



Takeaways from the Community Clean Technology Partner Townhall on 7/19/17.

How to Read: the red text are the **Gaps / Needs Improvements** identified by the businesses, the green text is the **Possible Solutions / Recommendations** identified by the community partners. Black text is the general comments that apply to the section.

1. **Employers are saying they have challenges with existing employees who are resistant to change in technology to upgrade their skills. A strong mentality of “we have always done it this way” exists within the workforce.**
  - a. This might be able to be addressed by continuing education programs at community colleges.
    - i. It's a conundrum because the expense is enormous with technology changing quickly.
    - ii. Perhaps the training needs to happen in the workplace.
  - b. People have become stagnant, change can be part of their education.
  - c. “We've always done it this way” means there isn't a culture or policy of change in the industry. Input should be at the leadership level and not a portfolio of experiences for the people already saying no.
  - d. The industry/companies that were involved in the roundtable discussion need to define their vision more clearly. Perhaps they need a consultant to facilitate, support and train employees on change management.
  - e. Partners inquired if there is any support for businesses that are interested in organizational change to help them meet workforce needs. They may need to invest in this type of support.
  - f. Participants were interested in what incentives exist and what are identified as the disadvantages of pursuing organizational change.
    - i. The motivation to change needs to be developed.
    - ii. Because change is difficult to implement and causes disruptions, organizations need to expect to slow down expectations during the transition.
  - g. Put in “Change Management”
    - i. Being more strategic in implementing change. Update measurements for success.
2. **Self-service options aren't available to consumers because internal staff are hesitant to change.**



- a. Make training mandatory to employees. Yearly training to update and review technological changes. Employers should have yearly reviews on changes and reinforce the value of this training.
- b. It's a leadership issue, not an employee issue
  - i. Change has to start from leadership level.
- c. Idea of self service options represents a threat to the worker. They are worried about their job becoming obsolete.
  - i. How do you ensure that self-service options won't replace workers?
  - ii. But if there is a risk of job losses, leadership must be transparent. Identify what the staff role morphs into.
- d. Employers offering an incentive may be able to encourage employees to attend training and to get a better/higher skill set.
- e. Allow staff to be involved in the training planning process which will create buy-in. Allow staff to help define training needs and goals.
  - i. Employee incentives are great, but how does that fit into the bigger picture? Identify a few employee champions to lead the change.
- f. There is a King County change management trainer that might be able to be a resource.
- g. Continuing education is available through Everett Community College and Edmonds Community College. Continuing Education facilitators and instructors can help companies identify what they need.
  - i. Edmonds Community College has worker retraining programs, to help individuals re-enter the workforce. This is a 1-year program.
  - ii. The workforce system can help to promote the industry and focus on continuous education.
  - iii. There are companies who work with community colleges and high schools to recruit students into their apprenticeship programs while taking classes at college at the same time.
  - iv. WorkSource typically goes through the community colleges
- h. The community colleges have futurists who can look at trends and teach people how to evaluate what's coming down the line and possible solutions to those changes.
  - i. The utility industry is right on the cusp of major changes and will need change management assistance.
  - ii. A futurist can help determine upcoming needs and how to respond to those changes.
- i. How does this tie into longevity - long time employees may have trouble adapting.



- i. Can the workforce system help employers create internal career pathways to evolve and change through advancement? Instead of just bringing in new people, could the system help establish long term longevity amongst employees?
  - j. The larger the company, the slower change occurs because of its multiple layers.
    - i. Change is a cultural thing. Regardless of company size, it is possible for any company, with the right culture to be ready for change.
  - k. Employers can review everyday processes and streamline different functions similar to small scale lean manufacturing.
  - l. Some school district have green-sustainable-design-engineering courses for students.
    - i. Edmonds Community College had a clean tech program with certifications but it is no longer offered due to a lack of enrollment.
  - m. The focus should be on re-training incumbent workers. There is a high number of upcoming retirees within the utility industry.
  - n. Employers say they pay above average for entry level positions, but they don't have enough people who are properly trained.
    - i. Workforce system could possibly become a one-stop training center for the industry.
- 3. One of the challenges within the industry is the number of engineers who are age 55 and older. How do they attract and hire qualified replacement employees?**
  - a. Most of the employers within the energy sector have apprenticeship programs and that's the best way to recruit and train.
  - b. Employers should bring in apprentices while the 55+ employees are still on board to help with training.
  - c. How can employers retain their workforce?
    - i. Offer apprenticeships for career growth and pathways.
    - ii. Allow employees to see the company goals so they can determine where they fit within the larger plan.
    - iii. Identify pathways indicating pay increase opportunities so employees are able to set goals for themselves.



