

Strategic Plan 2016-2019 for Nova Scotia's Boatbuilding Sector



Prepared by



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Foreword

This document presents the Human Resources-related *Strategic Plan* for Nova Scotia's boatbuilding sector for the next three years: 2016 to 2019. It has been produced by the Nova Scotia Boatbuilders Association based on needs reported by the sector, and on the outcome of its work with the sector over the past three years.

Our sector comprises Nova Scotia-based companies that build, repair, and service boats; and by companies that provide goods and /or services in support of them.

The NSBA defines a boat as a marine vessel that measures under 24 metres in length. This coincides with the accepted threshold used by Transport Canada and international Classification Societies.

Our *Strategic Plan* includes a three year Action Plan that addresses three key issues that have been identified as having the biggest impact on the sustainability and growth of the boatbuilding sector. We define these key issues as Strategic Priorities:

Strategic Priority #1: *Attraction & Retention*

Strategic Priority #2: *Training & Industry Capacity Building*

Strategic Priority #3: *Human Resource Planning*

The sector's single biggest priority is to attract youth into the various aspects of the industry – and how employers can retain them. The Action Plan explains how this will be done, as well as how the other priorities will be addressed.

The NSBA's *Strategic Plan, 2016 – 2019* was developed in consultation with Nova Scotia's boatbuilding industry via meetings held over the past two years with industry stakeholders and employers.

This crucial work completed by the NSBA over the past 3-1/2 years has been made possible through the Sector Council Program, administered by Nova Scotia Labour & Advanced Education.

About

The Nova Scotia Boatbuilders Association (NSBA) was established in 1998 by a group of leading boatbuilders in the province who saw the benefits of working as a coordinated group towards achieving sustained business growth for the sector. The association's mission statement was established to:

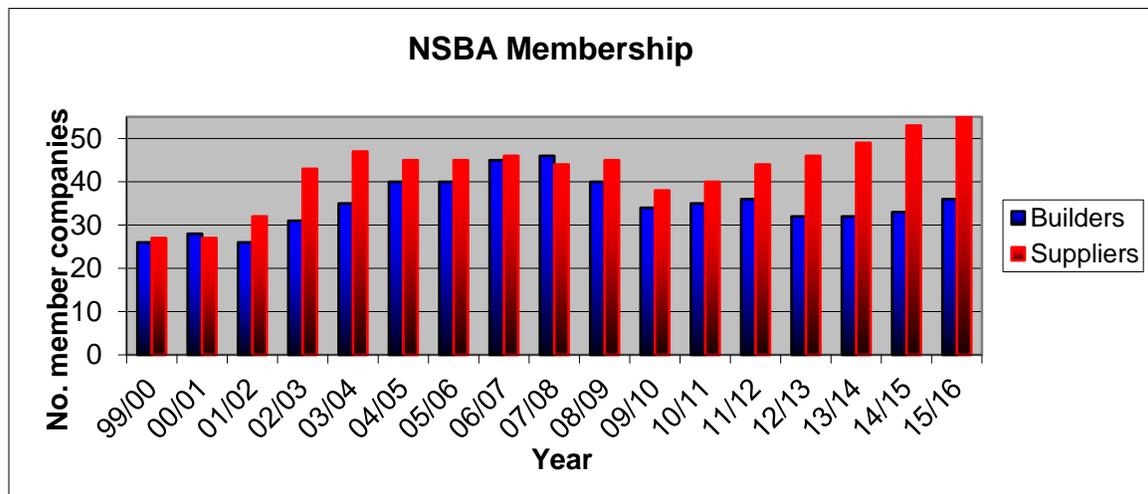
“Create and foster an environment that promotes profitable and sustained export-oriented growth for its members”

The following key roles for the NSBA were identified to help achieve sector growth:

- Training & Education
- Promotion
- Technology Advice
- Representation

Given that there had never been an organization with a full-time staff representing the boatbuilding sector - one of Nova Scotia's oldest industries – there was much work to be done to help ensure a bright future for the industry, and to provide young people with a rewarding career.

From a modest initial membership of seven boatbuilding companies and nine supplier companies, the NSBA now has 36 boatbuilder companies and 56 marine supplier companies in its membership.



The NSBA is governed by a Board of Directors elected from the membership-at-large at each Annual General Meeting. The association has a professional staff of four, located in Bayers Lake Business Park, just outside Halifax.

Representation

The NSBA represents about 86% of the boatbuilding industry in Nova Scotia. The sector is largely rural-based, as can be seen by the dots in this satellite image.



