



2022-2025



**BUSINESS
+ HIGHER
EDUCATION**
ROUNDTABLE

Strategic Plan

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Letter from the CEO

To BHER's members, partners, and team,

We've laid solid foundations at BHER since business and post-secondary leaders joined forces in 2015 to tackle some of the toughest challenges facing Canada's learners, workers, educators, and employers. We've established our reputation as an organization committed to connecting, convening, and creating opportunity through collaboration.

I'm incredibly proud of our accomplishments to date. We've:

- Built 42 partnerships, with over 150 partners, and secured nearly 40,000 work-integrated learning (WIL) placements for post-secondary students across the country;
- Launched an R&D division focused on rigorous, evidence-based insights;
- Developed a first-of-its-kind WIL Hub with tools and resources to help businesses of all sizes explore, invest in, and create quality WIL;
- Grown our staff complement from two to nearly twenty; and
- Remained firm in our commitment to creating a better social and economic future for all.



This strategic plan outlines how BHER will continue to drive change over the next three years.

We'll deepen our relationships with our members and build more partnerships across the country. We'll continue to ask our members and partners what tools and resources they need to address skills, talent, and innovation challenges, and we'll build them.

We'll remain committed to WIL, but leverage what we've learned to support worker upskilling and reskilling, while helping businesses navigate the future of work. We'll continue to ground our work in evidenced-based research and we'll establish BHER as a leader in Canada's research, development, and innovation ecosystems.

We'll continue to tell our story and tell yours. We have bold ambitions and we've built an incredible team to realize them. We'll continue to connect, inform, build, and change Canada for our members and on your behalf. I look forward to reflecting three years from now on a decade of growth and impact for Canadians across the country.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Val Walker".

Dr. Valerie Walker,
CEO, Business + Higher Education Roundtable



BHER's Mission, Vision, and Values

MISSION:

Creating opportunity through collaboration.

Who we are:

The Business+Higher Education Roundtable (BHER) is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization bringing together Canada's largest companies and leading post-secondary institutions. Since 2015, BHER has worked to harness the strengths of our business and post-secondary education members to build opportunities for Canadians, boost innovation, and drive collaboration.

Vision:

A thriving Canada where everyone has an opportunity to reach their potential.

Values:

We take **action**.

We act on **evidence**. Information and data are the basis for what we do.

We act with confidence. We are **bold** in our opinions and output.

We drive **transformation**. We don't do things the old way. We stay ahead of the curve.

We act in partnership. **Relationship builders** are who we are.

We **connect** people, collaborate with groups, and develop partnerships between everyone in our ecosystem.

We act for **all**. The outcome of our work is for the benefit of everyone in Canada.

Strategic Priorities

01 **Connect and convene with purpose**

Our core mandate. We will connect, convene and lead the conversation on skills, talent, and innovation with our members and other leaders from across the country.

02 **Skills and talent**

We will build capacity and drive change in Canada's skills and talent ecosystems, especially work-integrated learning, to help businesses navigate the future of work.

03 **Innovation and research partnerships**

We will create a stronger culture of innovation and research partnerships in Canada to leverage existing strengths, deepen collaboration, and support sustainable economic growth.

04 **Organizational capacity**

We will continue to strengthen and scale organizational capacity, communications, and revenue streams to better serve members.

The Big Picture: BHER's Next 3 Years

Below is a summary of BHER's goals and strategies. Additional detail can be found on the subsequent pages.

Goal 1: Connect and convene with purpose

Lead the conversation on skills, talent, and innovation with our members and other leaders from across the country.

- a. Establish BHER as a leader in evidence-based solutions to skills, talent, and innovation challenges.
- b. Deepen our connections with members (and their connections with each other).
- c. Engage stakeholders and expand our networks.

Goal 2: Skills and talent

Build capacity and drive change in Canada's skills and talent ecosystems to help businesses navigate the future of work.

- a. Continue to play a leadership role in expanding access to quality WIL in Canada.
- b. Work with BHER's members and partners to support worker upskilling and reskilling in Canada.
- c. Build expertise in the future of work.

Goal 3: Innovation and research partnerships

Create a stronger culture of innovation and research partnerships in Canada to leverage existing strengths, deepen collaboration, and support sustainable economic growth.

- a. Connect members to existing initiatives that support collaboration and growth.
- b. Identify opportunities to support Canada's research and innovation ecosystem.

