



THE MONIESON CENTRE

TRANSFORMING BUSINESS IN THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

Discovery Workshop Report KIS Showcase, Queen's School of Business, Kingston *April 8, 2009*

INTRODUCTION

This report is part of The Monieson Centre's Knowledge Impact in Society (KIS) Project, a three-year endeavour to connect academic knowledge with economic development needs in Eastern Ontario. The report is a summary of information collected at a workshop held as part of the 2009 KIS Showcase in Kingston, ON. About eighty academics, community leaders and business people from Eastern Ontario gave feedback on economic development needs and research questions raised in eight previous Discovery Workshops throughout the region. This information will guide the research pursued over the course of the KIS project.

The workshop was hosted by The Monieson Centre in partnership with Prince Edward/Lennox & Addington Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) and the Eastern Ontario CFDC Network, Inc. Mr. Erik Lockhart, Associate Director, Queen's Executive Decision Centre, facilitated the workshop.

The KIS project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. For more information, visit www.easternontarioknowledge.ca.



QUESTION 1

Prioritize the 30 research questions raised by community leaders in the eight Discovery Workshops: If we could only address six of these questions, which ones would you select based on usefulness (impact) and applicability across Eastern Ontario.

Ranked research questions:

1. **Creative Economy.** How can our community respond to and capitalize on the emerging creative economy?
2. **Niches.** What is our region's niche/competitive edge and how can we capitalize on it?
3. **Economic Development Engagement.** How can we engage our community in economic development?
4. **Value-Added Products.** How can we create value-added products from our local natural resources (agriculture, forestry)?
5. **Cooperative Government.** How do we develop efficient government that builds cooperation between local, regional, provincial and federal levels?
6. **Youth Retention.** How can we retain our youth?
7. **Entrepreneurship.** What is the best way to foster entrepreneurship? Do business incubators work?
8. **Demographic Information.** What demographic information can guide our planning? How can we adapt to changing demographic trends?
9. **Branding.** How can we effectively brand ourselves?
10. **Best Practices.** How do we compare to other similar communities and what best practices can be learned from them?
11. **Asset Inventories.** What can we do to make an inventory of our region's assets?
12. **Economic Development Models.** What economic development models could be implemented by our community?
13. **Business Financing.** How can we attract or create business financing opportunities?
14. **Green Industries.** What emerging/green industries can we develop?
15. **Small Business Encouragement.** How can we encourage small businesses?
16. **Youth Engagement.** How can we increase youth involvement and engagement?
17. **Business Attraction.** What community attributes will attract business?
18. **Tourism.** What tourism opportunities exist in our region? Can we attract tourists year-round?
19. **Downtown Improvement.** How do we develop a vibrant downtown?
20. **In-Migration Attraction.** How can we attract in-migration?
21. **Development Implementation.** How can we implement previously identified development strategies?
22. **Skills Training.** How can we provide skills training in our community?
23. **Healthcare Recruitment.** What is our best strategy for healthcare professional recruitment?
24. **Agriculture & Forestry Sustainability.** How can we develop agricultural/forestry sustainability?
25. **Knowledge Retention.** How can we retain valuable local knowledge?
26. **Foreign Skills Attraction.** How can we attract foreign skills?
27. **Transportation.** What are the keys to transportation improvement?
28. **Infrastructure.** What is the best way to access infrastructure funding?
29. **Greenbelt Development.** What is the best strategy for development in relation to a greenbelt, particularly in light of Places to Grow legislation?
30. **Housing.** How can we develop adequate housing?

QUESTION 2

For the top 12 questions identified in Question 1, what exactly would be helpful in terms of information and knowledge? What are the specific needs, issues, and questions we should examine?

1. **Creative Economy.** How can our community respond to and capitalize on the emerging creative economy?
 - What are other communities' best practices?
 - How do we redefine the creative economy for mostly rural economy?
 - What defines creative economy? We need a definition that we all understand.
 - What is a community's competitive advantage regarding specific creative economy sectors?
 - What are the external creative economy trends?
 - Tool development for communities.
 - Labour force/workforce development.
 - How significant is the cultural sector in our community and what are current employment levels?
 - What is the earning capacity we can expect?
 - How do we capitalize on the creative economy concept and use it to deliver benefits to eastern Ontario?
 - Determine what constitutes a creative economy: what does it look like; is it the arts, research, service?
 - What does the creative economy mean?
 - What education do people need to participate?
 - Do we have any elements of the creative economy?
 - What supports are required for people in creative economy?
 - Will the creative economy fulfill our financial needs?
 - Identify assets: do we need to attract people outside of Eastern Ontario for fresh ideas?
 - How do we retain and grow our current creative economy?
 - Can partnerships be developed within region?
 - Get Richard Florida to write a book of Eastern Ontario's creative class.
 - How can we encourage people to turn hobbies and ideas into businesses/attractions?

