



2016-2017
ANNUAL REPORT



Working with business has become core to what the Centre for Excellence does. It informs our thinking and strategies, the training and assistance we provide to employment agencies and the policy development work we do with government. Our Business Champions League continues to grow and their assistance has continued to help move our agenda forward.

2016 Business Champions Awards
(L-R) Joe Dale, Mark Wafer,
Hon. David Only, Terry Vos,
Sean Callaghan, Steve Sharpe

From the Chair



With the rapidly changing focus on employment it's exciting to be part of a system in the midst of restructuring and on-going development! Now, more than ever, it's important that we have a strong provincial voice and can

play a leadership role that's so important to our movement.

Your support of ODEN gives the Board of Directors affirmation of the role ODEN and you, as service providers, play as leaders in a very positive movement.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize the dedication of the ODEN staff in both their day-to-day work and the extra effort that each of the team puts in on special projects and extra duties. On behalf of the Board, our sincere thanks.

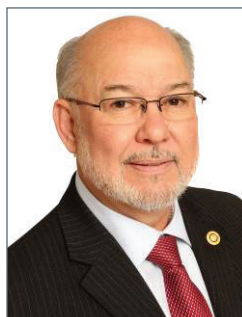
At this time, I must also thank the Board for their on-going commitment, the time and the work they do in pursuing our organization's Vision – That all people who have a disability in Ontario have access to the labour force and the ability to achieve meaningful employment.

And finally, I must thank you, the practitioners, for your dedication and passion for the work you perform. We hope that in reviewing this report, you will be both inspired by the work we do and assured your membership is paying back in dividends.

Nancy Lewis

Chair of the Board

From the Executive Director



It's been an exciting year for ODEN and the Centre for Excellence. Our membership has grown to more than 100 organizations across the province and we have established a strong position based on our work

and the expertise we have developed.

With the roll out of Ontario's Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities, and the launch of our work on service quality, I'm sure 2017/18 is going to be a busy one. With restructuring of this magnitude, we'll need to put extra effort into keeping you in the loop.

I want to echo Nancy's comments about the work the staff team puts in every day at ODEN to ensure we have a strong and effective Network. I'd also like to thank Bob Vansickle for his contributions over the past year and a half and Community Living Sarnia Lambton for generously allowing his secondment to us. He will be difficult to replace but I'm sure we'll keep him engaged in some capacity.

Finally, I'd like to thank the Ministry of Community and Social Services for their support of the Centre for Excellence and the work we do. Without them, we would not have seen the significant gains, that you will read about in this report.

We look forward to another great year of improving the employment landscape for people who have a disability.

Sincerely,

Joe Dale

Executive Director

Employer Engagement

We've had many successes this past year. Among them three stand out – Dare Foods, MediSystems and the Canadian National Exhibition. What is particularly noteworthy of these cases is the move away from 'token' hires to what appears to be a more systemic trend. These and other similar business strategies is what will make real change in the employment landscape for people who have a disability.

Dare Foods



Dare Awareness Training with Joe Dale

We started working with Dare Foods in the spring of 2016. It was an interesting journey which began when Dare's Human Resources Manager heard Joe Dale and Mark Wafer speak at a Grand Valley Human Resources Professionals breakfast meeting in December of 2014.

Dare had decided to bring work, that had previously been outsourced back into their Cambridge Distribution Centre. Dare believed this would reduce costs and improve both productivity and overall efficiency. They also thought this might be an opportunity to include people who had a disability in their workforce so they reached out to ODEN.

With ODEN's help, Dare worked their way through the logistics: designing new work stations; planning the transition to bring the work in-house; and engaging existing employees to share in their

vision and goal of creating an inclusive, yet highly productive workforce.

Things ramped up in the fall of 2016. Dare's goal was to launch in early 2017 and it was agreed they would hire six (6) new employees who had a developmental disability among the twelve (12) new hires they needed to make.

Dare wanted to ensure everyone was on board and had ODEN deliver awareness training to every employee in the plant – salaried employees and supervisors, on all three shifts. Interestingly, at the Q & A part of the presentations, what Dare heard was: "I'll just be so proud to say I work at Dare and we do this", from one office employee; and, "I have a 12-year old son with autism and I'd like to think that he'll have a job some day", from a night shift worker. Absolutely no reservations or push back from anyone.

As things unfolded, Community Living Cambridge was engaged. They had candidates and job coaching services needed to support the recruitment, on-boarding and training processes. On February 6, 2017, six (6) candidates were hired for full-time, unionized positions.

Dare had set its production targets for the first two (2) week ramp up period but people surpassed those targets to such an extent that Dare ran out of raw materials and ended up redeploying the employees into other jobs in the plant until they (Dare) could catch up.

One of the six employees found the job to be too much and left her position but Dare was undeterred. They hired two additional workers through Community Living Cambridge. Community Living Cambridge continued the job coaching and began the fading process in the spring. Today, they do periodic check-ins.

