



Thinking **BIG** and **BOLD** About the Future of the Upstate
Workforce and Skill Development
Thursday, January 31st 3-5 pm
BMW Zentrum

DISCUSSION NOTES

OPPORTUNITIES

Short-term

- Commit to act on this important issue. Identifying and moving forward on a specific action that will advance workforce and skill development.
- Continue to build partnerships and collaboration around the issue of workforce and skill development.

Medium –term

- Increase the availability of non-traditional education for working students.
- Create a process for validating credentials from the various programs that have been developed. There are so many now especially because of the internet.
- There are a significant number of non-violent ex-criminals who have the ability to join (re-join) the workforce, but encounter barriers related to retraining and most especially from employers unwillingness to consider hiring candidates with a criminal history. Statistics show that ex-criminals who are able to assimilate into the workforce are less likely to commit additional crimes, thus reducing the financial burden on the system.

Long-term

- Make the Upstate known for its well-prepared and well-positioned workforce
- Make the Upstate be known for its ethical workforce. Ethics in decision making is essential for genuine success- something we can all be proud of. It takes reciprocal relationships in organizations for this to occur because challenges are easier to work through when people are there to support one another.
- Increase graduation rates from high school through college.
- Shift expectations/ culture
 - There are many credentials that aid in becoming a productive and successful worker- 4 year degrees aren't the only way
 - We are educating students well, but we are missing a work ethic and people work differently now because of technology. We need to teach our children how to work hard. Technology is simplifying work. Don't just give people "the fish," teach them how to fish for themselves.
 - Use the potential in our senior population and in ex-offenders
- There is a trend of more and more work being done by less and less people. How do we sustain a workforce this way? Is this only the case in particular sectors? Do we need to pursue other sectors in order to sustain a workforce?
- There are jobs in the Upstate that aren't being filled, and lots of people who are unemployed. How can we bridge that gap? Do a gap assessment?

BIG AND BOLD IDEAS

Short –Term

- Create a regional workforce coalition and set up regular meetings of the workforce and skill development community to facilitate collaboration
- [Apprenticeship Carolina](#) helps companies register their apprenticeship program in every county in SC. There are many incentives for companies to do this such as a tax credit, formalization of the job training process, and having employees with credentials. Students/ apprentices go from a school to a registered apprenticeship program. Some companies in this program want to start introducing skills to students at the high school level.

Medium-Term

- With all of the good intention in the room (and in the Upstate), make a plan for sustainable action in workforce and skill development that is coordinated with all players that have an interest and/or mission in the issue. Make limited resources go further this way.
 - Need a base of facts and figures to go from. Where/ how to get these?
 - Identify the problems/ opportunities- they differ depending on the organization’s mission, so maybe identify one strategic overarching objective and work together on that to make progress.
 - Define what exactly we are trying to accomplish
- Create a list of companies and the type of training one can get at that company as an intern which then can create possibilities for employers to hire them or look for jobs at similar companies. This list could be hosted on the Upstate Information Hub.
- Take the model of public-private partnerships and spread it around the entire transportation cluster. The model is both industry and individually focused and sector-based, coming together to match needs and skills to create productive citizens.
- Develop a regional program that assists non-violent ex-criminals to gain needed skills and then helps connect them with employers willing to provide a second chance.
- Metrics- What gets measured gets done. Hold ourselves accountable. The consistency and sustainability of programs and whether or not they are working is important.
 - Who is responsible for creating and tracking them?
 - Every workforce training outfit has goals and measurements, but the goals need to be towards jobs supported by future employers.
 - Put a premium on job placement for jobs with labor market value- jobs that companies are hiring for

Long-term

- Make pre-K-14 to higher education seamless and leave prepared for jobs that are available today.
- Paradigm of expectations-First, we didn’t want people to be educated, but then peers passed us up. Paradigms in education are always changing and there is a shift that needs to happen again now.
 - Educate people for a purpose. Let folks know the purpose.
 - Business and education need to be connected with one another and engaged about what the other one needs. Seek out one another
 - In school, practice soft skills in addition to teaching them. Soft skills = “people” skills, conversation and negotiation skills.
 - Change the expectations and let them be known. Parents also need to help their children prepare and figure out their path in life including their educational path- and beyond- to work.
 - Build a consistent regional message on the importance and value of education for all ages (early childhood through life-long learning).
- Identify partners to develop the public-private partnerships applied to the transportation cluster across the Upstate for other sectors.
- Identify the policies in our state that restrict folks from engaging in workforce development and training and change them. Align SC policies that allow for all elements of skill and workforce development collectively.
- Take advantage of ALL of our human capital and don’t waste our human potential.

- Mature workforce (50+)- adjust to incorporate these experienced people who want to work. Can offer part-time jobs for these folks.
- Ex-offenders- can use the Gallup polling strength-finders assessment to help make sure these folks are placed based on their strengths. Placement rates are 80 plus percent and retention rates are even better. Is there a system in the Upstate already doing this? If so, enhance the existing system. If not, develop a system.
- Expand externships and clinicals to help train students. These are already requirements for some students.
- Some colleges are required to place students in jobs. Spread this to more schools. Let their placement statistics be known.

Supporting notes

- The future is unknown, but we have to adequately prepare for it somehow.
- SC has a fabulous workforce. Workforce development is the responsibility of the entire community.
- There are hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs in this country that can't be filled, and lots of folks without jobs.
- In Texas, 8th graders and high school students are introduced to aerospace industry- Tarrant County Aerospace Cluster: aerospace companies in Texas were invited to work together to come up with a strategy for developing a pool of workers for their companies. Outreach materials were given to 24,000 students and counselors and now there are many new and dislocated workers with full benefits.
- As a country we are wasting human potential. People go into the penal system for minor offenses sometimes and then their entire lives are negatively affected. We need to give folks a second chance.
- A high school diploma is starting point and not stopping point.
- Collaboration is key. Follow good regional and national models and examples.
- Idea towards an overarching vision: "create the country's most qualified workforce for the emerging era of increased automation, computerization, and robotic operation of companies in all sectors."

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