- d. Millennials are becoming a larger portion of the workforce. Leadership may need training to understand this particular segment of the workforce and what appeals and motivates them.
  - i. There is a lot of literature and research available to employers.
  - ii. Millennials think differently than other generations and leadership needs basic understanding to attract, retain, and manage the millennial workforce.
  - iii. Because of the limited number of young people with specific skill sets, they are often poached from one company to another. This may seem like “job hopping” and interpreted as disloyal to some hiring managers.
  - iv. Employers would like to identify job hoppers and the reason for higher churn rates. How can they make their companies more attractive and a place where people want to stay for longer periods?
- e. Need more opportunities to talk to high school & college students.
  - i. Create message that continuing in school is not for everyone and indicate what opportunities exist outside of academic tracks.
- f. **One barrier is Mathematics. There is a need for more applied mathematics taught in schools. Make math relevant to work.**
- g. Do employers need assistance in preparing entry level worker to move up?
  - i. Could WorkSource serve as a consultant for business?
  - ii. Could WorkSource provide incumbent worker training?
- h. **There are several young leadership and professionals within the field, and behind their fields. Some of them run via local chamber. If you are trying to bring people on to management, they need the help of those young professional program and community. Information can, young leader united, via united way.**
  - i. Edmonds Young Professionals [YPN@edmondswa.com](mailto:YPN@edmondswa.com)
  - ii. Mukilteo Young Professionals (Mukilteo Chamber of Commerce) <http://mukilteochamber.org/>
  - iii. Leadership Snohomish County <http://www.leadershipsc.org/>
  - iv. Young Leaders United, a division of United Way Snohomish County, is a network of young professionals that may be able to offer assistance. <https://www.uwsc.org/ylu>
  - v. Year Up (<http://www.yearup.org/>) Provides training that allows young, low-income individuals move onto professional career



pathways within one year. Local Year Up: 2607 2nd Avenue, Seattle 98121.

- i. Job seekers may be able to look into military and apprenticeship for training.
- j. An untapped group in the workforce is immigrants and refugees. This population is under-utilized.
  - i. One problem is that U.S. doesn't recognize some degrees and credentials from foreign countries. Human Resources block those who don't have certain degree.
    1. Welcome Back Center at Edmonds Community College (contact [elizabeth.patterson@edcc.edu](mailto:elizabeth.patterson@edcc.edu)) helps immigrants to translate their diploma and education transcripts.
- k. Older workers may be reluctant to acquire new technology skills due to their proximity to retirement.
  - i. For the company, it is better to focus on most recent hires and their pay, and incentivize acquiring new skills.
  - ii. Recognition of staff is very important at every level within the company.
  - iii. Providing extended time frames for workers to learn new skills might be appropriate for employees who are less tech savvy. Requiring training classes might be needed.
  - iv. In this industry, there is an "Engineering cliff" with a huge number of people nearing retirement at the same time. The challenge is how to keep your workforce current and recruit new people?
    1. Are they laying the ground for the newcomers?
    2. At a system level can we help them?
- l. How can we serve employers as a system and as a consultant? It is worldwide. What are the best practices? Can we provide those practices?
  - i. Look for models, organizations, or agencies that have a culture of recruiting people with the ability to learn.
    1. When hiring, it's important to determine if job seekers have a high level of curiosity and research skills.
    2. Hire for skills not experiences.
- m. Employers, workforce professionals and educational institutions need to communicate which skills will be needed in the future.
- n. Technology changes rapidly and it's difficult for schools to keep up with the change.
  - i. Have labor councils engage youth while they are still in school.



- ii. Work with OSHA, employers, and labor councils to understand the rules around 16-17 year olds (minors) in the workplace. What needs to happen for a change to OSHA regulations?
  - iii. Create a capstone hiring Project in high school.
- o. Trade UP is a collaboration with United Way, Snohomish County Labor Council, Mayor Kelly, Workforce Snohomish, and K-12 schools, and provides an opportunity to get employers involved.
  - i. It takes an active campaign to create curriculum – schools need to have a strong STEM program. Technology is a bridge to getting students outside to explore types of careers.
  - ii. Getting students connected and passionate is key.
  - iii. There may be grants to support this work with WA Energy, Puget Sound Energy, and other energy companies.
- p. Apprenticeships
  - i. In other parts of the country there are apprenticeship models that includes three days apprenticeship training with two days of education each week. Create a consortium of organizations to make it happen.
    - 1. Industry has to buy into this type of model.
    - 2. Companies would need to hire youth ages 16-18.
    - 3. Champion a work group consisting of local employers and labor councils to work to change laws regarding age limits within the workplace.
    - 4. Use a top down AND down up approach to get buy-in at every level.
  - ii. 1-2+2+2 model – Build partnerships with local apprenticeships.
  - iii. **Five-year programs are too much to ask of a worker.**
    - 1. **Comes down to communication. Employers don't see employees follow thru on 5-year plans.**
    - 2. **Apprenticeship as a whole in Washington State must change. Five years skills requirement is way too long.**
  - iv. West Valley High School in Yakima is a model of a good program. Juniors and seniors work at a company from Tuesday to Friday, 7-11 am and the rest of the hours they attend school.
    - 1. School districts may be limited by their own flexibility.  
Contact Mary Kay Bredeson: [mbredeson@everettcc.edu](mailto:mbredeson@everettcc.edu)
- q. Let parents know that this industry is a viable career option.
- r. Students can go to college and work in the trades, they can be inclusive.
- s. There is a big disconnect between secondary education and the unions.



