

# WELCOME

Linking Economic Development and  
Workforce Development

## SALON

**BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES ON OUR  
WORKFORCE CHALLENGES**

**July 31, 2008  
Sterling Hotel  
Sacramento, CA**



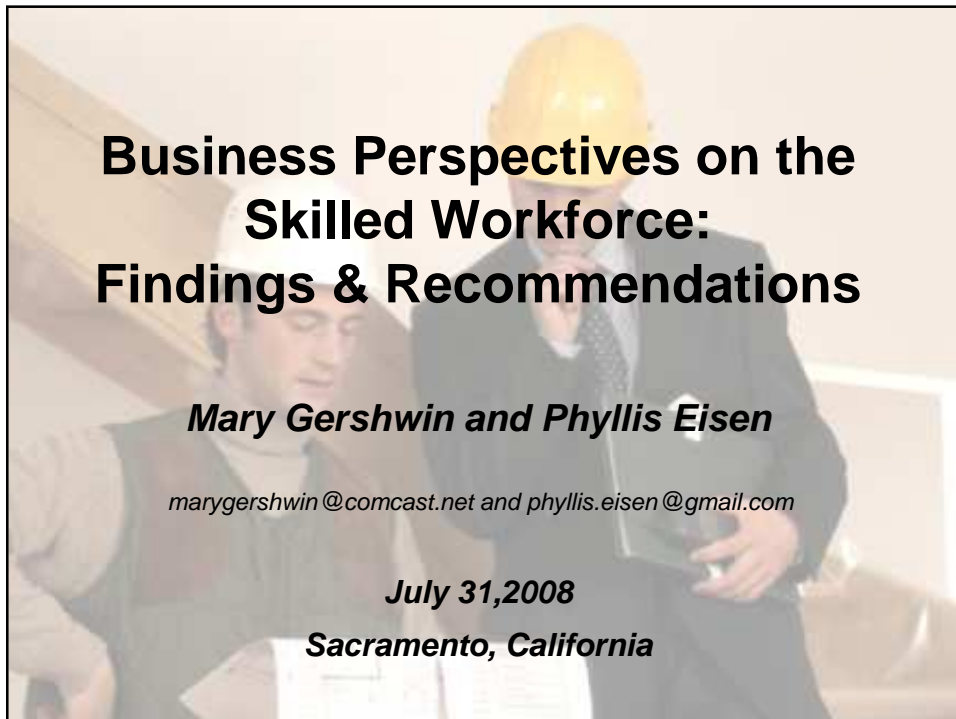
## **Business Perspectives on the Skilled Workforce: Findings & Recommendations**

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***July 31, 2008***

***Sacramento, California***



## **Objectives of the Study**

- **Assess the Need**
- **Define Key Issues**
- **Examine Employer Roles**
- **Map Allies and Community Context**
- **Identify Champions**

## **About the Study**

- A feasibility study designed to provide the CMTA with information and intelligence to guide workforce development strategy, leadership outreach, and priority development.
- Funded by grant support to Business Champions from the Lumina and Ford Foundations
- Joint letter requesting participation was from Jack Stewart, President of the CMTA and Darrell Steinberg, incoming Senator Pro Tem from the region. Fred Jones was commissioned to recruit participants.
- Designed and conducted by Mary Gershwin and Phyllis Eisen of the Business Champions Initiative.

## The Participants and Interviews

- **39** open-ended interviews with **47** regional business leaders
- **Sectors** represented included:  
construction, manufacturing, accounting, architecture, agriculture, automotive services, transportation, information technology, financial services, distribution, utilities
- Interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 90 minutes.



## Study Findings

1. Common issues of concern:  
**Workforce Demands, Systems, Results**
2. Employers believe they have a **role and responsibility** to build a skilled workforce
  - Growing Together
  - Growing Your Own
3. Employers have strong views on their partnerships:  
**Allies, Advocates and Obstacles**
4. The **growing immigrant workforce** is perceived as key to competitiveness
5. **Employers are getting value** from their investments
6. There is strong potential to develop the **Business Voice**

**FINDING #1**

**COMMON ISSUES: DEMANDS, SYSTEMS, RESULTS**

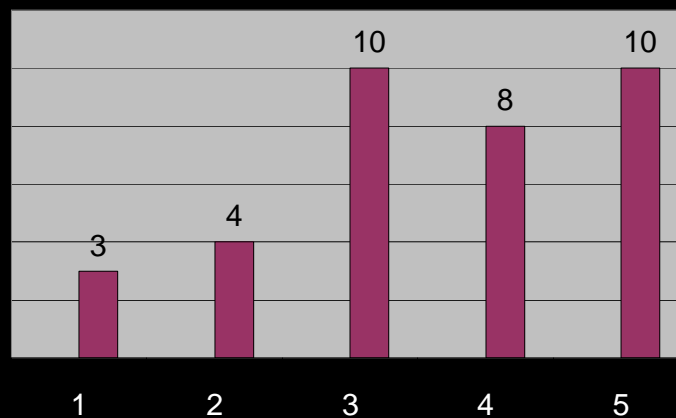
- **Our Demand for Skilled Workers**
- **Our Systems**
- **The Results**