Figure 1: Satellite image of Nova Scotia showing boatbuilder locations

The NSBA works with small to medium-sized companies that build and repair custom or semi-custom boats, dinghies, trawler yachts, sailboats, patrol/search and rescue boats, commercial fishing boats, and workboats such as scientific research vessels, pilot boats and fire boats. The association also works with companies offering boat repair and storage services.

Staying connected

The NSBA is connected with many industry, non-profit, and government organizations that have a stake in the province's boatbuilding industry:

- **AMTA**
The Atlantic Marine Trades Association promotes recreational boating in Atlantic Canada and represents boat dealers and some manufacturers in the region.

NSBA has a partnership with AMTA to promote the Marine Service Technician trade and related training.

- **National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA)**

NMMA is a North American organization representing dealers and manufacturers of production boats. It owns many boat shows in the US and Canada and tracks trends in the industry. NSBA is a member of NMMA, who gives access to US stats on production boat sales.

- **ABYC**

ABYC is an industry-based organization established over fifty years ago to develop standards for recreational boat construction in the US. More recently, ABYC develops and delivers certification courses that address best practices for marine electrical, composite and diesel systems. NSBA is a member of ABYC and regularly facilitates their certification courses for boatbuilders and marine suppliers in the province of NS.

NSBA endeavors to use its relationship with ABYC to offer flat discount rates for the certification, also extending this to the NS government marine surveyors and other professionals who have taken the courses.

- **Waterfront Development Corporation (WDC)**

NSBA has an agreement with WDC to use their waterfront facility in Lunenburg for marine-related training for management and tradespeople.

- **National Research Council Canada (NRC)**

NSBA has an agreement with NRC, through its Industrial Research Assistance Program, to provide a technical advisory service to boatbuilders in the Maritimes. This includes developing NSBA's "tech tips" on a range of current boatbuilding topics with the goal of helping companies stay competitive and compliant with regulations.

- **Association of Industry Sector Councils (AISC)**

The NSBA continues to be an active member of the AISC and contributes through its experience with competency-driven apprenticeship programs and on-site workshops. NSBA learns to apply best practices from other industrial sectors, as the number of initiatives undertaken and resources created by the sector councils are transportable to other industry sectors.

- **CMAC**

NSBA is a member of the National Canadian Marine Advisory Council (CMAC) and regularly participates on the CMAC Standing Committee for Fishing Vessel Safety, as well as the Working Group on Fishing Vessel Safety.

- **NSAA**
NSBA has a Training Service Agreement with the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency to promote, manage and administer the Boat Builder Apprenticeship Program. The NSBA also works closely with NSAA in preparation for the implementation of the new Marine Service Technician Apprenticeship Program. A representative from NSAA also sits on the NSBA Training and Certification Committee (TCC) which regularly meets to oversee sector training.
- **Quadrant Marine Institute**
NSBA has a license agreement with the Quadrant Marine Institute, based in British Columbia, to use and adapt their learning material in support of the new Marine Service Technician trade.
- **New Zealand’s Marine Industry Training Organisation**
NSBA has a license agreement with NZ MITO to use and adapt their learning material and apprenticeship program model in support of the Nova Scotia Boat Builder Apprenticeship Program which was established in 2005.
- **NSCC**
NSBA has a Memorandum of Understanding with NSCC to collaborate on the delivery of off-job training for boatbuilders in the province. A representative of NSCC sits on the NSBA Training and Certification Committee.
- **Transport Canada**
NSBA is an active partner with Transport Canada Marine Safety & Security (TCMSS) at both the national and regional levels by participating with CMAC and by promoting and facilitating workshops and seminars to advance the industry’s awareness and understanding of marine safety issues, TC regulations and standards.
- **NS Apprenticeship Board**
Chip Dickison, NSBA’s Training Coordinator, sits on the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Board.
- **CAPLA**
Chip Dickison, NSBA’s Training Coordinator, is a Board member of the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment.

Leveraging through partnerships

Over the past four years, the NSBA has successfully leveraged funding received from the Sector Council Program to help achieve the goals of its Strategic Plan. SCP funding has been leveraged through partnerships with the following groups, departments and organizations:

- Nova Scotia’s marine industry
- NS LAE - Technical Training Fund
- NS LAE - Adult Education, RPL division
- National Research Council, IRAP
- NS Communities, Culture & Heritage
- Futureworx
- Équipe d’alphabétisation Nouvelle-Écosse
- Mi’kmaq Economic Benefits Office of Nova Scotia
- Confederacy of Mainland Mi’kmaq

Labour market

The labour market continues to grow for the boatbuilding sector, and the demand is exceeding the supply.

