



The Central Columnist Line Up

Serving Durham For Over 30 Years



Canada Is Running Out of the People Who Keep It Going

By Dale Jodoin
Columnist

Try to find a family doctor in parts of Canada. Try to book a plumber when a pipe bursts. Try to get an electrician. More people are hearing the same answer. Not today. Not this week. Maybe next month. It is a warning. Something is shifting across the country, and people can feel it.

Canada is getting older. Large numbers of workers are retiring. Fewer young people are stepping into many of the jobs that keep daily life moving. In some areas, there are not enough people to replace those who are leaving.

That matters more than many Canadians may realize. This is not about office jobs or distant policy. It reaches into hospitals, job sites, farms, schools, care homes, and small towns. It reaches into the places people depend on every day.

For years, Canada has relied on growth to stay stable. More workers supported more retirees. More families kept schools open. More people paying taxes helped keep public services running. That balance was never perfect, but it helped the country move forward. Now that balance is under strain.

Across Canada, skilled workers are reaching retirement age. Doctors are leaving. Nurses are stepping away or burning out. Plumbers, electricians, mechanics, truck drivers, and many others are ending long careers. These are not jobs you can fill quickly. Many take years to learn and even longer to do well.

Canada did not prepare enough for this shift. The numbers are clear. Nearly one in five Canadians is now over the age of 65, and that share continues to grow. At the same time, job vacancy rates in key sectors like healthcare and construction remain high across the country.

That gap is not closing on its own. For a long time, young people were pushed toward one idea of success. Get a degree. Work at a desk. There is nothing wrong with that path, but somewhere along the way this country stopped showing enough respect for skilled trades and hands on work. Too many young people were never told these jobs matter and are worth choosing.

Now we are paying for that mistake. When there are not enough nurses, patients wait longer. When there are not enough tradespeople, housing projects slow down. When there are not enough truck drivers, goods take longer to arrive. When there are not enough care workers, seniors and families carry more of the burden.

People are living it now. The problem grows when cities and provinces compete for the same shrinking pool of workers. One area offers money to bring in doctors. Another raises wages to pull nurses from somewhere else. Some even pay to move people across the country. It looks like action, but it does not solve the real problem. There are only so many trained professionals available. If one city pulls a doctor from another, Canada did not gain a new doctor. It just moved the shortage.

That is not growth. It is a shuffle. While communities compete, the pool keeps shrinking. Canada needs people. In practical, everyday ways. We need workers who can build, care, repair, grow food, drive trucks, open businesses, and raise families. We need people who will step into roles that are already sitting empty.

Without newcomers, the slowdown will move faster. If more people leave work than enter it, the country weakens. Fewer workers means less tax coming in. It means more pressure on healthcare and pensions. It means more strain on those still working. It means fewer services and rising costs. There is also a reason Canada still depends on temporary foreign workers. Programs like the Temporary Foreign Worker Program help fill jobs that would otherwise go unfilled.

On farms, workers help harvest crops that would be lost without enough hands. In care homes, they support seniors where staffing is already stretched thin.

These are not jobs being taken from Canadians in many cases. These are jobs that are open and waiting. Without temporary workers, some businesses would close and some services would slow down even more. That does not mean the system is perfect. Workers must be treated fairly and paid properly. But removing this workforce without replacing it would make a bad situation worse.

Canada needs balance.

We need to train young people for the jobs the country actually needs. We need to bring respect back to trades, healthcare, and practical work that keeps daily life moving. Schools need to show kids these paths matter. Communities need to value work that is hard and done with the hands.

At the same time, we need newcomers and temporary workers to help fill the gaps while the country rebuilds its strength.

This is not about blame. It is about reality.

This is about whether you can get care when you are sick. Whether your home can be repaired. Whether food gets grown, delivered, and sold. Whether a town can keep its clinic open. Whether businesses can stay open.

This is not fiction.

This is real life. It is what our country needs if it wants to grow and even hold its ground. People remember a Canada that felt steadier and easier to trust, but that world is gone.

The country we have now needs people, skills, planning, and honesty. If we ignore that, the slow decline already starting will not stop. It will become normal, and by then Canada will be in deeper trouble than many expect.



Tailor Your Answers to the Employer's Needs

By Nick Kossovan

Employers don't care about your past; they care about their future. Yet most candidates walk into an interview prepared to recite their career history (read: water under the bridge) as if it were a biopic. They then wait for questions that'll give them a chance to explain why they're the right candidate for the job. When those questions aren't asked, which is very likely, they feel they didn't adequately convey their suitability for the job.

