

"Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do.

Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit."

- Aristotle, Philosopher

The Maine Center for Career Preparation is a private, non-profit committed to improving the economic prospects of Maine citizens by improving the linkages between education and workforce development.

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# Education Works!

## Where economic and workforce development meet

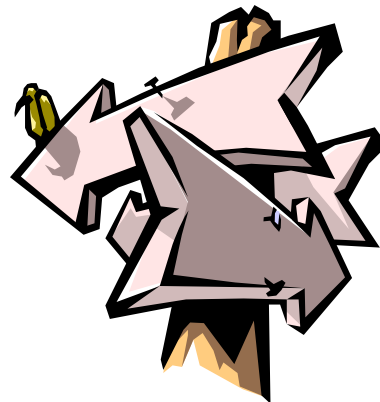
By Tom Broussard

The economic development and workforce development communities (as well as education and human services) often espouse the same goal-- *building a world class workforce*

These same communities must be equally committed to *working together* towards those same goals. We must do more to align the mutually dependent worlds of economic and workforce development

## Exercising new roles

While the economic development community recognizes the necessity of a skilled workforce actualizing those thoughts--especially at the local level--is particularly difficult not because companies don't want skilled workers but because the *muscles* required to advocate for workforce development are typically far outside the realm of their



experience and traditional self-image. Consequently, they often find themselves unable to engage the workforce development and education community in sustainable ways.

**Who would miss us?**

As a result those with a foot in each world find themselves developing and delivering career prep world of work and workplace training programs in schools and businesses in almost a counter-cultural supportive role

Who is the customer of workforce development and who would care if what little there is disappeared

**Who speaks for workforce development?**

While parents and business people are assumed to be the parties interested in these activities the certain could not be described as a lot

**Cause and effect**

Typical advocates are found together shared goals and a shared sense of collective cause and effect poor (or non-existent world of work programs in schools for example) are too far removed in time and place from their ultimate effect--diminished work opportunities--to allow a sense of shared goals to exist between workforce development and education This is the workforce development community challenge--creating effective partnerships for workforce development across historically uninvolved (or loosely involved) systems

**Sustaining Structures**

When asked the business community would respond that the very much support an

efforts to improve the competence and productivity of their workforce or soon-to-be workforce but once again a sentiment of the traditional structures for pursuing vested interests (a common language and a shared community commitment) progress on this issue has been limited success has come through almost heroic acts of activists who have made it their personal mission to bring all the players to the table where they could

**Heroic efforts are not enough**

These efforts were (and continue to be) successful as long as the individual hero (or heroic organization--several come to mind) stays the course if that person leaves or moves to another one the programs since the

were not organically embedded often drop and disappear

**21<sup>st</sup> century life requires Lifelong learning**

Each segment of the population needs the same message re-framed in a manner that allows them to hear it. Mill workers at Adawaska who reported that they felt immune to the winds of change had not heard the message yet. Workers at a number of places (and not all old-world workers either) have not heard yet that the need to be lifelong learners.

**Employer-sponsored Training**

Similar businesses have been slow to realize that there is a new loyalty growing that is accorded to

employers who train and invest in their employees and treat them like assets. The concern that trained employees might leave (while still a valid business consideration) must be balanced with emerging studies that show that employees are now choosing to stay with employers who are providing training. This once again highlights the fact that we need to build a constituency consisting not just of economic development people or workforce development people but a working marriage of those entities to include education and human services as well.

**“Work” isn’t a dirty word**

Business is a value-adding proposition and in the age of the knowledge worker the

value that is added is intellectual. And in the educational community still think work is a dirty word. Nothing could be further from the truth--from the gleaming manufacturing floor to the papermaker to the computer programmer work is life and knowledge sustains this life as much as the air we breathe or the water we drink.

**MAINE WORKS!**

It has been tough economic sledding recently but the states that succeed under these difficult circumstances will be those states that take very seriously the need to build collaboratives that work so that Maine can continue to work for all of us.