Worker certification: A tool for responsible mine closure and worker redeployment

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Abstract

Due to the cyclical nature of the mining industry and the finite lifespans of mines and mills, it is not uncommon for a worker to be employed at up to six different mines throughout the course of his or her career. In light of this, and to facilitate the redeployment of a workforce following a mine closure, some employers are turning to national worker certification as a way to support employees in their transition to new and continued employment in the mining industry. By training and certifying workers to a national occupational standard (NOS) for their respective occupations, employers are providing employees with nationally recognised, portable credentials — documentation of their skills and experience they can take with them to prospective employers.

The Mining Industry Human Resources Council (MiHR) has launched Canada’s first and only national mining worker certification program, the Canadian Mining Certification Program (CMCP), which has certified over 1,000 workers. This paper examines the strategic approaches of Agrium Inc.’s Kapuskasing operation, Xstrata Zinc’s Brunswick mine and Northgate Minerals Corporation’s Kemess mine to illustrate how employers are leveraging worker certification as one component of a responsible mine closure strategy that will help to support the process of transition and make redeployment easier. Certification provides departing workers with a professional credential that is proof of their skills and competencies, so potential employers have a clear indication of what the employee is capable of before he or she is hired. By ensuring workers are prepared for transition in the period leading up to or following mine closure, companies strengthen their legacy within communities. A case study analysis of how worker certification was implemented as a part of responsible mine closure at these three operations offers insights into this approach and how it supports the overall retention of workers in Canada’s mining industry.

1 Introduction: Ignoring the HR impact of mine closure damages the industry

Since its inception in 1996, MiHR has convened industry to develop stakeholder-led human resources (HR) programs that focus on the sustainability of the mining industry. MiHR’s most recent analysis shows that the industry’s hiring needs over the next decade, despite the current market conditions, are forecast at 120,000 workers. Trades and production occupations continue to make up a large proportion of the mining industry’s hiring requirements, and there is significant pressure to replace retiring workers. This category includes high-demand occupations where mining must compete against other sectors for talent (e.g., haul truck drivers and heavy equipment operators). It also includes a number of occupations where there are simply not enough new entrants to meet needs projected for the next 10 years (e.g., underground production and development miners and supervisors in mining and minerals processing).

MiHR’s labour market information is recognized as the authoritative resource for the Canadian mining industry because it is sector specific and has been validated since 2007. It provides accurate and timely labour market information to mining industry stakeholders, forecasting future hiring requirements in the sector by occupation and region based on fluctuations in commodity prices, which are the largest driver of employment in the sector. This information enables stakeholders to take practical measures to mitigate the risks associated with labour shortages (or surpluses).

Figure 1, showing the age distribution in the Canadian mining industry, highlights the significant number of mining employees that are eligible to retire in the next five to 10 years. In a mine closure situation, if these workers are downsized, a huge amount of valuable knowledge is lost and not transferred. This practical
knowledge cannot be replaced by education, so a different kind of skills gap in the industry is created, where supervisory and management staff have to be promoted without the knowledge and experience they need to succeed. Tools like the MiHR-developed National Occupational Standards (NOS) can help transfer knowledge associated with the roles of underground miner, surface miner, minerals processing operator and diamond driller. In 2016, MiHR will also add supervisors, trainers and hoist operators to this list. The NOS for supervisors will be particularly valuable to facilitate knowledge transfer in a mine closure or downsizing.

