

**Deloitte.**

## **Building big things with no builders...**

**How organizations can get ahead  
of constraining labour market gaps**



# Canada is aiming for a \$500B infrastructure push over the next five years

To succeed, Canadian builders must reverse past overruns by tightening scope, schedule, and cost, while closing the workforce gap through proactive planning and talent development.



It's an exciting moment for Canada's capital programs: **new federal commitments** across housing, transit, energy, and nation-building signal a **\$500-billion push** after years of uncertainty



To buck the trend of cost overruns on Canadian capital programs, organizations need to get disciplined on execution: **tighten scope, defend the schedule, and control cost**



Recent Deloitte research, including the '**Builders, baby, builders**' publication, underscores how critical those fundamentals are; but as financing and regulation get unlocked, a new risk is emerging: **the workforce**

# Workforce gaps will drive delays, overruns, and risks. What's your exposure?

Competition for skilled construction-related talent is coming from multiple industries. Labour market gaps will continue to grow faster than the system will produce workers, putting organizations on their back foot when no workers show up.

## Who will be left to build for you?

# 790,000+

potential vacancies based on 270,000 expected retirees and 520,000 net new labour needs.

Source: [Deloitte](#)

**Structural reality:** The systemic gap in skilled labour will continue to be amplified by slower immigration, shifting work preferences across generations, and general challenges in upskilling the Canadian workforce, meaning there will not be enough skills to execute on new projects or operate new assets. **Canadian organizations will not have a choice but to take a lead on solving this problem.**

## What are the business consequences of doing nothing?

### **Costs rise from labour competition**

- Organizations without clear role/skill/timing plans pay premiums and mobilize slower
- Bidding wars erode margins and inflate contractor and overtime rates

### **Safety risk & ops failures increase**

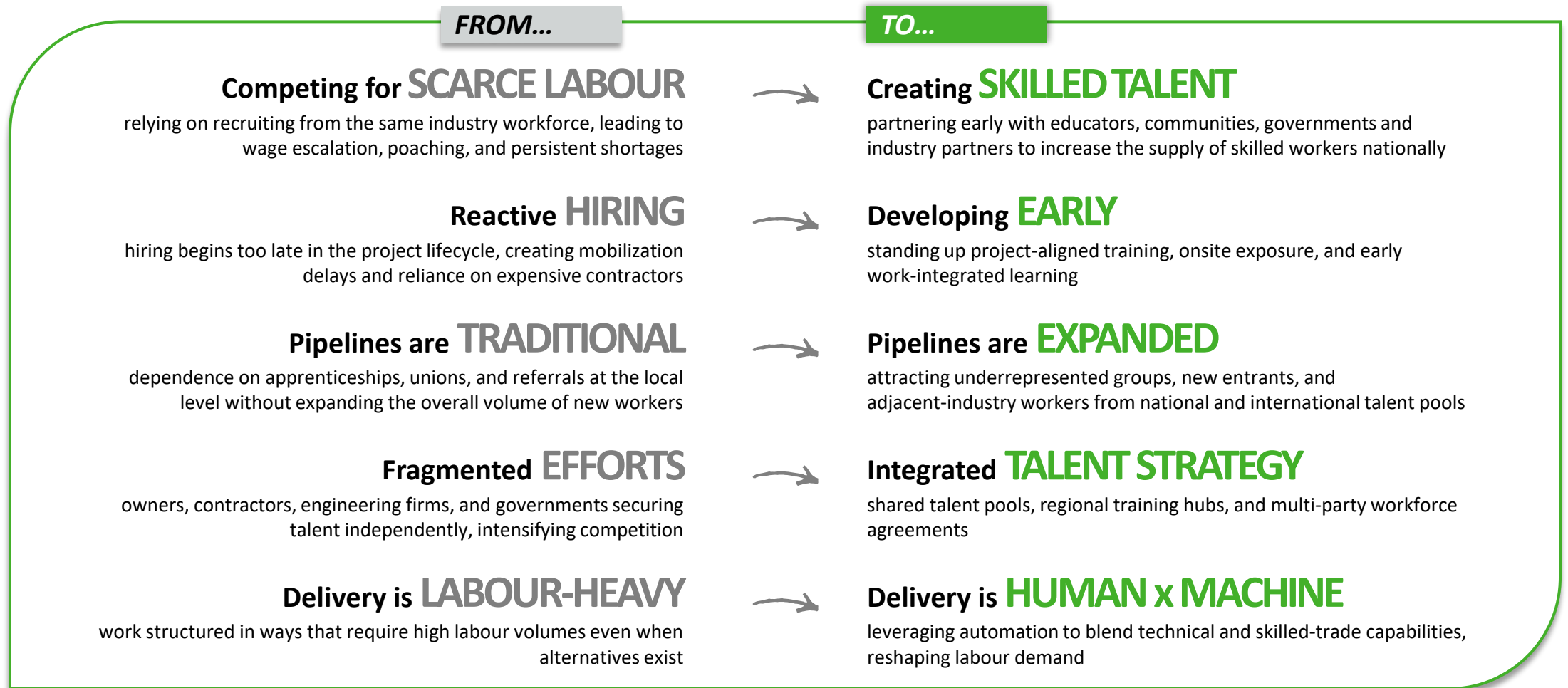
- Scarce specialties and understaffing / fatigue elevate safety incident risk and rework
- Skill mismatches on complex sites trigger quality escapes and downtime