Repeatedly throughout the last three years, the NSBA has been told by boatbuilders that they are in need of new employees to service the demand for new boats, or repairs on existing boats. This, coupled with the steady increase in the number of employees retiring, is making the challenge of attracting young people to the industry even more urgent.

The employment figures for the boatbuilding sector are shown in the following chart. It’s important to note that these are skilled jobs in rural communities, full-time, year-round – not seasonal.

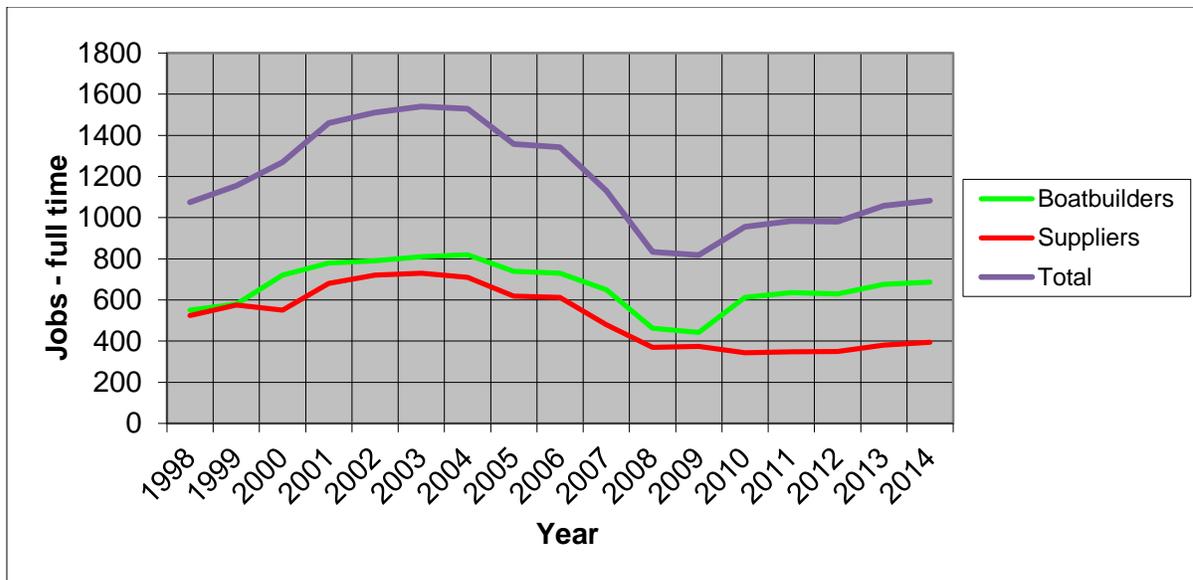


Figure 2: Employment in Nova Scotia's boatbuilding sector.

It is worth recording here a recent and very encouraging result of NSBA's efforts to interest youth in pursuing a career in the boatbuilding industry.

One of the many career presentations to students that NSBA delivers during the course of a year was made to Grade 10 and 11 students at the Duncan MacMillan High School in Sheet Harbour in early October, 2015.

The session caught the attention of at least one of the students because on the following day he contacted a local boatbuilding company to arrange a job interview. The interview was successful and the Grade 10 student was hired for part-time work at the boatshop while he completes high school. The position allows him to work flexible hours - which suits both the student and the employer.

While the student was visiting the recent HRSB Career Fair in Halifax, he came up to the NSBA information booth to thank staff member Christian O'Neill for letting him know about career opportunities in the boatbuilding industry, and to tell him about his new job.

NSBA then followed up with a call to the boatyard owner, who confirmed the student's employment and added that he is one of the best young workers he has ever had!

Sector priorities

Through regular communication and consultation with sector employers and employees, the NSBA has confirmed that the following three Sector Council Program priorities have the greatest impact on the future sustainability and growth of Nova Scotia’s boatbuilding industry:

Priority #1: Attraction & Retention

Rationale

The boatbuilding sector, as with many industries in the province, is experiencing a shortage of skilled tradespeople. NSBA’s consultations with industry employers have confirmed that finding workers with skills relevant to the boatbuilding sector is difficult. Employers see the out-migration of youth to other provinces, and attracting youth to a rural-based industry as being two major challenges.

