

2017

# VI/Coastal Manufacturing Sector LMP: Web-based Learning Network – Final Report

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**The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of its author(s) and not the official policy or position of the Government of British Columbia.**

## VI/Coastal Region Manufacturing Sector Labour Market Partnership: Web-based Learning Network – Final Report

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### Background

The Vancouver Island Manufacturers' Advisory Board (VIMAB), as a part of its strategic directions<sup>1</sup> for the manufacturing sector in the region, proposed the development of an online (web-based) collaborative learning network (CLN). This network would be used by manufacturers to share information and foster the development of a collaborative culture to address common labour market issues.

The CLN would help regional manufacturers to:

- Communicate with one another concerning skills gaps and training;
- Find learning and training that meets their needs through a one-stop information portal; and
- Share best practices and learning content.

HDM and its VIMAB partners have also invited other stakeholders (i.e. representatives from the post-secondary and training provider, and K-12 communities, labour and the Industry Training Authority (ITA)) to join as partners and contributors to the growth and sustainability of the network.

Going forward, the CLN will act as a:

- Vehicle for cross-industry collaboration and communication, training, implementation of industry standards (i.e. standards related ISO, health and safety, etc.), and the promotion of manufacturing as a career choice;
- Vehicle to present 'one voice' concerning regional training and industry development issues to government, post-secondary institutions, and private training providers;
- Regional hub<sup>2</sup> for sourcing and providing training-related expertise for regional companies;
- Clearinghouse and common access point for program and training information based on identified industry needs;
- Venue for sharing success stories and an incubator for new ideas that can be shared across the region and more broadly in the province; and

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<sup>1</sup> See the *Vancouver Island/Coastal Region Manufacturing Labour Market Partnership: Strategy* report dated January 27, 2017

<sup>2</sup> The CLN is not intended to act as a training provider but as a link to training that meets industry needs.

- Platform that encourages regular communication and dialogue between and among leaders in manufacturing companies on training, development and labour market issues that impact their workforce and company productivity.

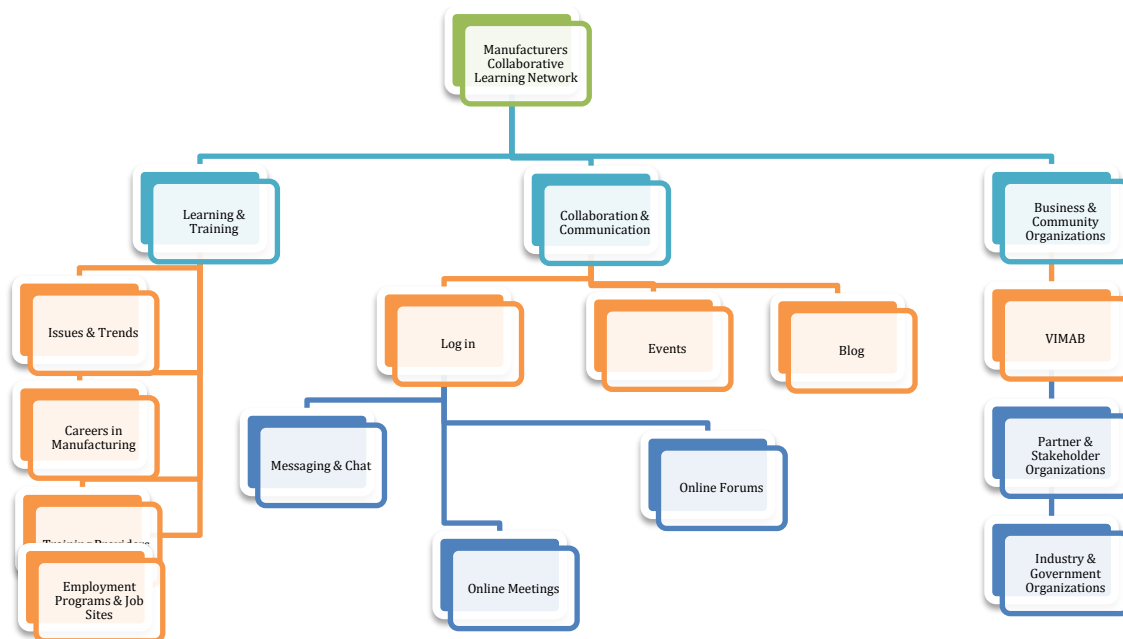
In order to move ahead quickly on the development of the CLN, a website development firm, Seriously Creative, was contracted by Harbour Digital Media (HDM) to create a Wordpress framework for the CLN site. This paper provides an overview of the final CLN design, the launch of the network, and future actions to encourage use of the network by manufacturers, stakeholders, and partners.