Source: Mining Industry Human Resources Council, 2013

**Figure 1  Age group distribution in Canadian mining, 2013**

The top 10 occupations with the greatest forecasted hiring requirements across the next decade are listed below and detailed in Table 1:

- Underground production and development miners
- Heavy equipment operators (except crane operators)
- Construction millwrights and industrial mechanics (except textile mechanics)
- Truck drivers
- Welders and related machine operators
- Primary production managers (except agriculture managers)
- Machine operators, mineral and metal processing
- Heavy-duty equipment mechanics
- Industrial electricians
- Supervisors, mining and quarrying

These hiring requirements, which are produced by the MiHR labour market information model and validated by an industry committee annually, indicate a baseline scenario where there is no growth or contraction in the industry. The full annual report (MiHR, 2014) also shows the hiring requirements in contractionary and expansionary scenarios. MiHR has also completed provincial custom analyses for Ontario, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories; these are all available on request.
Table 1  Hiring requirement forecasts by broad occupational categories, baseline scenario to 2024

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Category</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2024</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trades and Production Occupations</td>
<td>8,615</td>
<td>19,140</td>
<td>36,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and Physical Science Occupations</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>3,350</td>
<td>6,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources and Financial Occupations</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>1,630</td>
<td>3,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Workers</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>1,675</td>
<td>3,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Occupations</td>
<td>820</td>
<td>1,820</td>
<td>3,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors, Coordinators and Foremen</td>
<td>1,555</td>
<td>3,470</td>
<td>6,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other Occupations</td>
<td>14,640</td>
<td>32,535</td>
<td>61,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>28,620</td>
<td>63,620</td>
<td>121,150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Mining Industry Human Resources Council, 2014

1.1  Rationale for investing in employees during a downsizing or closure

MiHR’s research has shown that employers who are downsizing find that workforce transition support instituted prior to layoffs results in better attendance for affected employees and less disruption to quality. Remaining employees are positively affected, since they have concrete evidence of the employer’s concern for workers. Thinking of the long term, companies may be currently downsizing, relocating or closing, but in future may want to retain certain employees or rehire them.

In the context of long-term strategic workforce planning, providing employees with a credential that smooths and enables their transition to another mine also retains them in the industry, reducing the chance of further shrinking the future labour pool. This is essential, considering the hiring requirements over the next decade.

2  National occupational standards and certification

NOS provide a detailed inventory of the skills, knowledge and competencies required to perform specific jobs safely and productively in the mining industry. They also form the foundation of the Canadian Mining Certification Program (CMCP), which has now certified over 1,000 workers from across the country as surface miners, underground miners, diamond drillers and minerals processing operators. The first four NOS for mining — underground miner, surface miner, minerals processing operator and diamond driller — were prioritised by industry and developed from 2006 to 2008. In January 2014, MiHR received funding from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) through its Sectoral Initiatives Program (SIP) to develop three new standards for the roles of frontline supervisor, industry trainer and hoist operator, as prioritised by industry through extensive research.

2.1  How are NOS developed?

NOS are developed by a committee of industry subject matter experts (job incumbents, managers and trainers) and validated by a broader group of industry representatives. Committee members and validation participants are selected to represent a broad range of commodities, company sizes and regions. The NOS development committees (NOSDCs) meet in person and by teleconferences and, through facilitated sessions, conduct the occupational analysis and create the occupational standards. Meeting facilitators are trained to guide the discussions, ensuring that the NOS are consistent and broadly representative of industry’s requirements for the occupation being defined.
Once the standards have been developed and the validation process is completed, the committees are reconvened to finalise the NOS and authorise the release. At this time, the NOSDC can also develop certification schemes, outline training programs or set training standards for the occupation.

In developing NOS for the mining industry, MiHR has so far focussed on occupations that have been described as “semi-skilled” because they have lower requirements for formal post-secondary education or because there is a lack of formal recognition of these occupations at the provincial/territorial or national level. NOS development at MiHR has also focussed on those occupations for which industry demand or hiring requirements are anticipated to be the greatest in the future.

To date, MiHR’s four NOS have been used in certifying employees and, to a lesser extent, in accrediting post-secondary education programs. Nevertheless, as outlined above, the application of NOS can be much broader, supporting workforce planning and training program and curriculum development and facilitating recruitment, hiring and retention.

