

AVAILABILITY OF WORKPLACE TRAINING

WHAT IS IT?

The proportion of Canadian employers that offer any form of training for their employees, (ranging from on-the-job training to classroom instruction) according to Statistics Canada's biennial Workplace and Employee Survey. This indicator measures the extent of workplace training available to Canadian workers, which is key to keeping their skills and knowledge up-to-date.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO LEARNING IN CANADA?

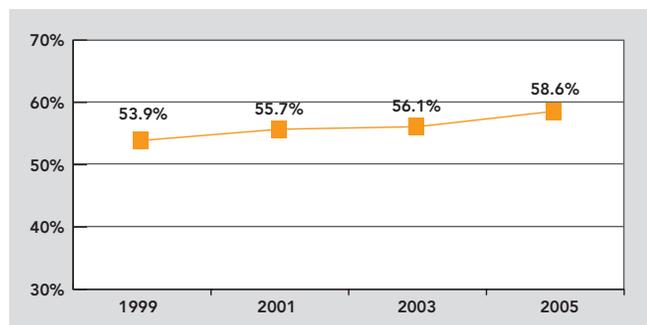
Workplace training has been shown to be an effective way for workers to improve and retain their job-related skills. Therefore, the availability of such training is considered key to keeping Canada's workforce competitive with other countries around the world.

The availability of training at work provides opportunities for Canadians to improve their skills and work-related competencies—opportunities that may not be able to access outside of work.

CANADA SEES STEADY GROWTH IN WORKPLACE TRAINING SINCE 1999

According to Statistics Canada's Workplace and Employee Survey (WES), 59% of Canadian workplaces offered some form of workplace training for their employees in 2005. This has shown a steady increase since 1999, when 54% of employers reported some form of workplace training.

CHART 1: Proportion of Canadian employers offering any workplace training, 1999–2005



Source: Statistics Canada, Workplace and Employee Survey

Of the Canadian employers who provided training in 2005, the majority (88%) offered it in the form of on-the-job training, while 62% offered it in a more traditional classroom setting. Approximately 26% of employers offered both forms of training.

Workplace training can take many forms—from more organized classroom courses to less structured, on-the-job instruction. According to WES, workplace training can include: orientation for new employees, managerial training, apprenticeships, computer training, occupational health and safety training, team building, leadership courses and even literacy training.

CANADA LAGS SIGNIFICANTLY BEHIND EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IN OFFERING WORKPLACE TRAINING

A comparable international survey from 2005 shows that Canadian employers ranked significantly lower than their European counterparts when it came to the availability of training in the workplace (see Table 1). Compared to 24 European countries, Canada would place 14th, well behind the United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden and France.

TABLE 1: Proportion of firms offering training, selected countries, 2005

Country and ranking	Percentage of firms offering training
1) United Kingdom	90%
3) Denmark	85%
5) Sweden	78%
7) France	74%
9) Czech Republic	72%
11) Estonia	67%
13) Slovakia	60%
Canada	59%
15) Cyprus	51%
20) Portugal	44%
22) Latvia	36%
23) Poland	35%

Source: Canada figure from Statistics Canada's Workplace and Employee Survey, 2005. All others from the EuroStat, Continuous Vocational Training Survey, 2005.

LARGER CANADIAN FIRMS MORE LIKELY TO OFFER STRUCTURED CLASSROOM TRAINING THAN SMALL OR MEDIUM-SIZED FIRMS

Research shows that a key factor in the overall availability of workplace training in Canada is the relative size of a company. While almost all large firms offer some sort of workplace training, less than half of small firms (those with fewer than 20 employees) do so. To a great extent, small or medium-sized firms in Canada rely on less structured, on-the-job training.

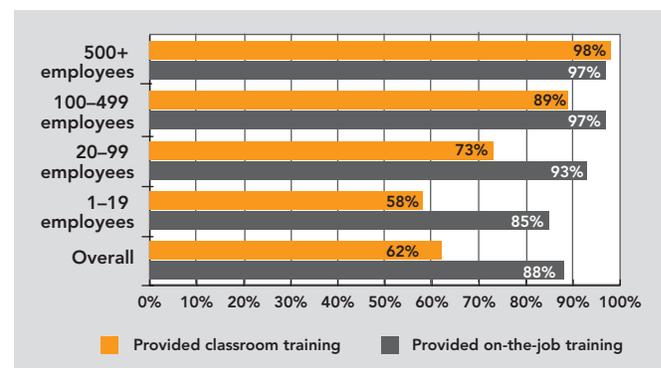
MANY CANADIAN EMPLOYERS OFFER ONLY THE MOST BASIC FORMS OF STRUCTURED WORKPLACE TRAINING

Research has shown that structured classroom training offered by Canadian employers often focuses on basic workplace practices, instead of more advanced technical skills.

The most common types of training offered by Canadian employers are new staff orientation, and health and safety training. More advanced training, such as managerial, supervisory, literacy and numeracy training, is offered by a significantly smaller number of employers.

In addition, other opportunities for skills development are being offered outside of the traditional workplace environment. For example, in 2005 more than one-third (37%) of Canadian employers reimbursed their employees for training undertaken outside of working hours.

CHART 2: Proportion of Canadian employers offering any structured training, by company size, 2005



Source: Statistics Canada, Workplace and Employee Survey

For a fuller discussion of issues related to workplace training in Canada, please see CCL's Lessons in Learning entitled "Canada's biggest economic challenge: Improving workplace learning," available at www.ccl-cca.ca/lessonslearning.

Also see Workplace Learning: Understanding return on investment to training and other business results, a series of articles produced by CCL and published in 20/20, the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters bimonthly magazine. The articles are available at www.ccl-cca.ca/worklearning.