### **Delivery timelines are missed**

- Capacity shortfalls cut productivity and slip critical-path milestones
- Late hiring delays mobilization and cascades through dependent schedules

# The required shift from reactive talent finding to proactive talent building

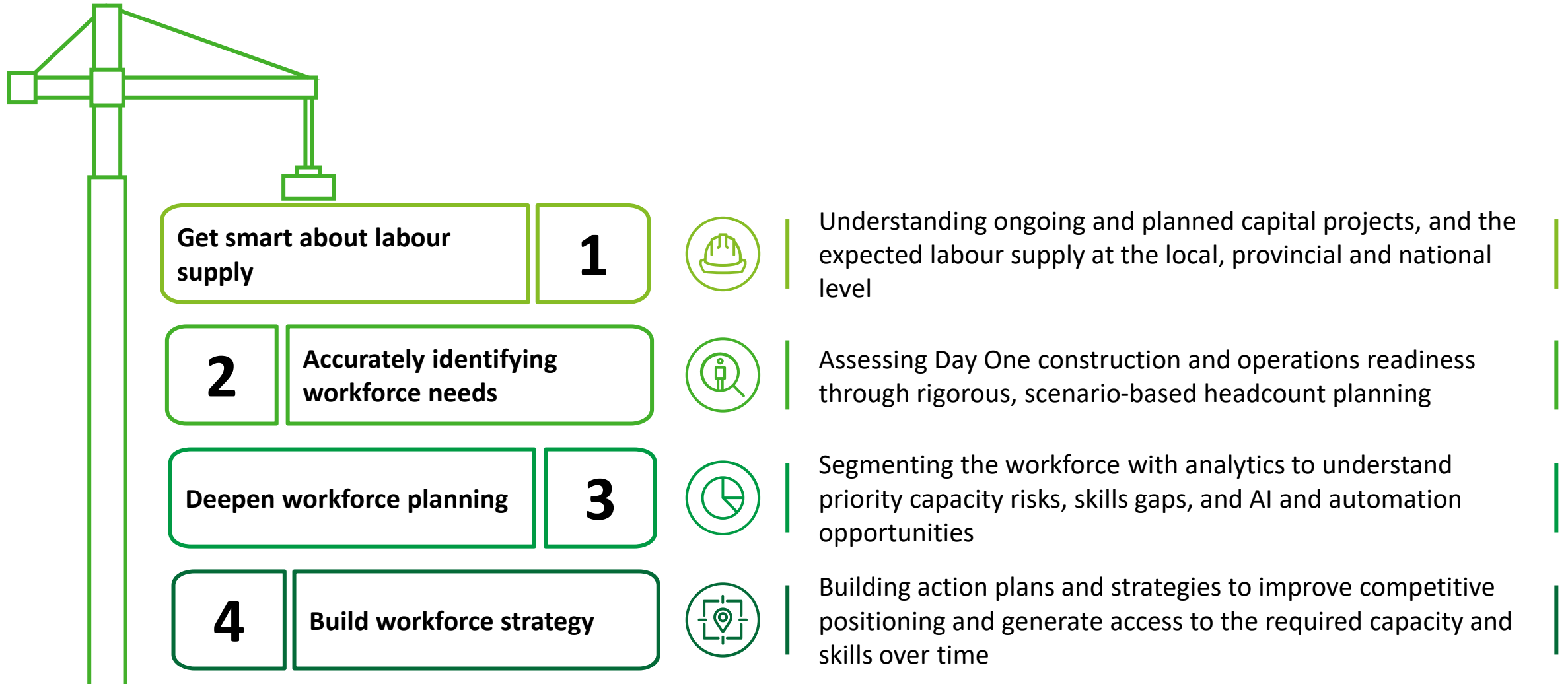
Traditional talent pipelines will not meet the needs of Canada's infrastructure ambitions. Organizations must implement strategic shifts to ensure they have the right people, at the right place, at the right time across project lifecycles.