Dare is so convinced by their success in Cambridge that they hired ten (10) people who have a disability to work in their Spartanburg, South Carolina plant. And, we believe there's going to be more opportunity in Dare's other Ontario facilities in the future.

When we decided to bring work that had previously been outsourced back in house we knew we'd have to expand our staffing and we thought this might be a way to engage employees who had disabilities. What we didn't realize was how easy it would be. The support we got from ODEN took all the mystery out of the process and made it simple and efficient. The new employees were able to meet all production standards and the results surpassed all of our expectations.

Colleen Cox,
Director, Logistics
& Distribution
Operations, Dare
Foods Limited.

MediSystems

MediSystems is a division of Shoppers Drug Mart and the best way to describe it is to imagine a warehouse drug store with no walk-in customers. MediSystems fulfills prescriptions for large institutions – Nursing homes, senior's residences, etc.

MediSystems had a need. The first step in their process is to input prescription orders into computers – prescriptions by the thousands – and, as you can imagine accuracy is paramount. Once inputted, this kicks off the entire fulfillment process which is highly automated. They can't afford to have errors in the medications or the doses that are inputted.

The challenge for MediSystems is this data entry work requires prolonged and sustainable periods of focus and extreme accuracy. They were seeing high turnover and productivity rates that were below standard.

ODEN teamed up with Specialisterne to present a plausible solution to MediSystems. In July, they hired five (5) people who are on the autism spectrum and/or with neuro-diversity.

While it's early on in the process we anticipate a successful venture and early indications are holding true.

For Medisystems, this is a pilot in their flagship location but, once proven, they expect to roll out this process in several of their other locations across the province.

Canadian National Exhibition

In the fall of 2016, ODEN was invited to meet with the CNE's Accessibility Advisory Committee to speak about inclusive employment. The CNE hires over six hundred (600) people annually so there is lots of opportunity.

As a result, the CNE set a goal to ensure their workforce represents the broader community. Specifically, they committed to ensuring people who have a disability comprise 18 to 20 per cent of their workforce. The CNE engaged ODEN in the spring to help them achieve this goal within the next five years.

ODEN reviewed the CNE's recruitment practices, on-line portal and all job descriptions, making recommendations to remove barriers and bias. The CNE wanted to ensure these processes were accessible, inclusive and welcoming of applicants including those who have a disability.

We partnered with five GTA employment agencies to provide candidates and job coaching – JVS Toronto, March of Dimes Canada, Operation Springboard, Spinal Cord Injury Ontario and YES Employment Services. We then provided awareness and sensitivity training for all CNE managers and supervisors.

Typical of our approach, the goal is to help build comfort, confidence and capacity within the CNE's leadership team, particularly front-line managers and supervisors who will have people with a disability on their teams.

In the end, the CNE hired 18 people with the assistance of the five organizations and another 8 through their regular hiring channel.

Interestingly, when they did an anonymous survey of employees, a full 9% or 58 workers identified as having a disability. In follow-up meetings with



L-R: Honourable Tracy MacCharles – Minister Responsible for Accessibility, Virginia Ludy – Chief Executive Officer CNE, and Joe Dale – Executive Director ODEN

the CNE they reported a 94% re-hire rate for those employees who have a disability vs. an 89% re-hire rate for all employees. A great first year of their five-year plan.

While some may think 'this is just a summer job' the impact for those employees is tremendous. For starters, the average age of CNE employees is 19 and, each year, the first round of hires is re-hires from the previous year. With US research stating: 'The number one indicator of successful labour market attachment for young adults who have a disability is having had a single job while in high school' this is a great opportunity to engage youth in the workforce. Successful employees could have summer jobs for 4 or 5 years in a row, better preparing them for the workforce when they graduate from school.

However, not all employees were in that youth category: one agency manager noted that a few candidates who were hired had previously been in their sheltered workshop for many years. The success for these candidates has ignited these individuals to think about a job as their desired goal for the future. Even more compelling was the impact on the agency manager's staff team who also saw the possibility of a different future for the people they support.

The Centre for Excellence also brokered a number of partnerships and individual jobs with member agencies – Duroflex, several Tim Horton locations, Sodexo, CIBC and many others across the province.

Supporting Employment Service Operators

The Centre for Excellence continues its work with employment agencies in an effort to ensure an effective and successful employment service delivery network throughout the province.

We have provided many training programs for the staff of agencies including our 1-day and 3-day professional development programs for employment specialists. This past year we have done 19 one-day sessions and four 3-day sessions involving almost 500 professionals who work in employment services.

Our consulting services have increased in demand over the past year and we have offered strategic planning, service improvement and marketing expertise to employment service agencies across the province. Overall, we have provided consulting services to five (5) organizations this past year.

In addition, we partnered with MCSS on 10 presentations for over 400 participants on the

Employment Service Training with Christian Horizons - Ajax, July 2017



Ministry's transformation agenda as it relates to sheltered workshops.