Goal 4: Organizational capacity

Strengthen and scale organizational capacity to better serve members.

- a. Scale and formalize internal operational capacity, communications, and processes.
- b. Expand communications impact.
- c. Build sustainable, diversified revenue streams.

01 Goal:

Connect, convene, and lead the conversation on skills, talent, and innovation with our members and other leaders from across the country.

a. Establish BHER as a leader in evidence-based solutions to skills, talent, and innovation challenges.

- Convene members and expand engagement with partners and stakeholders.
- Conduct, curate, translate, synthesize, and disseminate evidence-based research and analysis for our members and stakeholders.
- Build broad consensus and buy-in on member-driven issues.
- Provide reliable and timely advice on priority issues to members and on their behalf to government decision makers.

b. Deepen our connections with members (and their connections with each other).

- Learn from and work more closely with leaders throughout member organizations (i.e. not just at the top).
- Build new forums for engagement, such as surveys, committees, and advisory groups to leverage member insight and expertise.
- Strengthen communication channels with members so we can share and amplify the work they are doing.

c. Engage stakeholders and expand our networks.

- Deepen relationships with provincial and territorial leaders to build our understanding of their work, create new connections, and act as a resource and broker for members.
- Engage students more often and more directly in our work.
- Recruit diverse students, learners, and workers to participate in interviews, surveys, focus groups, etc., to broaden our network and ensure our work is responsive to their needs.

02 Goal:

Build capacity and drive change in Canada's skills and talent ecosystems to help businesses navigate the future of work.

a. Continue to play a leadership role in expanding access to quality WIL in Canada.

- Create and scale WIL partnerships to deliver new WIL experiences, with a particular focus on official language minority communities, under-represented groups, and hard-to-reach populations.
- Create, pilot and evaluate new resources and new types of WIL for key stakeholders, especially small and medium-sized enterprises.
- Mobilize, transfer, and exchange the knowledge and data generated through our WIL partnerships and R&D work to support WIL ecosystems in Canada and reduce the duplication of efforts.

b. Work with BHER's members and partners to support worker upskilling and reskilling in Canada.

- Establish credibility in upskilling and reskilling by building on existing research and expertise, including from our members and partners.
- Connect and convene our members and other leaders to create robust data (both quantitative and qualitative), better understand outcomes, inform decision making, and develop new programs.
- Help members and partners navigate the impacts of net-zero emissions targets on learners, workers, jobs, and skills.

c. Build expertise in the future of work.

- Use data to identify early signals of workforce changes, and help employers identify the skills they need in the workforce.
- Explore how BHER can advance research and action around future-of-work issues, such as quality jobs, access to employment, hybrid/remote work, and building a skilled, equitable workforce.
- Gain a deeper understanding of the role of international student retention and immigration in tackling Canada's labour and skills shortages.

03 Goal:

Create a stronger culture of innovation and research partnerships in Canada to leverage existing strengths, deepen collaborations, and support sustainable economic growth.

a. Connect members to existing initiatives that support collaboration and growth.

- Engage members to understand their top research partnership and innovation challenges.
- Connect members to existing initiatives through curated research partnership development.

b. Identify opportunities to support Canada's research and innovation ecosystem.

- Track and report early signals and future trends to members.
- Produce research outputs that generate ideas and identify potential solutions and interventions.
- Build capacity and expertise to respond to member-identified challenges.



04 Goal:

Strengthen and scale organizational capacity, communications, and revenue streams to better serve members.

a. Scale and formalize internal operational capacity and processes.

- Develop capacity (including internal staffing, external contractors, vendors, etc.) to deliver on the strategic plan.
- Invest in organization-wide and individual professional training and development, supported through formal performance management processes.
- Invest in tools, technology, and resources to ensure staff have what they need to reach their goals.

b. Expand communications impact.

- Continue to build BHER's external footprint and brand recognition through mainstream and social media.
- Leverage relationships with members and strategic partners to broaden our reach.
- Prioritize innovative approaches to knowledge translation and knowledge mobilization.

c. Build sustainable, diversified revenue streams.

- Develop and execute a strategy for member growth and retention, prioritizing diversity, i.e. human, geographic, and industry.
- Generate revenue through contract research, i.e. in response to calls for proposal, foundation grants, walk-up business, etc.
- Explore the feasibility of revenue-generating convening and events.

BHER Milestones and Big Wins



Our Members



Founding Partner:



**Business Council
of Canada**