure that you, as an LBS agency, are steering the conversation so you don't find yourself promising more than what you're comfortable delivering.

Get Your Foot in the Door

Even if you are working with an employer who identifies multiple needs, you don't have to address all the identified needs at once. Ask the employer to prioritize the training and commit to addressing the first type of training on the list. Chances are that the employer isn't going anywhere, so delivering training at a pace that works for your LBS agency gives you time to cultivate the relationship with the employer, to learn as you go, and to build on your successes.

Professional Development

We have definitely heard that some LBS practitioners have reservations about approaching employers, especially if workplace literacy is new for their LBS agency.

You may find this PowerPoint named Workplace Literacy: Marketing to Employers useful as a starting point. At the end of this resource, we have also included a couple of sample emails/scripts for initial outreach to employers.

If you prefer to learn by listening, we have two podcasts on workplace literacy that you may find of use. Both were produced by Literacy Northwest and can be found [here](#). Brief descriptions of each can be found below.

1. **Adult Literacy: Your Gateway to Workplace Productivity (10:42)**

This Learn Launch focuses on how employers can develop and build their own workforce by utilizing local adult learning centres and working with Literacy and Basic Skills Networks.

2. **Workplace Literacy: Community Supports & Resources (21:03)**

This Learn Launch focuses on resources, tips and building capacities with employers and other key stakeholders in the world of workplace literacy.

Please keep in mind that LBS practitioners are very good at reaching out to community stakeholders. You can draw on these experiences and approaches. Talk to some of your other partners like your Workforce Planning Boards and Job Developers for insights into how talking to employers may differ from talking to other service agencies.



Collaboration

Over the years, LBS agencies and many other community/educational agencies have begun to collaborate or to collaborate more to increase their profile(s) and to make use of precious resources.

You may wish to collaborate with other LBS agencies when it comes to marketing to employers. There can be several advantages.

Benefits of Collaborative Marketing

First, it can be difficult to predict exactly what needs an employer will identify. Your LBS agency might be very accomplished at providing digital literacy programming, but a little less comfortable providing Level 1 and low-Level 2 “Professional Writing” programming. This is why it can be beneficial to discuss employers that are being approached and what the emerging needs are at Literacy Service Planning meetings. If your agency has done all the work to market, you do not wish to bring in another LBS service provider, but it might be an option if you feel the need to share the workload.

Collaborative marketing may expand the reach you are able to achieve by working on your own. The more employers begin to talk about skills development, Skills for Success, and the value of continuous learning, the better off all LBS agencies in the community will be. And, of course, the more likely it is that individuals in your community will hear about adult literacy or skills development programming.

Another benefit of collaborating is that you may begin to develop a pool of resources. All the resources that have been and will be developed through the current Skills for Success initiative will be brought together into one place, which is excellent. But there are already many workplace literacy resources and targeted curricula, not to mention assessment resources, that existed before the Skills for Success initiative. It can be hard to know about all of them but working with other LBS agencies at the community level may increase your awareness of, and access to, these resources.

And let’s not forget that LBS is built on niche delivery. Not all LBS agencies in a community deliver the same kinds of programming in the same ways or for the same client groups. Working in collaboration with other LBS agencies in your community is helpful because doing so means you can use your program’s expertise in areas you have already built ...It’s OK to stay in your lane!

Leveraging Employers with Multiple Locations

Not all employers fit nicely in a geographical box. For example, a company may have a head office in Sudbury, ON, and develop a workplace literacy programming relationship with a local LBS agency there. This same company may then conclude that they have found the workplace literacy programming of great benefit – so beneficial, in fact, that they’d like to look at workplace literacy delivery for their four other sites – in London, Kingston, Ottawa and Windsor.

It would be impossible for any LBS agency to serve all these areas. This is where partnerships and referrals can be developed and used. The LBS system can work together – with regional networks reaching out to other regional literacy networks – to make warm introductions, to provide details of successful workplace literacy programming, and to connect employers with local LBS agencies.



Timelines

So, how long does it take to market to employers? Of course, the answer is, “It depends.” There is no standard marketing timeline. Some employers may be very interested initially, but then something will happen in their industry or in their workplace that will impact their ability to stay on track and make decisions related to training.