***Getting by on recruitment estimates is no longer an option; deploying strategic workforce plans is imperative***

# Four steps to proactively access the workforce capacity and skills required

Organizations need a workforce plan and strategy that surfaces and tackles their greatest workforce risks early. To do so, they need to start doing four things well.



# This is the work we love to do and do well

We've helped organizations plan for labour market gaps to keep their projects and operations on track. We can help you get ahead of them too.

## Example Use Cases



A multi-national oil & gas organization was struggling to attract and retain talent due to the growth of competing industries in the region. They worked with Deloitte to quantify expected labour market challenges, forecast internal skill shortages, and surface the employee experience pain. A holistic workforce strategy that included **strategic sourcing decisions, expanding community partnerships**, and even **refitting uniforms** ensured a targeted approach to sustaining a pipeline of skilled talent over time.



A national public infrastructure agency faced Day One readiness risk as shifting operations and project timing created capacity gaps. They worked with Deloitte to quantify the current workforce and labour market, modelled future demand under multiple scenarios, and sized gaps by priority role. A holistic workforce strategy **integrating targeted hiring and upskilling plans, clarified role requirements**, and a **future workforce structure**, was then defined, providing a phased plan to mobilize on time.



A large mining company was about to develop a new mine in a remote region with multiple local competitors. They worked with Deloitte to quantify the labour market available, forecast capacity and skill requirements over time, and assess their employee value proposition. A holistic workforce strategy included **defining a realistic sourcing mix over the project lifecycle, training new talent onsite**, and **intentionally cultivating an attractive culture**, enabling a workforce ready for Day One and beyond.

Please reach out  
for more



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# Appendix

# Getting ahead of workforce gaps at each step of a capital project

Organizations can plan deliberately: building capabilities early to ensure a smooth, confident transition into steady, reliable operations supported by well-prepared, aligned teams.



## Strategy & Planning

- Prioritize the full project portfolio, choose the delivery model, and determine which capabilities stay in-house versus outsourced
- Define how future operations will function and identify the key skills required for long-term operations and maintenance



## Design & Procurement

- Identify the activities needed for procurement and design, and ensure you have or are hiring the right technical and oversight talent
- Begin preparing for future operational roles by determining whether new hiring or retraining will support ongoing operations



## Project Execution

- Monitor project performance, resolve issues quickly, and adjust team roles to maintain strong delivery excellence & oversight
- Prepare for operational launch by involving future operations staff early and executing structured recruiting plans



## Ops Handoff & Upkeep

- Ensure a smooth transition by placing the right people on both owner and contractor teams and completing readiness activities
- Continually assess operational performance and adjust staffing and processes to maintain reliable operations

“Right people, at the right place, at the right time across the project lifecycle”



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