

## Could Renfrew County Employers Use a Little TLC?

Renfrew County has an interesting mix of smaller (less than 50 employees) and larger employers. Primarily, though our employers fall into the “Small and Medium Business” category, and over the past year most of the growth in job opportunities has been in heavy and civil engineering construction, food services and drinking places; and building material and supplies wholesalers and distributors. (according to the latest Trends Opportunities Priorities TOP Report on local industry in Renfrew County [www.workforceplanningontario.ca](http://www.workforceplanningontario.ca))

A major concern of local employers was that they didn't have the resources within their companies to train and re-train workers. That's very understandable in the current economy. When your bottom line is trying to stay healthy, investing in training and re-training for your staff is not usually at the top of your priority list. And it's often very difficult to find training resources in the community that can develop the package you need to focus on specific basic skills upgrading that your employees need. One-size-fits-all training just doesn't cut it.

Here's an example of what access to skills assessment and upgrading can do. When Jim Smith joined Gentle Giant Moving Company in 2004, he thought he would be there for a few months and then move on. But the company's owners had other ideas. They observed Smith on a few jobs and recognized that he was physically strong and smart--a winning combo for a business that requires equal measures of muscle, troubleshooting ability and people skills. Smith easily could have gotten stuck in a basic role. With his quiet demeanor and shy nature, he was often the "silent helper" on jobs and was reluctant to take a bigger role in the company. However, with the encouragement of the company's management and some one-on-one basic skills training, Smith began to overcome his fears, and when a co-worker was injured, he nervously stepped in to oversee the job. Since then, Smith has taken on increasingly larger roles and received several promotions, moving from a strong, silent helper to a sought-after driver, crew chief and trainer.

When local employers see in their employees what the owners of the Gentle Giant Moving Company saw in Jim Smith, that's where the Training and Learning Centre of Renfrew County (TLC-RC) may be able to help. If you have talented people on your team that may require brushing up on essential skills in order to serve you better, our expertise in community-based adult learning may just be the kind of TLC you need! Don't hesitate to call the office and ask questions about our free service.

Coming Next: The difference TLC-RC makes in your local community