Source: Mining Industry Human Resources Council, 2014

Figure 2  The design and creation of a national occupational standard

2.2  How are NOS used?

NOS establish clear, objective benchmarks and are used in a variety of industries in Canada and around the world to do the following:

- Support personnel certification.
- Facilitate recruitment and expedite hiring processes by informing job descriptions and providing the basis for job applicants.
- Inform training program development and assess third-party training providers.
- Identify career paths to support employee retention.
- Evaluate and determine the qualifications of potential employees, including internationally trained workers.
- Establish performance criteria and develop training plans.
- Support succession planning by identifying the critical competencies of experienced workers who are transitioning out of the industry and identifying the training and experience required for more junior workers to assume more senior positions.
- Assist with mine closure or downsizing.

2.3 International interest

Canada’s NOS are garnering international attention amongst global mining employers and Canadian companies operating abroad and are often viewed as the gold standard to which other countries aspire — a great compliment to the Canadian mining industry.

As custodians of the NOS, MiHR receives inquiries from across the globe from countries such as the United States, Ghana, Turkey, Indonesia, Peru, Colombia, South Korea, Chile and Kazakhstan. Some nations are referencing the standards for research and comparison or as a model to develop their own NOS, while others are interested in certifying their workers against the Canadian NOS. This global interest points to a growing commitment to standardised skills and training, safety and productivity at mine sites, and the development of a highly-skilled mining workforce. As the program expands, this will open up global opportunities for transitioning workers affected by mine downsizing or those who are able to secure work with a contractor.

2.4 The role of NOS and certification in mine closure

NOS and certification also play an important role when market conditions result in downsizing or mine closure. Xstrata’s Brunswick mine, Kemess mine and Agrium’s Kapuskasing phosphate operations have all used the CMCP as one tool to assist in responsible mine closure. Workers who have participated and been certified under the CMCP have a professional credential that is recognised throughout the mining industry in Canada and can be used to demonstrate their transferable skills to other industries. This is also beneficial to mining employers and workers as the market recovers, as it enables workers to transition back in to roles that reflect their skills and experience. Prior to the creation of the NOS for underground miner, surface miner and minerals processing operator, these occupations were referred to as “undesignated.” The lack of a formal, national recognition system led to high turnover rates, inconsistent training and an inefficient labour market. As it can take anywhere from two to five years to train a skilled worker for the mining industry, understanding the future need and having the tools in place to plan for this is essential.

For mines that are downsizing and have employees choosing retirement, NOS provide a foundation for effective succession planning in high-demand jobs. Clarity regarding the important skill sets that will be lost through retirement attrition is essential so that employers do not create unmanageable skills gaps on site. A process for responsible mine closure
The following process for responsible mine closure is based on MiHR’s Mining Workforce Transition Kit, developed by MiHR and industry experts to assist employers in times of transition, and on lessons learned from the responsible mine closures of the case study companies detailed in Section 4: Northgate, Xstrata and Agrium:

1. A transition committee is established: this should include representatives from HR, training, the union and employees.
2. The transition committee meets with MiHR to discuss timelines and the use of NOS and certification.
3. The transition committee appoints a CMCP implementation team, which should include representatives from the training department, HR and recruitment.
4. An action plan and certification timeline is created and agreed by the CMCP implementation team and MiHR’s Office of the Registrar.
5. The transition committee establishes and equips an information centre for transitioning employees with materials on certification (MiHR supplies materials). This information centre is usually integrated with other resources that assist transitioning employees, such as interview guides, resume writing tips, job hunting advice, etc.
6. The training lead in the committee aligns the company training standards with the relevant NOS. This will expedite the certification process.
7. A workplace assessor is nominated by the employer and trained by MiHR on how to assess candidates on the job. Timeline is based on the mine closure plan and employees’ skills and experience.
8. Employees are enrolled into the certification program.
9. All employees who have applied for certification conduct self-assessments, which are based on the NOS, and submit these to the workplace assessor.
10. Workplace assessments are conducted with candidates on site, using the CMCP record of assessment (ROA), based on the NOS.
11. Employees are certified once they perform tasks at the level of competency required in the certification scheme and have achieved the required number of hours in the workplace, as documented by a workplace assessor in the ROA and validated by the MiHR Office of the Registrar.
12. Upon certification, employees receive recognition items: a skills passport, lapel pin, hardhat sticker and certificate.
13. MiHR provides employees with tools to show recruiters and potential employers how to interpret the skills passport and ROA. These tools benefit employees and employers by enabling faster integration into the new workplace, eliminating the need to duplicate training and validating workers’ skills by a nationally recognized organization.
14. The ROA is a valuable, detailed inventory of the employee’s skills and experience; combined with the skills passport and other certification items, it assists employees in their job search and in marketing their skills.
3.1 Sample of completed records of assessment (ROAs)

