

TOURISM WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE



Issue 7 – June 2013

International Visitors: Are You Ready?

As three-time Indianapolis 500 champion Bobby Unser once said, “Success is where preparation and opportunity meet.” For Ontario tourism businesses, there is an enormous opportunity for success by preparing to meet the needs of international visitors. Like any visitor to Ontario, Chinese and other international travellers come here to experience all that our province has to offer; however, they have certain service expectations that, if met, will create positive memorable experiences and, in turn, more business.

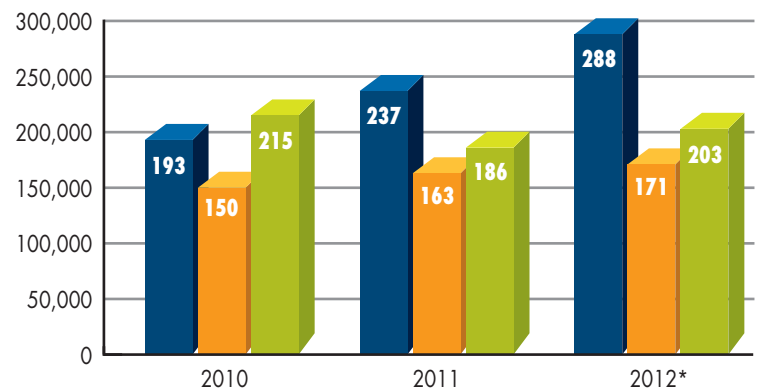
To help businesses capitalize on this market, OTEC has created a series of workshops (see page 4) to teach participants how to adapt to this growing market. The workshops cover everything from language and cultural expectations, such as using both hands to pass food, to amenities requirements, such as ensuring bottled water is available in hotel rooms.

The business case for preparing for international visitors is simple: as the fastest growing tourism market, Chinese travellers are also now the biggest spenders, choosing to spend US \$102-billion worldwide last year alone.

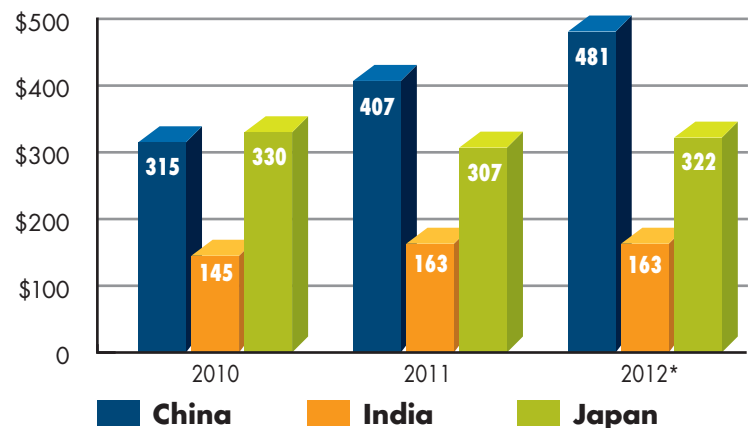
Closer to home, tourism businesses in Ontario have a unique opportunity to also benefit from immigration. China was the number one source country for immigration to Canada in 2012, with 32,990 permanent residents admitted. Research has shown that visiting friends and relatives is the predominant reason for Chinese travellers to come to Canada and that the average visitor stays for 28 nights.

By taking the time to prepare to meet the needs of Chinese travellers, Ontario businesses can make the most of the opportunity that this growing market presents and propel their business to success.

Number of International Visitors by Country



Spending by Country in Millions



Source: International Travel Survey, Statistics Canada, CTC 2012 Annual Report

*CTC Research Estimates

President's Message



This past year has been an exciting time for OTEC and its partners and stakeholders. As an organization that has the drive to effect positive change in Ontario's hospitality and tourism industries, I can honestly say that the stories in this Workforce Development Update represent some of our best work yet. They also represent countless project plans, meetings and late nights for our team and partners - and we wouldn't have it any other way!

Since OTEC was contracted by TIAO to develop the Ontario Tourism Workforce Development Strategy for 2012-17, which is a series of strategic initiatives for tourism workforce development in this province, our network has quietly made great strides toward these goals and should be proud. Among the great work being done, OTEC has been working with the community college network to enhance our provincial career ladders and promote labour mobility; we have been working with a growing network of rural

and remote training partners to provide new opportunities to jobseekers; and we have been working with our RTO and association partners to build awareness of resources. We have come a long way in a short amount of time, but there is still a long way to go and I know that our team and partners are up for the challenge.

