

# Models for Success

## Co-op and Apprenticeship



### Lloyd Stamm

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#### *The route he took to get where he is*

Lloyd Stamm took an early interest in vehicle technology. The high school he attended in Alberta, offered technical training, including an elective in fixing cars. "It was something I turned to because I did well at it and it gave me a leg up, a head start on my apprenticeship as an automotive service technician (AST)"

Upon earning his Red Seal certification as an automotive service technician, he found himself at the end of an economic boom in Alberta, working for a dealership that needed a service advisor. When the economic downturn forced the dealership to close, Lloyd found new employment with Suzuki, a small Japanese manufacturer which was just starting up in Canada. Over the next 15 years, Lloyd progressed from a technical advisor to a senior district parts and service manager. Then, when he had very young children, he opted to become a fixed operations manager in a dealership, a job that would require less travel away from home.

For seven of the 30 years he has been involved in the automotive industry in BC, he worked for the Automotive Retailers Association (ARA) which represents the independent repair and service industry in BC. At ARA, Lloyd was involved in several initiatives. He helped develop an alternative model for automotive apprenticeship training and

took part in the creation of the Automotive Training Standards Organization, which plays a leading role in creating and maintaining apprenticeship training programs outlines.

#### *His key skills*

Asked what skills have served him best in all his jobs, Lloyd says "I always had a mechanical ability, but more than that I always liked to learn. I was always curious and was very interested in why something was NOT working." Lloyd credits the many good mentors he had along the way with teaching him about the industry. He took every opportunity to ask any co-worker with more experience about everything there was to know. When he was a dealership technician, he was the first to volunteer to take training when manufacturers' training schools offered courses.

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#### *What he does*

"Everything I do always revolves around solving a problem" says Lloyd. "I started out as technician looking for solutions when something was not working." He goes on, "I am still looking for solutions, but now it involves getting the right people together in a room." Lloyd derives a lot of personal satisfaction out of seeing things come to fruition, whether it's successfully completing a repair, or getting a new apprenticeship initiative off the

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ground. Lloyd thinks that, “sometimes teachers, who advise students in career choices, can’t understand why someone would want to go down the trades route, if they have not experienced the tremendous satisfaction you can get from a hands-on job well done.”

### **Greatest challenge**

The biggest challenge for Lloyd, as someone who has been ‘ringing the bell to warn of an upcoming skills and labour challenge’, is to “get people to open their eyes to reality,” to see the local implications of a meltdown at GM, or a broader economic collapse, as well as the recent societal tendency to live beyond our individual means. Lloyd’s challenge is to put that bigger picture into perspective when he is talking to individual employers who tell him that they are unable to find good apprentices, or can’t afford to hire apprentices. It’s part of his job to show employers how they can benefit in tough economic times from investing in training apprentices and to inform them about the financial and other resources that can help make this happen.

### **What industry needs today and tomorrow**

“What was science fiction 30 years ago” is what technicians now deal with as basics,” is how Lloyd summarizes major upheavals in what is demanded of the workers in today’s industry. “When we look at something like basic skills for AST, it used to include some really basic mechanical things like how to use a file” says Lloyd. “Basic knowledge now ALSO includes how to use a scan tool.” There’s a constant need in apprenticeship training to keep updating the basic requirements.

### **His involvement with Skills Canada**

Three weeks after joining ARA, Lloyd got involved with Skills Canada BC when he was asked to be a judge at a provincial competition. After two or three years of being a judge, he was asked to join the Board of Directors of Skills Canada BC. Long before he reached that level of involvement, however, Lloyd got curious about the origins of the skills competitions and why they are a ‘best kept secret’

in Canada. The international skills competitions started in Spain in 1946, after the Spanish Civil War of 1931-36 and World War II, with an effort to “interest youth in getting into trades to rebuild the country.” The way they chose to do it was “by showcasing real life situations and making some fun out of it.” This September at WorldSkills Calgary 2009, more than 900 skilled young competitors from 51 countries around the world will come together to test themselves against demanding international standards in 45 skill categories.

### **Why the competitions continue to grow and flourish**

As Lloyd sees it, there are a number of factors why skills competitions are a hit. “Kids love to compete, it is innate.” They compete in sports, they compete for marks. In society as a whole “competition is key to economic vitality; if you aren’t competitive everything melts down”. Having an event at which students get to compete and showcase their skills is one way to bring lots of people together get some exposure, showing the rest of the school, or the region or the country what skilled tradespeople do all day. For Lloyd skills competitions are the perfect venue to bring elementary and secondary students “to see stuff they would never have realized you did in that trade.” When students and their teachers and parents see a dog house, or a landscaped terrace completed during a day or two of competition, ‘it gives them some appreciation of the skills involved, and it gets some of them thinking... I wish I could do that.’



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Funded by the Government of Canada's  
Sector Council Program

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