As noted, we have also referred numerous job opportunities to member agencies.

As we continue to build capacity at ODEN, we will be able to meet the increasing demands of our sector and ensure we meet the goal of ensuring people who have a disability have full access to the labour market.



Employment Service Training with March of Dimes Canada - Sudbury, July 2016



Employer's Partnership Table - Toronto, September 2017

Policy Development

ODEN has been very active in the Developmental Services Transformation agenda, particularly as it relates to the closing of sheltered workshops.

In December, 2015, MCSS Minister Helena Jaczek announced there would be no new admissions allowed to sheltered workshops. This was followed up by a Ministry mandate that all sheltered workshop operators must submit a plan for how they would transition away from sheltered workshops.

This issue was further amplified last spring when Kevin Flynn, Minister of Labour, announced his Fair Wages Act. While most people are focussing on the \$15 per hour minimum wage issue, there is also a clause in the act that says sheltered workshops will no longer be eligible for exemptions from paying minimum wage. This means that sheltered workshops will either have to pay minimum wage or close their doors by January 1, 2019.

As Ontario's Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities roles out, ODEN will continue to play a key role in ensuring specific strategies are effective and achieve the desired results. The strategy has four key pillars:

1. Engaging businesses as champions.
2. Government as Leaders.
3. Focus on Youth.
4. Creating a person-centred and responsive service delivery system for people with disabilities.

The Minister Responsible for Accessibility, the Honourable Tracy MacCharles, and her team will be responsible to oversee the implementation of the strategy although at an operational level, other Ministries/branches will take lead roles.

ODEN has been very active in the development of the Employment Strategy and in providing feedback and recommendations to ensure the desired outcomes are achieved.

1

Engaging Business as Champions: Our Executive Director, Joe Dale, has just been appointed to the Employer's Table that will launch in 2017. This work is supported by the Ministry of Economic Development and Growth.

2

Government as Leaders: This is predominantly being driven by the Ontario Public Service (OPS) as an internal strategy to ensure the Provincial Government is doing all it can to ensure people who have a disability are represented in the OPS.

3

Focus on Youth: There hasn't been any publicly announced activity in this area as yet. ODEN has recommended establishing a task force, similar to the Employer's Table to ensure the all appropriate stakeholders are engaged.

4

Creating a person-centred Service Delivery System:

This pillar includes streamlined access to services by: a. bolstering the capacity of Employment Ontario service operators to better support job seekers with disabilities; and, b. the streamlining of ODSP-ES, Ministry of Health and OEAS services and a move to provide a coordinated Supported Employment service through these entities. This strategy will roll out in three communities – Cornwall, Belleville and Timmins – in April of 2018.

On-going Funding for Centre for Excellence

We were very pleased that, at the conclusion of the Centre's Employment Modernization Fund grant, the Ministry of Community and Social Services agreed that ODEN's services are very important to the sector and the growth of employment opportunities for people who have a disability.

As of August 1st, 2017, ODEN became a transfer-payment agency (TPA) with MCSS.

At the same time, the Centre will see modest growth with our staff team growing to six. We are grateful to the Ministry for its continued support.

Looking Ahead

ODEN will continue to deliver its core services – Employer Engagement, Support for Employment Service operators, working with Government, transition support for agencies moving away from sheltered workshops and the promotion of innovative and best practices.

We will also be introducing two new initiatives in 2017:

1. An initiative to develop service quality guidelines for the delivery of employment supports for people who have a disability by service providers and a community of practice in this area.
2. A review of partnership models for the delivery of employment services.

ODEN also anticipates continued involvement in the roll out of the Province's Employment Strategy.



Innovator of the Year Award 2016 - Community Living Essex County - Career Compass

A Few Additional Highlights

ODEN engaged its members in its first ever Disability Employment Awareness Campaign #EngageTalent in 2016. This was very successful and will become an annual campaign.



Executive Director, Joe Dale poses with an employee at Vos' Independent Grocers.

We worked with a number of DS employment agencies to create a new employment network in the North Bay and surrounding area – the North East Employment Network (NEEN).



Regional X-Country Check-Up - Mississauga, March 2017

ODEN is a full partner with the newly formed Ontario Centre for Workforce Innovation (OCWI). Based on this ODEN will partner with OCWI to launch a study of Supported Employment programs in 2017/18.

We hosted a pre-conference workshop on Change Management with Peter de Jager in 2016. Since then, we have been working with Peter on the creation of a step-by-step workbook on change management that is specific to our sector. This will be released by the end of October, 2017.

Our Executive Director, Joe Dale, was a feature speaker at the first World Conference on Supported Employment – Employment for All, in Belfast, Ireland in June 2017.

Addressing the need to engage people who have a disability at a much younger age, in terms of preparing them for employment, ODEN has delivered a number of presentations to family groups and school boards this past year. This work will continue into 2017/18.



Community Living Sarnia Staff - 2016 RDC Conference Gala - Richmond Hill, June 2016

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