

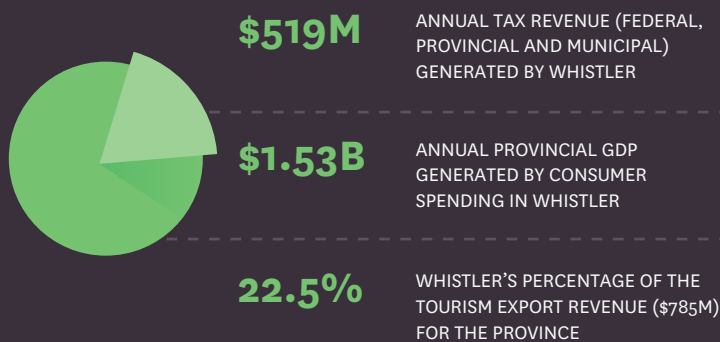
Putting Canadians **1ST**

Supporting Economic Growth in Tight Labour Markets & Putting Canadians First

Preamble

Canada boasts numerous destination mountain resorts that attract visitors from around the globe – and Whistler consistently ranks as one of the world’s top ski destinations. The resort drives 22.5% of the tourism export revenue for the province and generates \$1.4 million in daily tax revenue for the federal, provincial and municipal government. A tight labour market continues to challenge our ongoing competitiveness as a tourism destination (the November unemployment rate for Mainland Southwest was 5.8% and Whistler was measured at 2% in 2015 by the Resort Municipality of Whistler’s Community Life Tracking Survey). Industry reports project a 14,000 full-time-equivalent labour deficit for tourism and hospitality positions in 2020 (Labour Market Study by go2hr, BC’s Tourism Industry Human Resource Association). The seasonal nature of the ski industry – much like in agriculture – makes it very difficult to obtain, train and retain talent. Along with Canadians, temporary foreign workers and working holiday visa holders are a valued and vital piece of our labour force. Without these workers Whistler could not deliver an exceptional customer experience.

The Whistler Economy: A Tax Revenue Driver



FOUR POLICY CONSIDERATIONS TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO WORKERS

- 1** Create a stream for seasonal workers, like the Agricultural Program, that is accessible to all sectors on the same criteria where there is seasonal work with proven labour shortages (under 6% unemployment). The clear – and sensible – precedent has been set with the agricultural workers. In the case of the ski industry, data shows there are simply not enough qualified Canadian snow sport instructors to serve the operating resorts in our country.

Whistler Labour Market by the Numbers (Whistler Chamber Summer 2015 labour survey)

➔ **93%** OF BUSINESSES IN WHISTLER ARE SMALL BUSINESSES

➔ VISA HOLDERS A VITAL COMPONENT OF THE WORK FORCE:

81% OF RESPONDENTS REPORT EMPLOYING WHV HOLDERS AND 26% REPORT EMPLOYING TFWs

➔ PAYING MORE TO ATTRACT CANADIANS:

78% OF BUSINESSES SURVEYED INSTITUTED A WAGE INCREASE IN THE LAST 6 MONTHS (72% CONFIRMED THE INCREASE WAS BETWEEN 6-25%) TO ATTRACT OR RETAIN A TEAM MEMBER

➔ MONEY “LEFT ON THE TABLE” EACH MONTH DUE TO LACK OF STAFF:

41% SAID OVER \$5K UNREALIZED EACH MONTH

22% SAID OVER \$10K UNREALIZED EACH MONTH

➔ POSITIONS MOST NEEDED:

- 1 LINE COOKS
- 2 HOUSEKEEPERS
- 3 FRONT OF HOUSE FOOD SERVICES (SERVERS, BARTENDERS, HOSTS ETC.)
- 4 FRONT DESK AGENTS (GUEST SERVICES, RESERVATIONS AGENTS ETC.)

NOTE: 14% OF BUSINESS REPORTED NEEDING MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

➔ KEY JOB POSITIONS CURRENTLY UNFILLED

40.5% REPORT HAVING 4-20 POSITIONS UNFILLED

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS CONT.

2 Increase, or at the very least, maintain the number of allocated visas under International Experience Canada (IEC) program, and continue to enhance reciprocal bilateral agreements to liberalize program parameters, based on Canada’s highly successful bilateral agreement with Australia. This program creates outstanding ambassadors for Canada for life and has been designed to be a net zero trade. Approximately 20% of Whistler’s workforce is composed of Working Holiday Visa (WHV) holders – they are a vital complement to our Canadian workforce.

3 On the subject of the Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA):

- A** Extend the validity periods of LMIA’s from 1 to 3 years – this allows the government to preserve “fee integrity”, reduces processing workflow for government and removes red tape for industry.
- B** Consider prorating the LMIA cost based on the number of months it’s valid for. Businesses should not have to pay for a full year if they are only utilizing a Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) for a portion of the year – for example, a 3-month TFW LMIA would cost $3/12 \times \$1,000 = \250 .

4 Increase the allocation to the BC Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) to approximately 9,000 annual nominees for 2016, and ensure that additional space is allocated to Entry-Level and Semi-Skilled (ELSS) occupations. This will allow foreign workers to more swiftly become contributing Canadians and join the permanent workforce – it will also encourage employers to invest more significantly in these candidates vis a vis training and settlement support.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

WHAT IS WHISTLER DOING TO ATTRACT CANADIANS AND REDUCE DEPENDENCY ON FOREIGN LABOUR?

WORLD CLASS TRAINING FOR SMALL BUSINESS

Whistler boasts a community-wide, customer training program powered by the University of Victoria's Gustavson School of Business. It makes executive level training available – and affordable – to small business to help them attract Canadian workers. In the 2014-15 ski season this certificated program (recently featured in Forbes Magazine) trained 5600 members of the workforce and is seen as a unique benefit to individuals interested in gaining a world-class skill set.



PETER B. GUSTAVSON
School of Business
Executive Programs
The world looks different from here.

Forbes

ATTRACTING FIRST NATIONS WORKERS

Whistler businesses are putting special efforts into recruiting, training and hiring First Nations workers in the Sea to Sky corridor. For example, the Whistler Chamber of Commerce hosts – in Partnership with the University of Victoria – the “Eight Ways of the Thunderbird”, a customized First Nations service training program that helps build their capacity and expedites their transition into the local workforce.



BEST-IN-CLASS HOUSING SOLUTION

Whistler houses just over 80% of its workforce in the resort – compared to other North American mountain resort towns that house only 40%. The Whistler Housing Authority continues to maintain and augment its inventory of resident restricted housing so that both rental and ownership accommodation are available and affordable for local income earners and retirees in perpetuity.



BETTER BENEFITS FOR STAFF

Whistler knows strong benefit offerings give its businesses a statistical advantage when it comes to attracting Canadian workers. Resort businesses have historically subsidized or paid entirely for their team's ski passes – but our recent summer labour survey shows 65% are now adding additional health benefits, 56% are enhancing performance bonuses, 23% are now offering staff housing and 24% are matching RRSP contributions.



DEEPER RECRUITING TACTICS

Whistler businesses rigorously monitor the success of their recruiting channels and the strategies are getting more sophisticated – especially for small businesses. Forty-five percent of those businesses we surveyed this summer posted for positions provincially and nationally, 23% participate in or host live job fairs, 56% advertise on Facebook and LinkedIn and 15% use a regional or national recruitment agency.



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