July 2021

INPUT AND PERSPECTIVES

In response to the Ontario Workforce
Recovery Advisory Committee (OWRAC)

Ontario

OWHC | Ontario
Workplace Health
Coalition

About the OWHC

The OWHC is a volunteer, not-for-profit, non-partisan organization, serving as a unifying structure among workplace health stakeholders, advocating for a comprehensive approach to creating healthy workplaces in Ontario. The activities of the OWHC can be categorized to include a membership option (consists of organizational members, individual members, and student members), digital media, semi-annual community of practice events, and advocacy.

Vision:
- Value employee mental, physical, and psychosocial health as fundamental to organizational success; and
- Adopt and implement a comprehensive approach to healthy workplace as an integral part of their business strategy and operations
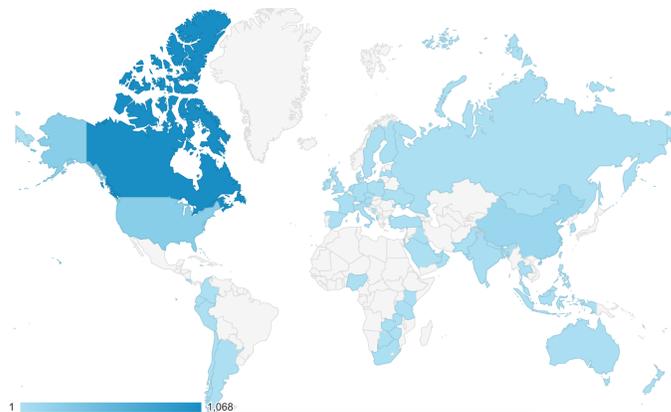
Mission:
- Bring together, educate and support all workplace stakeholders who are working towards creating mental, physical and psychosocial healthy workplaces

Goals:
1. A comprehensive workplace health approach is an integral part of organizational planning and management with ownership and accountabilities created
2. Healthy workplaces is a priority item on the agenda of Ontario governments
3. The full economic and social impact of comprehensive workplace health is measured

The geographic and demographic reach, an emphasis on digital reach, of the OWHC is illustrated below through Google Analytics and LinkedIn data collection.

Website visits by Country as shown in Google Analytics.

Most Views on LinkedIn by Company Size (Top 7):	Most Followers on LinkedIn by Seniority: (Top 7)	Most Followers on LinkedIn by Job Function (Top 7):
1) 10001+	1) Senior	1) Healthcare Services
2) 1001-5000	2) Entry	2) Business Development
3) 2-10	3) Director	3) Operations
4) 201-500	4) Manager	4) Human Resources
5) 1	5) Owner	5) Community and Social Services
6) 11-50	6) VP	6) Education
7) 5001-10000	7) CXO	7) Sales

Call to Action

Website link:
https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-workforce-recovery-advisory-committee-leading-future-work-ontario

To participate in the consultations by Ontario's Workforce Recovery Advisory Committee, the following Ontario Workplace Health Coalition (OWHC) Board Members have provided input and perspectives for the three pillars to help the Committee lead recommendations on the future of work.

Contributors

Subset of OWHC Board Members: Tiffany Rickard, Wayne Clancy, and Nathan Kolar

Question #1

Economic recovery: How to make Ontario the top jurisdiction with a world-class workforce and talent supply?

OWHC Answer:

Focus on supporting collaborative conversations with organizations to ensure that there is recognition and best practices sharing as it relates to wellbeing for employees from three perspectives… emotional (personal), physical (personal) and interactive (cultural). The interactive component has not been associated with wellbeing historically however does have a significant impact on emotional and physical wellbeing. As organizations tend to focus on measurement, it would be helpful to cross reference wellbeing outcomes with culture and engagement analytics.

The OWHC would also like to provide the following bulleted points in response to this question:

- Quality public education
- Quality public health-care
- Community spaces for healthy activity (parks, green space, recreation area, trails, community centres)
- Clean air
- Access to healthy food
- Support organizations who want to implement workplace health promotion (funding to develop, promote, and train organizations with a healthy workforce toolkit)