Employers can be impacted by external factors just like LBS agencies. Some employers face higher than usual production times. Or lower production times during which they are laying off staff. They may have opportunities to expand which means they are onboarding new staff. They may be merging with another company. Initial conversations with employers can provide some insight into the types of things that can impact employer availability and attention to training.

To illustrate the variability in the length of time it can take to market to employers, we’ve used our two case studies.

Case Study Timelines

Case Study #1: Employer A

Timeline:	About the Employer: A local brake manufacturer (Employer A) with a large workforce of approximately 180 employees recently hired personnel who lacked manufacturing experience. Employer A hired these “lower-skilled” employees because of a “tight” labour market in which workers were scarce. They made employee retention their top priority because of the labour shortage. Employer A wants their staff and the community to know they offer excellent wages and benefits and emphasize on-the-job learning as part of a “culture of learning” at their workplace.
June 15, 2022 July 19, 2022	Finding the Employer: Employer A approached the Workforce Planning Board in your area. Over the years, your regional literacy network has been developing stronger relationships with the Workforce Planning Board, so the Planning Board approached your regional literacy network who brought up the need at a Literacy Service Planning meeting. The Planning Board staff mention that the Employer A seems interested in building the math and communication skills of employees but is uncertain what this kind of programming might look like.

<p>August 12, 2022</p>	<p>Skills for Success: Given MLITSD’s focus on Skills for Success you have attended a webinar and a podcast on Workplace Literacy. You remember that using authentic workplace materials can really enhance the outcomes of training as well as help employers see the benefit of skills development training for employees. You file this information away in the back of your mind.</p>
<p>August 28, 2022</p>	<p>Marketing: You would like to set up a meeting with Employer A. Before you even contact them, you decide that you need to know more about their business. After all, you don’t know anything about manufacturing brakes! You notice that this company also has facilities in several other parts of Ontario. On the website, under “Training,” you notice that the training that is discussed sounds like it’s only for upper management.</p>
<p>September 14, 2022</p>	<p>Identifying Your Message: You decide that there are two things your LBS agency can do that might make working with your agency attractive to this employer. You have expertise in providing training on foundational skills – the kinds of skills that other skills can be built on top of. And your agency and your regional network are very well connected with other LBS agencies and support organizations around the province. If you can work with Employer A, Employer A would have a competitive advantage and one to share with other Employer A sites around Ontario.</p>
<p>September 16, 2022 September 28, 2022</p>	<p>Making the “Ask”: As Employer A has at least expressed an interest in discussing training, you send an email to the head of Human Resources. You emphasize that everyone needs training in today’s labour market and that providing such training can increase employee retention. After a follow-up email, the head of HR agrees to meet with you.</p>

Case Study #2: Employer B

<p>Timeline:</p>	<p>About the Employer: A local recycler (Employer B) with over 150 employees has many new Canadians on staff. Most of their recent hires have limited English language skills and have never worked in Canada. Employer B faces a tight labour market and wants to retain its employees. Like Employer A, they are committed to remaining a competitive workplace that offers employees excellent wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement. Employer B believes that on-the-job training is necessary to encourage a “culture of learning” at their workplace. They have many employees, including native English speakers, for whom they want to provide skills training.</p>
<p>Manager and Director talk at Chamber event: May 25, 2022</p>	<p>Finding the Employer: A member of your Board of Directors was at a Chamber of Commerce event and met the manager of Company B. The manager and your director struck up a conversation and your director mentioned it’s possible that your LBS agency may be able to address at least some of the skill development needs of Employer B. There are definitely some English language skills development needs.</p>
<p>Staff meeting: June 21, 2022</p>	<p>Skills for Success: You have a staff meeting to discuss this potential opportunity. Given that there are large numbers of employees for whom English is their Second Language, one of your staff asks if you could offer training that offers some sort of recognition or certificate. If your LBS agency and Employer B can reach an agreement about the needs for workplace literacy training, you know you are going to want to document the outcomes of the training in a meaningful way.</p>
<p>Time for reflection: September 21, 2022</p>	<p>Marketing: You know that your LBS agency may not be able to meet the needs of all employees. What if these employees need ESL? What if the employer asks about assessing foreign credentials? You attended a webinar recently that talked about the increasingly diverse workforces in Ontario and the need for inclusivity. You begin to reflect on what your LBS agency can do in these areas or who you may be able to partner with in the community. The Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) comes to mind.</p>