2. **Niches.** What is our region's niche/competitive edge and how can we capitalize on it?
 - How do we identify what those niches are?
 - How can we determine if our niches are really marketable?
 - How do you determine the competitive edge?
 - How do we create a new economy around wood and develop new markets?
 - Value chain analysis/cluster would assist.
 - We need better databases of environmental and human resources for the region.
 - We need to capitalize on the success stories that already exist in the region (maybe we need combine lists of those success stories).

- How do you help municipal officials overcome analysis paralysis so they can implement study recommendations?
 - Is best practices information available where private sector successfully implements economic development recommendations?
 - Research each area/region to identify its niche/competitive edge.
3. **Economic Development Engagement.** How can we engage our community in economic development?
- How can we engage the business community to provide information to help us be more successful?
 - What has already been done to engage the business community and how has that fared?
 - What have similar jurisdictions done? What has been successful?
 - How do we get municipal government to buy into these efforts when they are already broke financially?
 - Who makes up our community (profile)?
 - How do we get various municipalities to work together?
 - Is there an inventory of what other communities have done successfully?
 - What resources are available to support the community engagement?
 - What is the potential economic impact of community economic development projects?
 - What strategies and best practices promote community engagement?
 - What is the role of the municipality?
 - How does a huge rural township manage to engage its business stakeholders at the same table?
 - Engagement of business in economic development.
4. **Value-Added Products.** How can we create value-added products from our local natural resources (agriculture, forestry)?
- What are best practices in determining value-added products for a community?
 - What is the agricultural makeup of the region/community?
 - How do we exploit the growing green market?
 - What players would have to be engaged in this process?
 - Develop an inventory of what is already being done and/or planning to be done within the area and who is doing it.
 - What capacity do our current value-added businesses have to grow and prosper?
 - How do we build the capacity to create jobs and investment in the value-added sector?
 - How do we break down the silos created by geographic/municipal boundaries?
5. **Cooperative Government.** How do we develop efficient government that builds cooperation between local, regional, provincial and federal levels?
- We need a discovery workshop with the Eastern Ontario Inter-Ministry Council (Regional Directors from all ministries), the Ontario Federal Council, and Eastern Ontario Wardens to see linkages and inventories of key decision-makers and initiatives.
 - What would an Eastern Ontario Regional Economic Development Plan look like?
 - How do we build on relationships with school boards which receive their mandate from the province?

- What red tape needs to be removed from this region?
 - Elected officials are so busy, how do we get their attention to focus on one priority?
6. **Youth Retention.** How can we retain our youth?
- Develop effective apprenticeship programmes.
 - What new opportunities would bring back our youth?
 - What are they studying at school?
 - Do we really want to retain youth, or is it better to attract them back a bit later in life?
 - How do we build effective relationships with school boards who receive marching orders from the province?
 - What are some incentives to keep youth in the area?
 - What does the community have to offer?
 - Pay them better.
 - Where do youth go?
 - If and when they return?
 - Massive youth internship program to promote employment in rural communities.
 - What are the successful school-to-work transitions projects?
 - How do we provide infrastructure which is of interest to youth?
7. **Entrepreneurship.** What is the best way to foster entrepreneurship? Do business incubators work?
- What are the perceived barriers to self-employment?
 - Incubator models to research and funding opportunities.
 - What are the pros and cons and the how-to's of developing effective business incubators?
 - Has there been any work done to evaluate the effectiveness of business incubators?
 - What best practices are out there where a community has been successful in attracting and retaining entrepreneurs?
8. **Demographic Information.** What demographic information can guide our planning? How can we adapt to changing demographic trends?
- How do we get demographic information that is accurate, more up to date and more local? We are always lumped in with other areas.
9. **Branding.** How can we effectively brand ourselves?
- How do we get all communities to buy in on a regional effort?
 - Is a brand tourism-oriented or generally-oriented?
 - We need to know why we are branding ourselves before we do anything.
10. **Best Practices.** How do we compare to other similar communities and what best practices can be learned from them?
- How do you find similar communities that have similar challenges and solutions and what is the best method of tapping into that knowledge?
 - Should broadband be ubiquitous across rural Ontario?
 - What indicators would you use to form a comparative analysis?
11. **Asset Inventories.** What can we do to make an inventory of our region's assets?

- What data is available?
- Who would be the 'keeper' of the inventory?

12. **Economic Development Models.** What economic development models could be implemented by our community?

- How can we put research findings on economic development models into practice?
- How do you build awareness on various economic development models?
- Find similar communities who have implemented different economic models, processes, strategies, structures, collaborative partnerships, experiences, etc. For example, PPPs have been used for economic development, but they are hard to implement.
- Need to find ways of convincing leadership to consider alternative models and learn how to help them be comfortable trying something innovative and risky.
- What examples of small rural areas have worked elsewhere?