### Overview of the Final Collaborative Learning Network Design

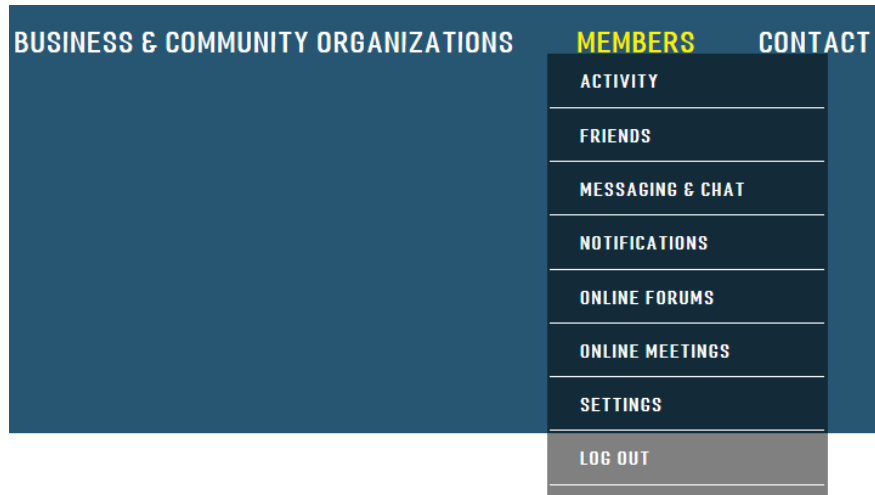
It is important to note that websites need to be dynamic and will change over time based on feedback from end users and evolving conditions in the marketplace for the target audience. Since the initial web design was developed and included in the presented in the draft framework paper in August 2017, HDM has been involved in additional informal dialogue (beyond what was undertaken to develop the implementation strategy and plan) with manufacturers in the VI/Coastal region concerning issues they face and how an online learning environment and tools might be used to address these issues. As a result, the CLN design has been amended to focus on two main areas:

- Learning and Training
- Communication and Collaboration

The following diagram provides a summary of the main features and content areas that are included in the final web design for the network. The website can be found at <http://mfgcln.com>.



A **Business and Community Organizations** section is also included along with the ability for individuals to register and login as members. By registering as a member, individuals also gain access to communication tools and online forums and other features that are not available to non-members.



The **Learning and Training** section of the website includes links to information and data that constitutes the 'database' of content for the site. This will expand and evolve over time based on input from end users, partners, and stakeholders.



**ISSUES & TRENDS**

British Columbia and Canadian manufacturers face a number of issues and challenges. This section highlights some of the recent research, commentary, articles & podcasts and provides an overview of a number of Issues & Trends facing manufacturers.

Issues related Blog Postings

- "Why Sidney has become the Industry INNOVATION CAPITAL for Vancouver Island" – <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/why-sidney-has-become-industry-innovation-capital-island-john-juricic/>
- "To innovate or not to innovate...that is the question" – <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/innovate-innovatethat-question-john-juricic/>

Trends Related Links

The **Collaboration and Communication** section of the site includes communication tools that will help to facilitate dialogue between and among those who choose to become engaged in discussions, events, forums, and meetings. Each page also includes social media links to Twitter and LinkedIn.



**BLOG**

This blog provides access to timely topics, information, and events of interest to the Vancouver Island/Coastal region manufacturing and learning/training communities.