<p>Identifying the message: October 4 and 5, 2022</p> <p>Meeting: October 18, 2022</p>	<p>Identifying Your Message: After a couple of phone calls and a meeting with your Local Immigration Partnership, you consider your impact statement. You believe that there is value in presenting to this employer that your LBS will support the employer not only in addressing employee needs that fall under the LBS umbrella, but that you can also support employees with other wraparound supports they may need.</p>
<p>Talk to CEO of Chamber about event: November 8, 2022</p> <p>Host event: December 7, 2022</p> <p>Approached by Employer B: December 15, 2022</p>	<p>Making the “Ask”: You think that there are several employers locally who have many employees with limited language skills. You suggest to the CEO of the Chamber of Commerce that the Chamber host an employer lunch that you and the (LIP) could present at. The CEO knows that retention of employees is a concern for many employers and agrees. You emphasize that the idea is not to promote a “one size fits all” type of training, but that your agency and the LIP are interested in addressing specific needs of employers that fall within your respective mandates. The event is scheduled, Employer B attends, and the manager of Employer B approaches you after the presentation to ask about next steps.</p>

Conclusion

We hope this module has been helpful to you in exploring how to market workplace literacy to employers. We've discussed how to find employers who might be interested in workplace literacy programming, and we've introduced workplace literacy within the context of Skills for Success. We've highlighted that contextualizing marketing approaches is an advantage when reaching out to employers. We spent some time encouraging LBS agencies to think about their unique value proposition and then how they might use their value proposition to make the "ask". We introduced the concept of the ONA and discussed the benefits of collaboration. Even if you decide that workplace literacy and actively reaching out to employers is not for you, given the labour market right now, you may be approached directly by an employer or two! And if you've reviewed this module, you will be better prepared to handle that request or, in the spirit of collaboration, to make a referral to another LBS agency in your community.



Appendices

Tool: Sample Email

Your Planning Board may have an annual survey of employers and they may ask questions of employers about employer interest in hearing from skill upgrading organizations. If you have a Planning Board that collects information on employers with this interest, it would be a great place to start:

Hello,

My name is (your name here) and I work for (your agency here). We help connect employment-bound adults who are improving their skills to entry-level jobs.

We are contacting you because you filled out the (insert survey name here) and said you were interested in talking to someone about skills upgrading and your workplace.

We would like to follow up with you to hear more about skills you need for your employees. Skills could include basic literacy and math, soft skills, or digital skills.

If you are interested, we would need 20 minutes of your time to talk over the phone or Zoom, whichever you prefer. A member of our team will be happy to schedule a conversation.

We look forward to hearing from you,

A couple of tips on the above. Referring to previous surveys they had completed shows follow-up and may make it easier to get responses. Be conscious of their time. If you say 20 minutes, make the meeting 20 minutes. Don't go over that unless employers are clearly engaged and tell you they can continue meeting.

Tool: Sample Letter

Hello,

Many employers are having a difficult time finding employees. Some employers find themselves hiring employees with lower levels of skills than would be ideal. And then it can be a challenge to retain these employees.

If this sounds like you, then we would like to talk to you about how we can support you.

My name is (your name here), and I am the Executive Director of (your agency here). For decades, we have been working with adult skills development programs in your community to support adults in getting and keeping jobs. Many of the people who attend our programs are already working – they are upskilling to keep the job they have or so that they can take advantage of promotional opportunities in their workplace. We are not like most corporate training programs. We don't sell "packaged" training.

We would like to meet with you, learn about your workplace, ask you some guided questions and propose training solutions to you. Once we have a good idea of what you need, we will work with our local programs to meet those needs and to provide foundational training that is contextualized to your workplace. Here are some of the types of programming we can tailor to your workplace:

- Digital skills
- Communication skills
- Math skills
- Soft skills (problem solving, conflict resolution, time management, etc.)

If you are interested in hearing more, I will be pleased to arrange a 20-minute information session with you – in person, by phone or by Zoom. Let me know which is most convenient for you.

I look forward to hearing from you and seeing how adult skills development programs might benefit your organization.