In a time of tightening budgets and competitive markets, I am inspired by our progress and the progress of our networks and the organic way in which many of these projects and partnerships have evolved. Networks of leaders and champions have been working together, often in the absence of government funding, to accomplish our shared goals; one strategic initiative at a time. We hope you enjoy the stories, updates and information in this edition and join us in celebrating both our progress and our potential.

Victoria L. Behune

Victoria Behune
President & CEO

What's new with *emerit* Training Solutions?

It's been a big year for *emerit* Training Solutions!

As Canada's nationally recognized standards and certification program for the hospitality and tourism industry, the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council (CTHRC) has continued to consult industry and adapt *emerit* industry certifications to meet the needs of business operators and educators alike.

As a result, it has never been easier for front-line tourism workers to achieve the Tourism Certified Professional (TCP) designation. By successfully completing the certification exam and demonstrating the required workplace experience, TCPs will be recognized amongst the best in their profession.

Celebrating *emerit's* 10th anniversary, the CTHRC has also continued to keep things fresh for management and specialist level occupations by recently launching National Occupational Standards and Certifications for a number of new occupations. Directors of Housekeeping and Hotel General Managers are now able to turn to industry validated National Occupational Standards for occupational training and professional certification in their organizations.



To help users find *emerit* products quickly and efficiently, in November of 2012 the CTHRC launched a new storefront for all *emerit* training and certification products. The steps to complete certification are also now easily completed through the new online candidate profile. Check out the new emerit.ca to see all the products included within *emerit* Training Solutions' portfolio.

emerit[®].ca



Workforce Skills Development Update

Last fall, TIAO launched the Tourism Workforce Development Strategy and recently announced a new Promoting Tourism as a Career campaign for the province. This represents the first of five key deliverables from the Strategy.

In addition to the five key deliverables being undertaken by TIAO, the strategy included four strategic priorities that have helped OTEC and our partners direct and align our efforts across Ontario. Here are some of the highlights from 2012-13:

Strategic Priority #1 Foster an Environment of Collaboration

This past year, OTEC has embarked on a series of standards mapping and dual credentialing initiatives within the Ontario College Network. These efforts are designed to facilitate the development of prior learning recognition and articulation with OTEC's network of high school, community-based and workplace training programs.

Strategic Priority #2 Develop a High Performance Workforce

By focusing on improving access to training and development, a new wave of partnerships with northern, First Nations and Métis partners has developed. These partnerships have facilitated the creation of new training networks in remote parts of the province and created new linkages between training partners and businesses. OTEC has also built awareness of workforce development networks, tools and resources through new relationships with the RTO and association networks, fostering a growing trend toward collaboration.

Strategic Priority #3 Focus on Workforce Attraction & Retention

OTEC continues to develop the provincial network of pre-employment training partners and works directly with over 100 social and employment service partners. OTEC has begun discussions with RTOs and the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration on how to attract more labour to the province.

Strategic Priority #4 Enhance Information Management & Research

Working through the RTO network, OTEC has begun to work with stakeholders, including the Workforce Planning Boards, to align regional labour market research toward more consistent results across regions.



*Algonquin College culinary students practice their skills.
Photo: Algonquin College*

Industry Training

The tourism market is changing. Visitors from China, India and Japan are coming to Ontario to see and experience its unique social, cultural and natural tourism offerings, but are expecting the same kind of hospitality they receive at home. To help Ontario businesses meet international visitors' expectations and take advantage of these emerging markets, OTEC developed an International Visitor Service Excellence series of front-line and management workshops.



Service Excellence for Chinese Visitors

OTEC's brand new workshop, Service Excellence for Chinese Visitors, is designed to equip front-line participants with the knowledge, tools and skills they need to serve and build long-lasting customer loyalty with Chinese visitors. In the workshop, participants will learn about the language, culture and protocol within the culture and gain the confidence and knowledge necessary to provide them with service excellence.

Service Excellence for Diverse Cultures

In this innovative workshop, participants learn how to maximize opportunities to build customer loyalty with new and diverse international visitors and newcomers to Canada. Service Excellence for Diverse Cultures provides participants

with the tools and skills to be confident when working with diverse cultures and will learn about the benefits of diversity and how "going the extra mile" with many cultures can positively impact their bottom line.

Preparing Your Business for International Visitors

Preparing Your Business for International Visitors is a half day management level workshop and is a pro-active resource for organizations to prepare to effectively serve international visitors and gain international customer loyalty. With particular focus on visitors from China and India, the workshop provides participants with an introduction to the language, culture and protocol and tips on how to provide amenities and services that meet the needs of these emerging markets.