Appendix A – Rough Ideas for Question 1

Prioritize the 30 research questions raised by community leaders in the eight Discovery Workshops: If we could only address six of these questions, which ones would you select based on usefulness (impact) and applicability across Eastern Ontario.

Votes	Rank	Issue	Comments
28	1	Creative Economy	How can our community respond to and capitalize on the emerging creative economy?
25	2	Niches	What is our region's niche/competitive edge and how can we capitalize on it?
18	3	Economic Development Engagement	How can we engage our community in economic development?
17	4	Value-Added Products	How can we create value-added products from our local natural resources (agriculture, forestry)?
15	5	Cooperative Government	How do we develop efficient government that builds cooperation between local, regional, provincial and federal levels?
15	6	Youth Retention	How can we retain our youth?
15	7	Entrepreneurship	What is the best way to foster entrepreneurship? Do business incubators work?
13	8	Demographic Information	What demographic information can guide our planning? How can we adapt to changing demographic trends?
13	9	Branding	How can we effectively brand ourselves?
12	10	Best Practices	How do we compare to other similar communities and what best practices can be learned from them?
11	11	Asset Inventories	What can we do to make an inventory of our region's assets?
11	12	Economic Development Models	What economic development models could be implemented by our community?
10	13	Business Financing	How can we attract or create business financing opportunities?
10	14	Green Industries	What emerging/green industries can we develop?
10	15	Small Business Encouragement	How can we encourage small businesses?
9	16	Youth Engagement	How can we increase youth involvement and engagement?
8	17	Business Attraction	What community attributes will attract business?
7	18	Tourism	What tourism opportunities exist in our region? Can we attract tourists year-round?
7	19	Downtown Improvement	How do we develop a vibrant downtown?
7	20	In-Migration Attraction	How can we attract in-migration?
6	21	Development	How can we implement previously identified development

		Implementation	strategies?
6	22	Skills Training	How can we provide skills training in our community?
5	23	Healthcare Recruitment	What is our best strategy for healthcare professional recruitment?
5	24	Agriculture & Forestry Sustainability	How can we develop agricultural/forestry sustainability?
4	25	Knowledge Retention	How can we retain valuable local knowledge?
4	26	Foreign Skills Attraction	How can we attract foreign skills?
2	27	Transportation	What are the keys to transportation improvement?
2	28	Infrastructure	What is the best way to access infrastructure funding?
0	29	Greenbelt Development	What is the best strategy for development in relation to a greenbelt, particularly in light of Places to Grow legislation?
0	30	Housing	How can we develop adequate housing?

Appendix B – Session Overview

The purpose of this workshop was to further prioritize and flesh out the research questions identified in the Discovery Workshops. A secondary objective was to demonstrate the interactive technology used in the Discovery Workshops.

The group began by prioritizing the thirty research topics identified in the eight Discovery Workshops. Each participant selected his/her top six. The group then further examined the top twelve topics by asking:

- What exactly would be helpful in terms of information and knowledge?
- What are the needs, issues, questions that we should examine?

Appendix C – Methodology

Information Gathering and Community Consultation process

The community consultation process included an information gathering component composed of a series of interactive workshops using facilitators from the Queen’s Executive Decision Centre. The purpose of this component was to get input from a broad cross section of community stakeholders.

The consultation was conducted using a group decision support system also known as an electronic meeting system (EMS), an innovative facilitation process developed from research at the Queen’s School of Business. The Queen’s EMS, called “the Decision Centre”, combines expert facilitation with a state-of-the-art group decision support system to enable groups to rapidly accelerate idea generation and consensus building. This facility consists of a network of laptops accessing software designed to support idea generation, idea consolidation, idea evaluation and planning. The tool supports, but does not replace, verbal interaction; typically 25% of interaction takes place on the computers. Feedback from groups who have used the Executive Decision Centre process includes: meeting times can be cut in half; participation goes way up; better idea generation and alternative evaluation; a more structured process; and automatic documentation of deliberations.

Over 500 organizations around North America use the Centre for meetings such as: strategic planning, visioning, annual planning, focus groups, team building, budgeting, program review, project planning, risk assessment, job profiling, 360 degree feedback, alternative evaluation, new product development and a variety of other meeting types.

In the consultations, participants were asked, for example, to select their top six research questions from a previously defined list of thirty. Participants selected their top six on the laptops. The prioritized, aggregate results then appeared on a public screen at the front of the room. These results were then discussed. The group was then asked for the top twelve issues, “what exactly would be helpful in terms of information and knowledge?” Individuals typed specific questions related to each issue into the laptops and the results were displayed on the screen and discussed.