The ROA is built from the NOS and is a tool for trainers to assess the skills and competencies of a worker against the standard and against the required levels for certification in that occupation. Figure 3 shows examples of the ROA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MIHR Underground Miner Certification Record of Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area of Competence A</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare to Go Underground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of last experience: 06/30/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task A4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarize self with underground work areas and emergency procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Assessment/Demonstration: 06/30/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUB-TASK</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Familiarize self with underground layout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Follow company fire procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Respond to other emergencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Ensure safety of self and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Secure accident site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Assess situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) Report accident to appropriate personnel (e.g. security, first aid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVIDENCE/COMMENTS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows Refuge Station Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Emergency Code 1 Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported accident to appropriate personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secured accident site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active ERT member with First Aid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MIHR Underground Miner Certification Record of Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area of Competence D</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perform General Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of last experience: 06/29/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task D4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handle materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Assessment/Demonstration: 06/29/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUB-TASK</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Load materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Transport materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Unload materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Select appropriate personal protective equipment for work activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVIDENCE/COMMENTS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses Scooptram to move materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses proper lifting techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operates Toyota Man Carrier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hauls gear to storage with Komatsu WA 250 IT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3 Sample records of assessment (ROAs)
3.2 The Canadian Mining Certification Program recognition items

Once employees are certified, they receive recognition items (pins and certificates) and the tools to demonstrate their skills and competencies to their potential employers (skills passport, ROA). All workers’ records, once they are certified, are held by the MiHR Office of the Registrar, a resource that helps employees to maintain their career growth and helps employers to validate candidates who are applying for work.

![Skills passports for different occupations, certificates and pins](image)

Figure 4 shows the skills passports for each occupation, certificate and pins.

3.3 A more efficient labour market

We are currently gathering data on using the skills passport and ROA instead of a resume in the hiring process to identify any efficiencies gained through the new system. A second metric that is being explored is whether the skills passport and ROA reduce the time required to integrate new employees, given that their skills are assessed and validated so training dollars and time are not duplicated.

4 Case studies

4.1 Agrium Inc.’s Kapuskasing phosphate operations

Agrium Inc. had a closure plan in place for the Kapuskasing phosphate operation very early on. When the mine first opened in 2000, Agrium had estimated that the mine would close around 2014. That target moved slightly, and in 2010 it was announced the mine would close in 2013. Agrium implemented the CMPC to complement a long-term mine closure and transition plan that emphasised the marketability of departing employees’ skills and competencies in support of their effective transition to new employment in the mining industry.
Pierre Plamondon, human resource business analyst at Agrium, was part of the transition team at Kapuskasing. He said the company had been very open and engaged with employees about the closure:

*We were working through many planning activities that involved preparing employees for employment transitions. We really worked with all employees to plan those transitions as far back as a couple of years before closure. Some employees completed training and courses in preparation. A few accepted Agrium’s offer to relocate to our other operations in Saskatchewan and Alberta. However, most were rooted in northern Ontario and planning to stay in the region.*

### 4.1.1 Implementation: Giving employees the credentials to find new work

Agrium’s goal once the closure was announced shifted to packaging departing employees’ work portfolios in ways that best allowed them to easily share them and showcase their years of training and experience and the competencies they had each acquired in their respective fields of work.

Agrium first learned about the CMCP only a few months prior to the closure, but because it so closely aligned with the company’s existing transition plan and provided employees with a portable portfolio of their skills and experience through national certification, they invested in the training and resources to implement the program in a compressed timeline.

