

Media Release – Ontario employers link decent work strategy to better business results and a stronger economy for all

Toronto, ON, April 4, 2017. Today, at the “Cities Reducing Poverty: When Business is Engaged” conference in Hamilton, a group of employers from across Ontario launched the *Better Way to Build the Economy Alliance*, putting forward the business case for a good jobs strategy.

The alliance aims to show that a commitment to decent work makes good economic sense. At its heart is the website www.betterwayalliance.ca, featuring videos of business leaders speaking out against the “high-churn and low pay” model of employment. The testimonials emphasize that engaged employees make a big difference, giving businesses a competitive advantage by making them more productive and lowering costs associated with staff turnover.

Speaking at the launch, alliance member and Grosche International co-founder Helmi Ansari said: “As a small business, the most critical part of our success is our staff. If our employees are spending all their time worrying about how they are going to pay their rent or put food on the table, they are really not going to be engaged in the long-term success of the business.”

Kelly Watson, Director of People and Development at the Muskoka Brewery, explained that they have already reaped the benefits of such employment practices, through an increased care for product quality, dedicated team members, as well as a reduction in absenteeism. “By providing fair wages and offering employees a dedicated place in our company, we have taken the financial stress away from them, and as a result have seen a better engaged workforce.”

Ontario Nonprofit Network Executive Director Cathy Taylor, speaking about the provincial non-profit sector that employs more than one million workers, explained that the same can be said about the quality of services and efficiency. “A healthier and better-supported workforce means organizations can better meet their missions, and deliver programs and services. Investing in our workforce saves money and time.”

Better Way to Build the Economy Alliance members are calling for a good jobs strategy not only for the bottom line of their organizations but also for the health of Ontario’s economy. With the final recommendations of the Changing Workplaces Review expected to be released in the coming weeks, they are looking to the government for leadership on this issue.

The increasing prevalence of precarious jobs currently short-changes both families and the businesses community. Karen Lior, Director of Stakeholder Engagement at the Toronto Workforce Innovation Group warned about “the labour market trends that show a growing number of workers in Ontario having little choice besides low-pay, short-term jobs that offer no benefits and limited career progression.”

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