The shortage of skilled workers is also exacerbated by the demographics of the industry. With the majority of NS boatbuilders in their late 40s to mid-50s, there is an urgent need to attract younger skilled workers to the sector to ensure its sustainability as the older workforce enters retirement.

From numerous presentations the NSBA has made already to Grade 10 and 11 students, we know that consistent effort is needed to raise awareness among youth of the many career opportunities available in the marine industry.

Career Pathway for Nova Scotia's Marine Industry

Entry point into Boatbuilding Industry <i>see note 1</i>	Pre-Apprenticeship Programs <i>see note 2</i>	Apprenticeship <i>see note 3</i>	Further Education & Training Options <i>see note 4</i>	Career Goal <i>see note 5</i>
High School Graduate Sea Cadet O2 Program Graduate Youth Apprenticeship Painter Carpenter Fibreglass Laminator Welder/Metal Fab Plumber Electrician Mechanic Auto Body NSCAD Graduate	Basic Fibreglass Laminating NS Sea School MST-Orientation Automotive, Collision Repair Automotive Service & Repair Carpentry Electrical Industrial Mechanical Plumbing Metal Fabrication Diesel Repair - Industrial & Marine	NS Boat Builder NS Marine Service Technician	Marine Industry experience Industry Seminars & Workshops College Diploma University Degree ABYC Certification NMEA Certification	Production Manager Service Manager Company Owner Business Manager Self-employed Estimator Marine Surveyor Sales Designer Engineer
Career Pathway				

- Notes**
- 1 Basic skills training for the listed trades is available through Pre-Apprenticeship Programs
 - 2 The list shows some examples of Pre-Apprenticeship Programs. There are others
 - 3 New Apprentices may be eligible to receive credits from previous training, through the PLAR process
 - 4 This list provides some options. There are others
 - 5 This list provides some options. There are others

Figure 3: Career Pathway for Nova Scotia’s Marine Industry

One of the initiatives NSBA is pursuing to help attract the attention of youth is the construction of a performance sailboat model designed by Nova Scotia students attending Memorial University of Newfoundland. This high-performance, foil-assisted *Open 60* design will feature emerging technologies that pave the way for the future of the industry. The model will be used at Career Fairs and High School presentations.

Priority #2: *Training & Capacity Building*

Rationale

As with many sectors in Nova Scotia's economy, the boatbuilding industry's labour force is aging, and many boatbuilders in this province are now well into their 50s.

The NSBA, through its regular visits to boatyards, is well aware that the number of youth working in the sector is much less than older workers. While NSBA has seen an encouraging increase in young employees over the past three years – especially in 2015 - they still represent a minority when compared to the older demographic.

Results of NSBA's regular consultation with industry suggest there are several challenges that the aging workforce presents to the sector. First, while the need to adopt new and more productive technology is increasing, older workers are less likely to embrace it, preferring to rely on the traditional skills they have learned and developed over the years. Secondly, there is also evidence verified by Workers Compensation Board that older workers are more prone to work-related injuries.

Priority #3: *Human Resource Planning*

Rationale

Most of the independently-owned boatyards in Nova Scotia lack provincial and local labour market information. They are often in the dark about the qualifications and credentials tradespeople have been obtaining to compete in the market, or lack knowledge of the interest trends of youth for certain trades.

Furthermore, employers are often unsure how the salaries they pay their employees compare with other boatbuilders – or whether they are alone in offering employee benefit packages.

NSBA believes this lack of labour market information impacts on a boatyard's competitiveness and on their ability to proactively forecast hiring and training needs in future years.

As part of regular visits that NSBA staff makes to boatyards across the province each year, information such as wage rates, employee benefits, working conditions, average employee age, and employee incentives is recorded and later grouped for sector and government use.

Action plan

Considering the sector's three Strategic Priorities, the NSBA has developed the following Action Plan that can be implemented with current staffing levels - and with at least the same level of funding from the Sector Council Program as in previous years, leveraged through NSBA's other government and industry partners.