To achieve certification through the CMCP, workers went through prior learning assessments and/or on-the-job demonstrations of skills with an MiHR-qualified workplace assessor, who captured and documented their level of competency in the required areas, as outlined in the minerals processing operator NOS. Employees worked closely with the HR team to access the information (HR records, training certificates, and so on) that would serve as supporting evidence in their application for certification. Agrium then combined these certification efforts with its other transitional support programs, such as the creation of training portfolios, employee profiles and resume updates. This information was leveraged when Agrium reached out to local employers and other interested mining sector employers ahead of closure to showcase and introduce the employees. Plamondon notes that a program like this requires team commitment:

*All of our leaders, from site manager to front line supervisors had employee transitions as a main priority. We supported employees through their transition; they supported Agrium through a very successful closure. Our focus to help front line workers in this area allowed them to focus on safely operating the plant to the very end. This was beneficial for everyone including our community partners and the mining sector in the area and it allowed us to retain all of the critical skills necessary to operate the plant, to process all of the mined ore and to successfully close the mine site.*

### 4.1.2 Outcomes

A total of 19 minerals processing operators from the Kapuskasing operation received their Level 1 certification, and Plamondon says the initial impact was twofold. First, employees working through the certification process were able to strategically organise their acquired skills, knowledge and experience, which has helped prepare them to market themselves. Second, they were given a national certification, which is something that had eluded minerals processing operators in the past. “It put them on equal footing with peers in other professions,” Plamondon explains. “They were able to share this certification with employers interested in their skills (ahead of closure, in many cases) and the prospective employer was able easily assess their qualifications and overall value as an applicant.”

Plamondon says certifying the operators as one component of the company’s overall closure strategy helped to support the smooth transition of the Kapuskasing workforce; over 85% of the employees had secured work for after closure even before their jobs were completed at Agrium.
4.2 Xstrata Zinc’s Brunswick mine

For Xstrata Zinc, the decision to offer the CMCP was of strategic importance from a corporate social responsibility standpoint. As part of responsible mine closure, it was important to the company to ensure workers were transitioned and prepared to begin seeking new employment. Here as well, the CMPC provided workers at a closing mine with nationally recognised, portable credentials to support their transition to new employment and their continued career in the mining industry. By implementing the CMCP at their site, Xstrata Zinc’s Brunswick mine had workers trained and certified to the NOS, which provided them with documentation of their skills and experience to take with them to prospective employers.

Prior to the development of the CMCP, many occupations in mining were considered “undesignated,” meaning they lacked a nationally recognised professional credential, so a worker’s skills and competencies were tied to the mine at which they were employed. MiHR’s research has indicated that the turnover rate for these undesignated occupations, such as underground miner, minerals processing operator and diamond driller, is twice as high as the average in all occupations in mining.

After operating in the city of Bathurst, New Brunswick, for close to 50 years, Xstrata Zinc wanted to preserve its legacy in the community by providing its workforce with the means to demonstrate the skills and experience that many residents had earned throughout the duration of their careers at the mine, and MiHR’s certification program provided the most value for the workforce because of its national recognition.

4.2.1 Implementation: Transitioning workers using the skills passport

Brunswick mine certified 190 workers as underground miners and minerals processing operators over a span of two and a half years, as the mine’s operations wound down. These workers became some of Canada’s first nationally certified mining workers, and they now have recognition for their skills and experience in the industry, giving them a portable credential that supports applications for future employment and validates what is on their resumes. The certification includes a skills passport, a certificate, a lapel pin and a wallet card. “I think it’s a win, win,” says Georges Ouellette, who was the mine’s production support superintendent before the closure in early 2013. “There’s no doubt about that in my mind. It’s something that’s been lacking in the industry for many years. The employees obviously love it because they are going to be recognised.” Euclide Haché, a certified Level 2 underground miner, and formerly a mobile equipment miner at Brunswick, agrees:

I have always been proud to be a miner. I’ll say to the person who claims that I’m not competent that it’s not true because in my occupation it takes skills and aptitudes to be able to come to work in the morning and come out at night exactly the same way you were in the morning. I also have in my wallet a card and a [skills] passport that can prove it.

