



Technology Employer Roundtable Notes

Workforce Snohomish, in collaboration with Snohomish County and Economic Alliance Snohomish County, has been convening monthly industry-focused employer roundtables to gauge and assess our region's workforce challenges. These roundtable events have identified issues that are industry-specific, as well as those seen across all types and sizes of employers. Each quarter, Workforce Snohomish shares the results with all interested community partners to help align and focus community resources.

Technology Employers met on 3/22/17 and identified multiple issues that they are facing within their workforce. The workforce community partners will continue to realign the community resources to address the deeper and more systemic issues facing the pipeline, retention, and development of the retail workforce. While solutions are being developed and implemented, the community of partners would like to make sure that current solutions for many of the issues raised currently exist and can help the engaged businesses.

The Following are the takeaways from the Technology Employer Roundtable Meeting on 3/22/17.

How to Read: underlined are the Different Sections, the red text are the **Gaps / Needs Improvements**, the green text are the **Possible Solutions / Recommendations**, and the black text are the general comments that apply to the section.

1. Issues raised by the employers when asked what concerns they perceive within their industry.

- a. Age bias, many of the companies favor younger workers and some companies actively push out experienced workers starting in their 40's and 50's depending on the company.
- b. Unclear job titles, which make it very hard to apply job experiences to new organizations and understand what skills are needed when individuals are applying for jobs within the tech industry.
- c. Workers within technology positions generally have a lack of communication and interpersonal skills. This is true whether it is with peers, customers, or leadership.
- d. It is hard to outreach for technological jobs on most job systems, as they do not have the skilled applicants that they are seeking.
 - i. Generally, Indeed is the best job platform to gain tech workers.
- e. There are disconnects between the technology skills needed and the higher education outcome skills. Commonly this is because training is centered around programming and development, while most jobs are service or maintenance centered.
- f. A lack of ICT skills.
- g. Some tech companies have been known to push people out at age 45.



- h. Finding workers that can pass a drug test.
- i. Difficult for job seekers to figure out which training to take to get tech jobs as each company can call similar positions different job titles.
- j. Technology changed quickly and training programs can be behind in teaching the current world applications. It is hard for people to keep up in the field.
- k. Regional transportation is lacking in capacity and options.
- l. Limitations in the level of cyber security skills and lack of workers in general.
- m. Shortage of a STEM workforce overall.
- n. STEAM programs within the state are not as good as the state claims to be nationally and they are vastly behind in international standards. Math, reasoning, logic, and reading are lacking.
- o. There are a lot of retirements happening and the skilled knowledge base is leaving the field.
- p. Lack of affordable office space locations and specifically Class A corporate office space.
- q. Staff recruiting for tech jobs in Snohomish County is hard because of competing jobs in King County.
- r. Salary competition with large corporations such as Amazon and Microsoft make it hard for smaller businesses within the area to keep employees.
- s. Smaller companies and public agencies have a hard time keeping people because a worker will leave once they have experience and have been trained. They job hop to higher paying positions and within many different organizations.

2. Solutions were identified and ranked by the employers.

- a. The development and increase of technology-related internships and training. (6 votes).
- b. Having or providing customer service skills training to workers within technology jobs since this is a generally an undeveloped skill within the field. (3 votes).
- c. Creating and investing in more affordable and larger Class A office space. (3 votes)
- d. The workforce system should improve and grow its interaction with small businesses. (3 votes)
- e. More investment on innovation centers and incubators for small businesses to have a place to develop their ideas and launch their startups. (2 votes)
- f. Have training include a better understanding of the different branches and sections that the field workers can enter into. Most schools train for the programming or development side of the field, however most jobs are within services and maintenance departments. There is the corporate or small businesses side of the field. At least letting students know that corporate programmer, which is how most trainings are set up, is not the only option and does not make up the majority of the field. (1 vote)
- g. Investment in and vastly improving STEM in schools and colleges. (1 vote)
- h. Increase problem solving skills within training. (1 vote)



- i. Create a common baseline language around job positions and technical skills. (1 vote)
- j. Adjust HR policy and procedure in the way they conduct and hire technical jobs. Such as experience and knowledge does matter more than certificates in the field. (1 vote)
- k. Different approach and attitude towards the millennial workforce as age bias greatly favors them over older workers. (0 votes)