SIDNEY – THE INNOVATION CAPITAL OF VANCOUVER ISLAND



TO INNOVATE OR NOT TO INNOVATE... THAT IS THE QUESTION



INNOVATE 2017 – LIVE-STREAM & PHOTO GALLERY LINKS

**RECENT POSTS**

- Sidney – The Innovation Capital of Vancouver Island
- To Innovate or not to Innovate...that is the question
- Sidney Breakfast Club – November 9th
- Innovate 2017 – Live-stream & Photo gallery links
- VMAC named Finalist in the BC Export Awards' Manufactured Products

The ***Business and Community Organizations*** section includes members of the Vancouver Island Manufacturers Advisory Board (VIMAB) and listings of individuals and organizations and links to their websites.



#### VIMAB – VANCOUVER ISLAND / COASTAL MANUFACTURING SECTOR ADVISORY BOARD



As a part of its work as an employer coordinator for the **Canada-BC Job Grant program**, Harbour Digital Media (HDM) and its partners (Schmidt & Carbol Consulting Group) have engaged manufacturing companies on Vancouver Island in discussions concerning training needs, skills gaps, and productivity issues affecting the sector.

Each page on the site also includes links to social networking sites. An example of social networking site links found on one of the pages is found below.



## Launch of the Manufacturers Collaborative Learning Network

### Phase 1: 'Soft' Launch

The Manufacturers Collaborative Learning Network was 'soft' launched in November 2017. This is considered the first phase of a two phase launch process. Members of the Vancouver Island Manufacturers Advisory Board (VIMAB), partners and stakeholders are in the process of being added as members to the site. Membership is free but is used to create authenticated accounts that can be used to sign up for events, forum, and to use the messaging and chat functionality that is included in the site.

Members will be asked to provide feedback concerning site content and usability through a polling feature that will be included in the site prior to the end of January 2018. A January 4, 2018 meeting

of VIMAB is scheduled at which time advisory board members will review the feedback and provide additional suggestions for site changes.

Both the online and in person feedback will be structured to include the following:

1. Confirmation of the functionality and feature priorities;
2. Review of the initial set of content and services that are included on the CLN website;
3. Testing of the website on various operating systems and mobile devices.

'Soft' launch feedback will be completed by January 31, 2018.

## Phase 2: Launch

It is expected that the industry and community stakeholder consultative process for the CLN website will be completed by February 2018. A social media and email campaign (similar to other campaigns that have been implemented successfully as a part of this Labour Market Partnership Project) will be used to inform potential users about the site and its purposes.

The launch campaign will include the following social media, email, and print campaign elements:

- Social Media Platforms contacts
  - Facebook – 745 individuals plus the 72 in the Vancouver Island Manufacturing Community Group – 72
  - Twitter – 608 individuals
  - Linked – 2715 individuals plus 119 in the BC Manufacturing and Industrial Business Network Group
- A Times Colonist (TC) article which according to the Times Colonist will reach approximately 10,000 readers
- Emails to the VIMAB (Vancouver Island Manufacturing sector Advisory Board) Database – 169 manufacturing companies and 35 business organization stakeholders
- Emails to the NCMAB (North Central Manufacturing sector Advisory Board ) Database - 164 manufacturing companies and 40 business organization stakeholders

The site will be monitored on an on-going basis with common web metric analytic tools. The following measures will be tracked on an on-going basis and will used in combination with end-user feedback to refine and further develop the website.

- Website traffic (visitors and members)
- Referrals (including those referred through social media postings)
- Traffic sources (where visitors are coming from)
- Bounce rates (how quickly people leave the site or conversely how 'sticky' the site is)
- Top pages
- Conversion rates



## **Final Thoughts**

The CLN site is seen by manufacturers as a critical part of the strategy to foster the growth of the VI/Coastal manufacturing community. It is designed to act as a vehicle to identify common learning and training issues and a venue for seeking solutions to those issues with regional training partners and stakeholders.