4.2.2 Outcomes

Even before the Brunswick mine closed, Cementation Canada had conducted job fairs in Bathurst to recruit some workers from the mine, and many offered their CMCP passports as proof of their skills, which Cementation, another participating CMCP employer, readily accepted. This highlights another key advantage of the CMCP: savings in time and training. A certified employee is trained to a national standard, and the skills passport documents the skills and competencies the worker has demonstrated on the job to achieve his or her certification, so potential employers have a clear indication of what the employee is capable of before he or she is hired.

The employer can also easily identify any gaps in training and/or experience and target their training dollars toward getting that experienced worker mobilised in their active workforce faster and more efficiently.
4.3 Northgate Minerals’ Kemess mine

The Kemess Mine (now owned by AuRico Gold) was in operation for 14 years prior to its closure in 2011. A transition plan was implemented a year before the projected time of closure, once management knew the ore body was depleted, but planning was underway long before that, says Linda Hodgson, who was the HR superintendent with Northgate Minerals at the Kemess Mine and is currently an HR consultant with AuRico Gold. Northgate made use of the certification program to supplement the transitional support offered to workers at a closing mine in order to reward long service and help them secure employment at their current.

4.3.1 Implementation: Rewarding the service of employees and providing proof of skills and experience

Employees were kept informed about the projected time of closure and how they would be supported in their transition to new employment. Hodgson says she thought offering national certification was an excellent way to assist their departing surface miners in securing employment at their current level, rather than having to start at the bottom with a new employer:

> From my experience, I have seen so many people leave a mine and go to another mine (maybe they are a shovel operator and have to go down to a truck driver) because there are no credentials they can take with them that [are] recognised across the country, or even across the province.

Several employees had given many years of service to Kemess, having been employed for the full 14-year lifespan of the mine as shovel operators, and Hodgson says being able to offer national certification to some of the departing workers was a way to reward this long service and to help increase their likelihood of finding employment and staying in the mining sector.

The certification program was implemented alongside other transitional programs Kemess was offering, which included training updates in mine rescue, first aid and fall arrest. The company hired a workplace transition coordinator to lead a transition committee and help workers update their training and resumes. Equipment trainers worked with the certification candidates to assess their skills and competencies against the surface miner NOS and help them compile HR and training records that would form the evidence required to support their application for certification. The workplace transition coordinator then worked with the certification candidates to compile this information into updated resumes, making the processes complementary and efficient.

4.3.2 Outcomes

Hodgson says certification is an excellent tool to work into an effective transition plan to support a mine closure—one that will help to retain employees throughout the transition and keep them engaged:

> One of the things that is so important is that people continue to work at the same level right to mine closure, and that you don’t lose the engagement of the employees, ... Because when you get to the end of a mine closure, people are often asked and sometimes expected to work outside of their designated area, and so if you can’t keep these individuals engaged and they are just putting in time, your chances of having a successful closure are comprised.

> If you treat people with respect and provide them with the tools and support to carry on, you are more likely to retain your workforce throughout a closure – and offering individuals the opportunity to obtain national certification in their occupation is certainly one component of a transition plan that will make them feel valued and supported, and help keep them engaged.
5 Conclusions

The feedback we have received from employers and a transitioning worker survey indicates that certification is a valuable tool for mine workers affected by mine closure or downsizing. The program was launched fully in 2011, and we are starting to see examples of how the program is facilitating recruitment and retention and assisting workers affected by mine closures or downsizing. In 2015, we are researching key metrics with our implementing sites to gather data and metrics on any impacts on retention and on the role of certification documents in facilitating recruitment and making training and integration more efficient.

This data will enable employers to understand the business case for certification, whether they are in production or moving toward closure.

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References


Bibliography