Boatbuilding Sector Action Plan			
Strategic Priority: <i>Attraction and Retention</i>			
Industry Need	Activities	Outcomes	Timeline
	Develop promotional material, including social media and performance yacht model, to make sector more appealing to youth	More effective promotional material is available for promoting to youth	Years 1 & 2
	Promote career opportunities to school students	More young people understand career opportunities available in marine industry	Years 1-3
More young people in the workforce	Encourage and assist job-seekers to find employment in sector	More young people enter the workforce	Years 1-3
	Identify steps employers can take to become more attractive to potential young employees	Employers become more attractive to young potential employees	Years 1-3
	Encourage employers to take steps that will make them more attractive to potential employees	More young people know about career options in the marine industry	Years 1-3
	Promote Boat Builder and Marine Service Technician careers to potential young employees	Boatbuilders see increase of job-seekers	Years 1-3
	Connect employers with young job-seekers	More young people aware their past work experience could be credited towards boatbuilder certification	Years 1-3
	Develop, promote, and deliver PLAR		

Retain best employees	Identify steps employers can take to help retain their best existing employees Encourage employers to take steps that will help them retain their existing employees	Fewer employees leave the boatbuilding industry workforce	Years 1-3
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Boatbuilding Sector Action Plan

Strategic Priority: *Training and Capacity Building*

Industry Need	Activities	Outcomes	Timeline
Upskilled employees	Promote and facilitate the delivery of Essential Skills training	More employees receive essential skills training	Years 2-3
	Identify current upskill training needs	Current upskill training needs are known	Year 1
	Facilitate training so employers can upskill their workforce	More employees receive upskill training and certification	Years 2-3
	Continue to promote and manage the NS Boat Builder Apprenticeship Program	Engagement in NS BBAP continues	Years 1-3
	Facilitate delivery of ABYC Certification Courses	More employees attain ABYC certification	Years 1-3
Improved HR management skills	Facilitate HR-related seminars and workshops for sector management	More managers receive management training	Years 1-3
	Promote mentorship within sector, and facilitate mentorship training	Pool of qualified Mentors increases	Years 1-3
Better acceptance of new technology	Encourage employers to adopt new technologies	More employers adopting new technologies that could help their business	Years 1-3

Safer and cleaner working environment	Produce and disseminate “Tech Tips” to boatbuilders on how to maintain a cleaner working environment	More boatbuilder employers and employees understand how to keep a cleaner working environment	Years 1-3
	Encourage employers to create and maintain a safer working environment		

Boatbuilding Sector Action Plan

Strategic Priority: *Human Resource Planning*

Industry Need	Activities	Outcomes	Timeline
Current sector LMI	Record and collate current sector LMI	More complete LMI for the sector is available	Years 1-3
	Disseminate sector LMI to government and industry	Government and industry better informed on sector LMI	
Access to relevant training	Identify sector training needs	Training needs better understood	Years 1-3
	Facilitate sector training based on identified needs	Availability of relevant training for sector is improved	Years 1-3
	Complete development of Boat Builder and Marine Service Technician trade outlines and Apprenticeship Training Standards	BB and MST trade outlines and training standards available	Year 1
	Establish MST Apprenticeship Program	MST Apprenticeship Program available in Nova Scotia	Year 1

	Promote and manage Boat Builder Apprenticeship Program	More people engage in the NS BBAP	Years 1-3
	Promote and manage Marine Service Technician Apprenticeship Program	More people engage in the NS MST	Years 1-3
	Facilitate delivery of ABYC Certification Courses	More sector employees get certified to ABYC Standards	Years 1-3
	Develop more Best Practices	More Best Practices Guides available to sector	Years 1-2
	Encourage employers to adopt Best Practices	More employers adopting Best Practices	Years 2-3
Improved productivity	Identify new technologies that can improve productivity	Technologies that can help improve productivity are identified	Years 1-3
	Deliver training on new technologies that can improve productivity	More employers and employees receive training in application of new technologies	Years 1-3
Improved HR practices	Carry out regular visits to sector employers and employees to identify HR-related opportunities and challenges	HR-related opportunities and challenges in the sector better understood	Years 1-3
	Develop and promote HR tools such as handbooks for OH&S and Customer Service	More HR tools developed and available to sector	Years 1-3
Clear lines of communication	Create and maintain working partnerships with government and industry stakeholders	Improved networking and collaboration between government and sector	Years 1-3
	Maintain regular communication with NSAA and NSLAE		

Reporting and administration

The reporting requirements related to the NSBA's Action Plan will be managed by Tim Edwards, Executive Director – with support from the association's administrative staff. Cost tracking of related activities will be carried out using Sage 50 Pro Accounting software.

Implementation

Implementation of the Action Plan will be headed up by Chip Dickison, NSBA's Training Coordinator, with support from Christian O'Neill, Training Assistant, and Tim Edwards, Executive Director.