- i. Apprenticeship is still a mystery to many.
- ii. People don't know how to get apprenticeships.

#### 4. Internship / Mentorship

- a. Internships. Students are having a tough time finding local internships and employers have difficulty in filling internship positions.
  - i. If the internship isn't required, students don't do it. But then they have a tough time finding jobs after they've finished their program of study.
  - ii. Employers asked how the workforce system interacts with higher education and internship programs.
    - 1. Typically the coordination is between higher education and employers. There is no central management for internships. Each college department handles their specific internship programs.
    - 2. A job developer at colleges and universities may be a good link between employers and those seeking internships.
      - a. Currently there are resources in place, people just need to be made aware of them.
      - b. It may be difficult to rely on faculty for internship coordination, there may need to be a centralized position. Although some colleges have people in those types of positions.
    - 3. It's not that the bridge isn't there, it's that students aren't finding the way to them. Students aren't even succeeding in the internship application yet. So, the job developers need to work closer with employers to help prep these students.
  - iii. Internships should be a partnership between education and employers.
    - 1. Having an internship program is beneficial to businesses. It provides an opportunity to see if a person is a good fit for the job and the company.
    - 2. Some companies want interns, but they don't know how to create an internship programs.
    - 3. Edmonds CC has a guideline on how to create an internship program. Contact Ann Penny: [apenny@email.edcc.edu](mailto:apenny@email.edcc.edu)



- b. Work study may also be an option for companies seeking student employees. Some schools allow students to work outside of campus.
- c. The Washington Centers of Excellence have community college programs that would develop students with a particular skill set.
  - i. Pacific Northwest Center of Excellence for Clean Energy  
<http://cleanenergyexcellence.org/>
  - ii. WISE Grant (WA Integrated Sector Employment) is headed up by the Aerospace/Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence  
<http://www.coeaerospace.com> Internships in Material Science available for students for WSU/Pullman.
- d. Campus Point helps to connect people with Internships in Seattle area. – Check their website.
- e. YouthWorks is a website connecting employers and internship/mentorship seekers.
- f. City of Lynnwood gets a lot of walk in request for internships.
- g. **It takes months to prepare for in advance to build an internship program.**
  - i. Set up expectations – what’s possible and what’s not.
  - ii. Employers need to have clear defined work flow.
  - iii. Job offers after internships are valuable.
- h. Follow model of east coast schools who establish a pipeline with companies for internships.
  - i. Northwestern University does this. Cultivate employers to participate.
- i. Internships can be an opportunity for recruiting. Build a robust “try before you buy” program. Internships are like a test drive of a worker.
- j. Pay higher wages.
- k. Internal culture/ job satisfaction is important.
- l. **Job classification should change as well. We need the young and the old because they all have a different motivation. The managers always want to remain the same because they are so institutionalized.**
  - i. Project base economy no matter in what industry.

## 5. Concerns with job seekers

- a. **New technology that younger generation is accustomed to makes for challenges in the workplace.**



- i. Their social development is different. Companies need to change internally.
  - ii. Manage expectations.
- b. New workers don't have required skills. Education system is not providing job ready skills.
- c. There is a disconnect with social skills due to technology.
- d. A lot of job applicants don't prepare when coming to an interview.
  - i. There are opportunities for employers to visit classes and talk about their company, or get involved in mock interviews. It's important to provide feedback to participants.
  - ii. Power Up workshops are available through WorkSource.
  - iii. School districts have started training on resume writing and employment beginning in 6<sup>th</sup> grade.
  - iv. Alumni associations from each school may be willing to help with resumes and interviews.

## 6. Other Comments

- a. For low income families and individuals, there are resources in Snohomish County that help individuals who are income eligible for utility assistance. Are there other resources?
  - i. Each utility company offers discounted rates for income eligible customers.
  - ii. Catholic community services provides assistance but funds are already depleted for this budget year.
  - iii. Snohomish County has funds available during cold months, but during the summer there is no funding.
  - iv. ANEW pays for energy/utilities sometimes for their clients. It is an emergency assistance fund, and there is eligibility requirements.
  - v. BFET has it written in the rise program, but it is a one-time deal.
    - 1. This is something utility companies have to deal with. There is a high number of low income people living in the county, that there aren't enough resources to fill all of the needs.
- b. Utility companies do not have any trouble in recruiting employees.
  - i. Hiring someone with experience has lower risk.
  - ii. The utility company gets 600 applications for 6 positions.
- c. Many Engineering graduates are heading out of state for work.



- d. There is a Higher Education to Employer pipeline problem.
- e. De-mystifying Workforce Snohomish's role, we need to create a better understanding within the community of what we do.

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