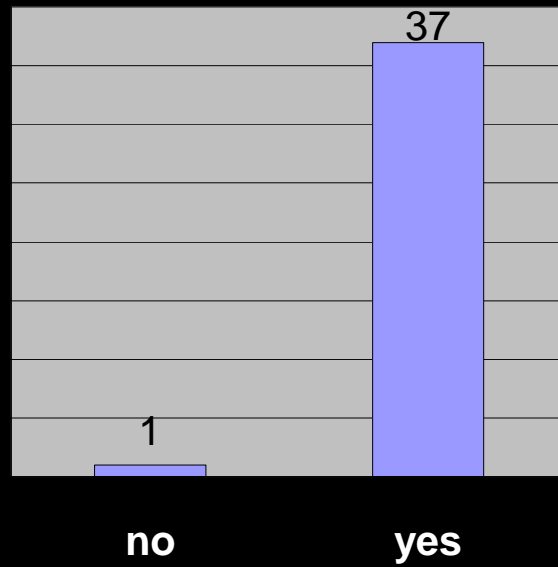
**FINDING #1**

**COMMON ISSUES: DEMANDS, SYSTEMS, RESULTS**

**On a scale of 1-5, how difficult is it for you to find skilled workers?**

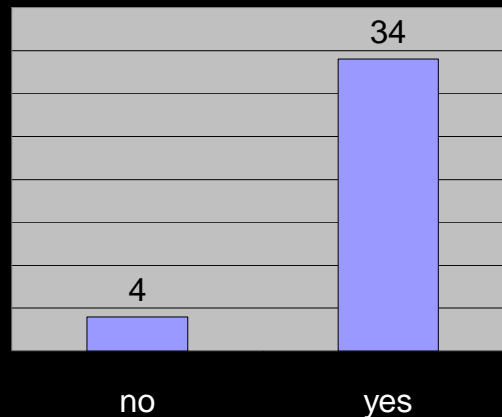


**FINDING #2:  
EMPLOYERS BELIEVE THEY HAVE A ROLE AND  
RESPONSIBILITY TO BUILD A SKILLED WORKFORCE**



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**Is the firm active in building a skilled workforce?**



**FINDING #2:  
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RESPONSIBILITY TO BUILD A SKILLED WORKFORCE**

## **Growing Their Own**

**Investing in employees with structured training and apprenticeship programs.**

**Internships targeted to those with specific skills**

*"We are building relationships with faculty. We want to mentor talented individuals."*

*"Recruitment is hard. Retention is not. We believe you bring in entry level people."*

**Scholarship Programs, tuition-reimbursement, flextime for workers**

**FINDING #2:**  
**EMPLOYERS BELIEVE THEY HAVE A ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY TO BUILD A SKILLED WORKFORCE**

## **“Growing your own” observations**

- **Apprenticeships are significant...** and frequently overlooked
- Most “grow your own” approaches involve **relationships and investments with educational institutions...** also overlooked
- Key barriers are **employers’ time and lack of information** about programs, options.

**FINDING #2:**  
**EMPLOYERS BELIEVE THEY HAVE A ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY TO BUILD A SKILLED WORKFORCE**

## **Growing Together**

### **Workforce/Education Focused Partnerships**

- CALPASC
- AG Programs
- Consumes Construction Program
- Project Lead the Way
- GET REAL
- LEED
- Trade Association Programs

### **Community partnerships with workforce strands**

– e.g., Valley Vision, Cap to Cap, Partnership for Prosperity...

**FINDING #2:  
EMPLOYERS BELIEVE THEY HAVE A ROLE AND  
RESPONSIBILITY TO BUILD A SKILLED WORKFORCE**

## **Growing together: Observations**

- Employer Collaborations:
  - Role and mission of various groups appear relatively clear and non-duplicative.
  - However, it seems unclear who (if any group) has an overall coordinating/connecting role.
  - Therefore, for newcomers to get involved the path is somewhat unclear. Several employers expressed interest in getting involved- especially in support of existing efforts, but don't know where to turn.
- Regionalism is the name of the game.
- Implications of the downturn- there is a clear sense of long term, sustained commitment.
- Green Workforce- how to prepare?

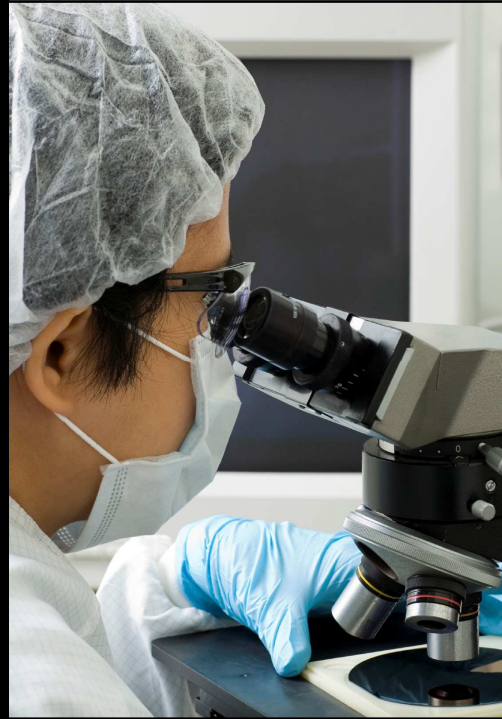


## **FINDING #3**

**Employers have strong views  
on their partnerships: Allies,  
Advocates and Obstacles**

***FINDING #4***

**The growing  
immigrant  
workforce is  
perceived as  
key to  
competitiveness**



**FINDING #5: EMPLOYERS ARE  
GETTING VALUE FROM THEIR  
INVESTMENTS**



## **FINDING #6: THERE IS A STRONG POTENTIAL TO DEVELOP THE BUSINESS VOICE**

- Clear that there is a core group of leaders
- Need for policy and systemic challenges
- Clear Charge: Developing the middle-skilled workforce

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS:***

1. Be strategic with engagement and investment – state as catalyst
2. Focus on middle-skill jobs
3. Support partnerships
4. Cannot overlook basic skills