Further, for this question, ensuring stakeholders are on the same page can be a point not to overlook. This means defining what world-class for Ontario really is, and what it isn't. This can help the Committee by leading to deliverables such as the creation of a credo, or overall glossary of terms during the course of the work by this Committee. That way, communication to the workforce and talent supply can be focused, consistent, and therefore iterated on over time. For another point about a world-class workforce and talent supply, the questions being asked by workers are changing. There is a quote which goes "the lives we live can be directed by the questions we ask". The future of work will begin to ask more questions pertaining to the triple bottom line (people, planet, and profit), along with similar domains in that of social responsibility, conscious capitalism, and ESG practices (environment, social, governance). To reference a body of work, the concept of being socially responsible is a principle of a human-centred organization, ISO 27500:2016. All in all, the future of work will ask more questions about how someone can be a part of something bigger than themselves through,, and how can someone help others and vulnerable populations, as well as the environment, along the way of their career and work. Lastly, for a world-class workforce and talent supply relating to workplace infrastructure, a specific example to highlight for workplace infrastructure is the presence of healthy buildings. Over the last few years, green buildings (LEED) gained momentum and a market presence, and healthy buildings are an extension of this. Healthy buildings relate to how

indoor spaces drive worker performance through the status of one's health (air quality, thermal control, feelings of safety and security, water supply, etc). The Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health hosts literature on their 9 Foundations of a Healthy Building, and two entities in the healthy buildings space for best practices and certifications are Fitwel and the WELL Building Standard.

Question #2

Strengthening Ontario's competitive position: In an increasingly remote, global and technologically advanced economy, how will we ensure that Ontario remains the best place in North America to recruit, retain, and reward workers?

OWHC Answer:

Organize and support the 'culture' of work within Ontario and how there is an interactive and collaborative approach to optimizing working culture. This helps current organizations thrive and attract new organizations and investments for all of the right reasons. These 'stories' would resonate both with talent and with investors. This can best be done through private public partnerships.

The following bulleted points have been thought of for this question, for providing living conditions to keep native Ontarians here and to attract others:

- Universal high-speed Internet access
- Safe communities
- Reward:
    - Cost of living
    - Taxes

As an extension to the mention of supporting the 'culture' of work within Ontario, is the pragmatic aspect of creating interactions within a remote economy. For one line of thinking, culture can be broken down into the daily interactions between workers. Remote workers who do not have in-person interactions can still brush shoulders and have in-person interactions with counterparts within their local and surrounding community, and all the better if counterparts work within a similar industry, meaning a Committee recommendation of sponsoring community coworking spaces, in-person events (keynote speakers, panels, etc.), and showcases or trade shows. A result of this is remote workers being given the refreshing opportunity to still engage with their community, and conduct their work elsewhere in that of community coworking spaces rather than solely in the same room and desk of a home office. This is about how a remote, global, and technology advanced economy can be isolating for workers who are working alone, all the more likely for loneliness and disconnection from coworkers and peers to occur. In addition, a Committee recommendation of creating media content around social proof, so that workers know they are not alone, can be vital. This social proof content can be in the form of

featuring Ontario workers and their stories or work through whitepapers, case studies, or roundtable focus group sessions. In summation, creating a local community of workers who engage with the global economy yet still have in-person interactions within their community, and who notice the social proof of workers thriving in Ontario, can then bring their knowledge, experience, and capital to their local economy of Ontario.

Question #3

Supporting workers: How to ensure Ontario's technology platform workers benefit from flexibility, control, and security?

OWHC Answer:

Workers are supported in a number of ways including organizational, governmental and community. All three are required to create a regional employment brand and also to enable organizations to thrive together. Often the community connection is critical and overlooked and with the shift to either full or hybrid remote work the community and work cultures are being blended and the best practices outcome is going to be a hybrid model moving forward. Our research has shown that many workers are less connected to their communities today as they are to their organizations.

Since the workflow and structure of technology platform workers is a relatively new and evolving concept, involving technology platform workers themselves in discussions about how to support them in terms of flexibility, control, and security, can be paramount. By asking the workers themselves, this notion of bottom-up planning or sometimes referred to as participatory planning, ensures voices are heard, and the recommendations for problem-solving by the Committee are representative of the right problems for workers at the right time, for effectiveness and efficiency of the problem-solving to begin with. Asking workers themselves can be done in the form of surveys, individual discussions, focus group sessions, and open-ended forms. What the OWHC does believe to be a tried-and-true means of supporting workers, and in this case supporting technology platform workers, is instilling growth and development in the structure of the work. Note, growth and development is one of the psychosocial risk factors for building a psychologically healthy and safe workplace, as outlined in the Standard (the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace - CAN/CSA-Z1003-13/BNQ 9700-803/2013). This is about technology platform workers having a guiding path, or even somewhat of a guiding path, to professional or personal growth, which can look like participation in paid trainings, exposure to a mentorship, education and learning materials, or access to remote conference sessions. When this occurs, as technology platform workers look to become more 'senior/experienced' in their role (or develop their personal skills), they can feel a sense of support because of the possibility of advanced responsibilities or opportunities provided to them, instilling realistic hope, optimism, and purpose in their work.