Waiting and hoping your interviewer recognizes your value isn't a viable strategy; it's a gamble with very low odds. Savvy job seekers don't just answer questions; they manage the interview. They don't see the interviewer's inexperience, vagueness, or unpreparedness as obstacles; rather, they see them as opportunities to steer the interview towards their value-add. They also understand that interviews are sales meetings, and it's their job to convince the employer that hiring them would be a good investment.

Every interaction with an employer, whether through your resume, cover letter, LinkedIn profile, or especially during interviews, is your chance to show that you understand their business and how you can contribute to their profitability.

Based on my experience, the majority of those who conduct hiring interviews do so as an appendage to their core responsibilities. Unless you're speaking with a full-time recruiter or HR, the person across from you is likely your future boss, who has a mountain of other responsibilities. Inevitably, there'll be times when your interview will be an interruption to your interviewer's workday, which, if it's filled with 'goings on', they'll have their head elsewhere. I've conducted many less-than-ideal interviews sandwiched between meetings, 'putting out fires,' or while dwelling on pressing matters.

This lack of focus is precisely why your interviewer may not have read your resume, may not remember reading it, and may ask vague, unstructured questions. When an interview starts to feel messy, your initial reaction might be to think, "This isn't going well!" However, a messy interview is an excellent opportunity to sell yourself. Remember, an interview is a sales meeting.

Don't wait for perfect questions; instead, subtly guide your interviewer. Tailor your answers to show you'd be a value-add to the employer's profitability.

- Weak Question: "So... tell me about your experience."
- Tailored Answer: "I've spent fifteen years in operations, but to make this most useful for you, I'll focus on the parts most relevant to this role—specifically where I've led teams through high-pressure execution challenges and reduced overhead by 20%."
- Why it works: You're setting the direction. Rather than giving a long, unfocused history of your career, as most candidates do, you're presenting your skills and experience according to the job's requirements.
- Weak Question: "Tell me about a challenge you faced."
- Tailored Answer: "I'll use an example where a delivery was off-track, and the client was at risk. Since this role requires managing complex vendor relationships, this will show you how I navigate friction points."
- Why it works: You've tailored your answer to their needs. You're not just telling a story; you're illustrating your value.
- Weak Question: "What is your greatest strength?"
- Tailored Answer: "My strongest skill is identifying operational bottlenecks before they hit the P&L. For Vandelay Industries, which is scaling quickly, this means I can ensure your growth doesn't outpace your infrastructure."
- Why it works: You've turned a personality trait into a business asset.
- Weak Question: "Where do you see yourself in five years?"
- Tailored Answer: "In five years, I plan to have mastered this market segment. But more importantly, in the first six months here, I intend to have your new regional office operating at full capacity so that the five-year goals we set are starting to be visibly accomplished."
- Why it works: You've brought a hypothetical future back to you, being a hire that'll offer an immediate ROI. You're also telling them you're focused on their five-year plan, not just yours.
- Weak Question: "Why should we hire you instead of someone else?"
- Tailored Answer: "I'm not here just to do a job. I'm here to take on your challenges. This job appealed to me because of your recent expansion into the Toronto market. I have the specific vendor contacts and local regulatory experience that would enable me to shave three months off your rollout time."
- Why it works: You've moved from "I'm a hard worker," which every candidate claims to be, to "I am a strategic partner who can provide an advantage."

Guiding your interviewer, if necessary, isn't about taking control or appearing boastful. Instead, it's about helping them easily recognize your value. The more specific and relevant your responses are to the value you delivered to your previous employers, the less effort your interviewer needs to assess your value. The quality of your answers (read: their influence on your interviewer) is measured not by how long you talk, but by how effectively you communicate that you can influence the employer's profitability. When your interviewer appears disengaged or seems to be struggling, don't get frustrated. Instead, do your best to provide answers that'll help them see you have the skills, experience, and drive to influence profitability.

DURHAM'S #1 NEWSPAPER

The Central

THE VOICE OF DURHAM REGION

Your Community. Your Voice. Your Newspaper.

SURVIVED COVID,
HARSH ECONOMIC TIMES,
AND
NEVER QUIT.

Through every challenge.
WE KEPT PRINTING.

WE ARE TIME TESTED
Proven. Trusted. For Generations.

INDUSTRY RESPECTED
Committed to Excellence in Journalism.

GLOBALLY RECOGNIZED
Local Stories. Global Impact.

BUILT ON TRUST. DRIVEN BY COMMUNITY.
Committed to Durham. Always.