Industry Partnerships

Great Spirit Circle Trail



Participants from the training program prepare to open the new hotel

Long-time partners OTEC and Great Spirit Circle Trail teamed up earlier this year to integrate *emerit* Occupational Skills Training into the recruitment process for the new Manitoulin Hotel and Conference Centre to secure a dedicated and highly trained workforce. OTEC delivered a series of five day training programs based on the *emerit* National Occupational Standards for Front Desk Agents, Housekeeping Room Attendants and Food and Beverage Servers. After completing their training, participants challenged their occupation's *emerit* Professional Certification exam and as a result, 20 participants were offered employment at the new hotel & conference centre.

Remote Line Cook Program

In February 2013, Anishinabek Employment and Training Services launched an innovative five week Remote Line Cook training program designed to prepare candidates for the growing opportunities in remote mining and outfitting camps. Developed by OTEC and based on the national *emerit* Line Cook occupational standards and training program, the pilot program brought in-class learning together with practical skills training from a Red Seal Chef provided by industry partner Wilderness North. The program culminated in an engaging "Iron Chef Challenge," where each participant prepared dishes and presented them to the judges.



The first group of Remote Line Cook participants

Elliot Lake Centre for Development

As part of the City of Elliot Lake's community adjustment strategy following the mall collapse, OTEC delivered a series of front-line and management level workshops hosted by the Elliot Lake Centre for Development in February, 2013. Community members and local businesses attended workshops that included, *Building a Culture of Service Excellence*, *Service Excellence*, *Engaging Generation Y*, *Accessible Service Excellence* and *Service Excellence for Diverse Cultures*. OTEC is pleased to support the City of Elliot Lake as it continues to implement its long-term community recovery plan.

Ontario Travel Centres

In order to take advantage of the opportunity that the increase in international visitors presents in Ontario, the Ontario Travel Centres partnered with OTEC to deliver *Service Excellence for Diverse Cultures* training. OTEC and the Ontario Travel Centres' management team also worked closely together to develop and deliver a *Sales Excellence* workshop to help Visitor Information Counsellors (VIC) not only be great service providers, but also develop their sales skills to effectively sell tourism offerings across the province

EnAbling Change

OTEC teamed up with TIAO and the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario to create a webinar series to help tourism and hospitality businesses throughout the province better serve customers with disabilities and become compliant with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The customer service standard webinar is now available at www.accessibletourismwebsite.com. This summer, OTEC will be developing a series of webinars focused on the Employment and Communication Standards of the AODA. The new webinars will be ready in September 2013.

Disability in Ontario



- About 1.85 million people in Ontario have disabilities; 15.5% of Ontario's population
- By 2017, seniors will account for a larger share of the population than children aged 14 and under
- By 2036, the number of seniors aged 65 and over will double from 1.7 million in 2008 to 4.1 million

A screen shot from the *EnAbling Change* presentation

RTO Partner Update

RTO 1 Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation



In early 2013, OTEC worked in conjunction with Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation and the Workforce Planning Boards to offer OTEC's premier customer service management workshop, Building a Culture of Service Excellence, throughout the region. Continuing to focus on developing management skills, OTEC also facilitated a 90-minute mini-workshop presentation, Coaching for Excellence, at the March 2013 Regional Tourism Conference.

RTO 2 Tourism Partnership of Niagara



Over the past year, OTEC has worked with the Tourism Partnership of Niagara and their industry advisory committee to develop an e-learning course to help Niagara service providers become ambassadors of the Niagara region. To date, over 740 participants have completed the course. After completing the program, participants received certificates of recognition. Participant evaluations of the program show that 93 per cent of learners believe the program will assist them in being a Niagara Ambassador and 92 per cent feel better prepared to assist guests. OTEC is now developing a Leader Kit for supervisors and managers to utilize in team meetings and pre-shift huddles.

RTO 3 The Heart of Ontario



To help prepare for a fantastic summer, OTEC and RTO 3 have partnered to offer a series of workshops throughout the region including Essentials of Service Excellence and Creating memorable Experiences. They will also be offering Preparing Your Business for International Visitors early next year.

RTO 5 Greater Toronto Area



The City of Toronto continues to offer Toronto tourism and hospitality businesses the opportunity to participate in the "Welcome to Toronto, We've Been Expecting You" front-line and train-the-trainer workshops. Developed by OTEC, this hospitality excellence program won the workforce development award from the Economic Developers Council of Ontario in February 2013. To date, over 144 Toronto area businesses have participated in the training workshops.

RTO 9 The Great Waterway



This year, OTEC is pleased to be working with RTO 9 to facilitate Essentials of Service Excellence workshops throughout the region to help them prepare front-line tourism and hospitality service providers for the upcoming peak summer season.

