



5 Minutes for Business

COVID-19
edition

Recovering our Workforce through Inclusivity

In our [Roadmap to Recovery](#), the first policy area we speak about is the importance of getting Canadians back to work. As part of this, we emphasize the importance of ensuring all Canadians have opportunities to participate in the recovery, as this is essential for inclusive growth and widespread job creation.

In a span of a few months, we went from one of the tightest job markets in recent history to record unemployment and reduced hours with an unprecedented rapidity. As we reopen across the country and move into recovery, we know that available jobs and the skills required will shift. Employers might increasingly look to automation to maintain operations during future crises and reduce risk. Canadians will need reskilling, upskilling and skills training programs to get them back to work. Education and training will also change, including a greater need for online learning and durable skills, with a focus on both work-integrated and lifelong learning.

So, what is the role of business in an inclusive recovery?

We asked the federal government to lead by example in representing inclusive voices in recovery and getting Canadians back to work. Its [Supply Chain Council](#) represents a good start, as it includes representatives from business, labour, many sectors and non-profits, and includes the voices of academics, women and aboriginal business. This should be replicated at all levels of government, in boardrooms and leadership meetings, in occupational health and

safety committees, as well as in business operations and return to work discussions.

Secondly, as employees continue and return to work, either remotely or onsite, or a variety of hybrid models therein, the key to successful work re-integration and economic recovery for parents is the availability of reliable and affordable childcare. We must appreciate that the female workforce – as employees, as business owners and as entrepreneurs - is bearing the brunt in terms of earnings, advancement, mental health and work/parenting choices. There will be no inclusive recovery – or recovery period – without the participation of women in the workforce.

We must also look at the different ways female-dominant sectors, such as retail, beauty and childcare/eldercare have been affected through the crisis. The business community has a responsibility to ensure that such sectors are fully integrated into overall recovery plans and stimulus support.

We also must recognize it is not only women who have been disproportionately affected. We must incorporate youth, students, immigrants and Indigenous populations, among others, in the inclusive recovery.

Ensuring all Canadians have opportunities to participate in the recovery is essential for economic growth and widespread job creation.

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