RTO 11 Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO)



OTEC continues to work closely with OHTO in conjunction with its customer service quality standards designation program, OHvation, as well as the region's Tourism Workshop Partnership Program. OTEC is currently facilitating workshops including Building a Culture of Service Excellence, Service Excellence, Creating Memorable Experiences and Service Excellence for Visitor Information Centres throughout Ontario's Highlands.

RTO 13 Northern Ontario Regional Tourism Organization



OTEC is pleased to support RTO 13 as a member of the Workforce Development Pillar Committee. The Workforce Development Pillar Committee is one of three committees that have been established to support the RTO's Board of Directors and facilitate the development and implementation of RTO's Strategic Plan 2012-15.

"OTEC did an outstanding job of creating an engaging, educational and fun web-based learning program for us." – Robin Garret, CEO of Tourism Partnership of Niagara

The Power of E-learning



Ontarians shop online, date online and bank online; so why not learn online too? Colloquially called e-learning, electronic learning is training delivered through a computer or mobile device designed to support individual learning and/or organizational performance goals. It utilizes everything from DVDs to web-based applications and is available in virtual classroom, webinar and web-based learning formats.

Why should you incorporate e-learning into your training solutions? Consider this:

- E-learning tends to be 25 to 60 per cent shorter in duration than traditional instructor-led classroom training. Content which would ordinarily take a full-day to complete in-class, may only take an hour or two to complete via e-learning.
- On average, companies can save between 50 and 70 per cent of their costs by using e-learning. By eliminating massive delivery costs such as the cost of a trainer or participant travel, companies save approximately 85 cents on every training dollar.
- E-learning has proven to increase knowledge retention by up to 60 per cent. By being self-paced, the participant can speed up and slow down as required and can learn exactly what they need to know, when they need to know, it to better perform on the job.
- It's flexible enough to be part of a blended learning solution that includes e-learning and facilitator-led training.

This past year, OTEC developed webinars for TIAO (page 5) and an e-learning program for the Tourism

Partnership of Niagara (page 6). The purpose of both of these projects was to reach a large audience in a quick and efficient way with information that was relevant to the participants' jobs. E-learning was the best way to meet each project's goals and achieve high penetration targets in an effective and affordable way.

As OTEC moves forward developing its own e-learning solutions for popular programs like Service Excellence, it is clear that e-learning has become a permanent part of the learning landscape. Watch for the launch of Service Excellence online in 2014!

Did you know...?

- *E-learning is a 15-year old concept*
- *77 per cent of American corporations are using some form of e-learning to train employees*
- *30 per cent of college and university students are taking at least one of their classes online. That number is expected to increase to 50 per cent by 2019*

A Look Ahead: UpSkill: Essentials to Excel

Two years ago, OTEC and the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC), in partnership with the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council (CTHRC) launched the *UpSkill: Essentials to Excel* project in order to address a worrying essential skills statistic in the hotel sector. Research had shown that 40 per cent of employees working in front-line hotel positions had gaps in underlying essential skills that could reduce their effectiveness on the job and ultimately reduce hotel productivity.

A nationally introduced project, UpSkill offered hotel employers and employees a comprehensive training needs analysis and customized training solutions for front-line staff to help improve job performance and foster professional growth. It was designed to help determine the return on investment (ROI) hotels could expect when they commit to essential skills development programs in the workplace.

Within the 16 participating hotels in Ontario, housekeeping room attendants, front desk agents, line cooks and food and beverage servers were evaluated for their essential skills levels and their performance on the job. Once the initial evaluation period was completed, half of the hotels were randomly assigned to the training groups to receive essential skills training specific to their occupation.

Once the training was completed, participants' essential skills and performance were assessed again and employers completed follow-up surveys to gauge their perceptions of the changes to their employees' abilities.

SRDC will quantify the ROI of essential skills training on a variety of business outcomes such as Service Quality Indices, Guest Satisfaction and other key metrics in a highly anticipated report due in the fall of 2013. **Stay tuned!**

Partner Network



OTEC Office & Learning Centre
 21 Four Seasons Place, Suite 300
 Toronto, ON, M9B 6J8
 (416) 622-1975 • (800) 557-6832
www.otec.org

- **For more information or to become involved in OTEC programs, please contact us:**
- **Wendy Paradis, Vice President, Client Services**
 – wparadis@otec.org, ext. 212
- **Adam Morrison, Director, Project Development**
 – amorrison@otec.org, ext. 236

Join the OTEC Social Network:

