



The
**Building
Meaning**
Project



If we can build meaning, we can build a workforce.

CARDUS



The BUILDING MEANING Project

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Working with your hands: it takes skill, intelligence, patience, and a pride in what you're doing. But in North America today, some of our policies and structures assume that getting your hands dirty is second-class work. The Building Meaning Project will reframe our understanding of the trades and make the connection between the dignity of working with one's hands, good jobs, and a healthy Canadian economy.

At our recent Canada's New Industrial Revolution conference, industry stakeholders noted that social bias against the trades negatively affects our ability to develop a sustainable trades workforce. Bias is a barrier. And, compounding the problem, significant numbers of apprentices don't complete their training. So what can we do about it?

In partnership with leading construction associations and labour organizations, Cardus presents the Building Meaning Project. This project will consist of:

-  A series of nationwide interviews with industry and government leaders
-  Regional roundtables for policy development
-  Media connections and coordinated efforts to change narratives and influence opinions
-  A strategic, cross-country "Beating the Bias" trades promotion plan

SUCCESS OUTCOMES

When the Building Meaning Project succeeds:

- Provincial curricula will see trades as a core subject for all students, regardless of career path
- Guidance counsellors will address social bias at the earliest, most formative level
- CEOs will measure trades engagement in their annual reports, alongside other core business measurements such as safety
- Industry associations will further endow skills scholarships, even entire trades schools, for construction workforce development incentives

Research conducted in partnership with:



Employment and
Social Development Canada

NCLRA



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POLICY RESEARCH

The trades bias is hurting Canada's economy. Cardus is coordinating research initiatives for Building Meaning, including:

- A review of the literature supporting the importance of the trades for Canada's national economy and the state of the skilled trades workforce
- A series of high-level interviews with leaders in industry, government, and educational institutions
- A white paper to outline the structural locations of social biases against the trades, identifying where and how improvements might be made
- A series of working roundtables featuring key stakeholders to discuss, prioritize and frame a series of strategic policy recommendations for industry, government, and academy

Contributing Interviewees include:

- Alberta Construction Association
- Alberta Construction Labour Relations Association
- BC Construction Association
- BC Construction Labour Relations Association
- BuildForce Canada
- Building and Construction Trades of Canada
- Business Council of British Columbia
- Canadian Apprenticeship Foundation
- Canadian Chamber of Commerce
- Canadian Construction Association
- Canadian Gas Association
- Christian Labour Association of Canada
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Government of British Columbia
- Hill & Knowlton
- Kiewit Energy Canada Corp
- Merit Contractors Association of Canada
- National Construction Labour Relations Association
- North America Construction Ltd
- Oakbridges Consulting
- Progressive Contractors Association of Canada
- Skills Canada Ontario
- Spectra Energy
- Women Building Futures

Regional Roundtables



CALGARY, AB
October 27, 2014



VANCOUVER, BC
October 29, 2014



TORONTO, ON
November 7, 2014
(Note date change)

Register:

www.buildingmeaning.com

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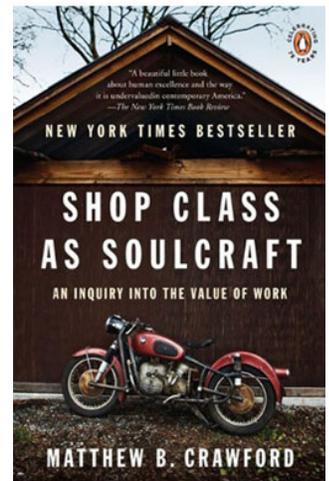
SHOP CLASS AS SOULCRAFT

Beating the trades bias—restoring social esteem for the trades—requires a public profile. A voice that can speak to the public at large about the meaning inherent in manual and skilled work.

Keynoting the national roundtable and public lecture will be bestselling author Matthew Crawford, author of *Shop Class as Soulcraft*.

The New York Times
BEST SELLER

Crawford asks a North American audience obsessed with knowledge work to “extend our moral imagination to people who are conventionally beneath serious regard.” He promotes the trades as more than brawn, and insists we acknowledge “the intellectual accomplishments of people who do work that is dirty.”



The **HILL** Family
LECTURE
Series

PUBLIC LECTURE | OTTAWA, ON
November 19, 2014
Matthew Crawford, best-selling author



NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE | OTTAWA, ON
November 20, 2014
Hon. Jason Kenney, Minister of Employment
& Matthew Crawford, best-selling author

Register:

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BUILDING MEANING ... FROM SEA TO SEA

But we need to do more than talk. To develop a parity of esteem for the trades, Cardus will work with industry, government, and the academy to instigate a series of concrete policy changes which will recognize the value and worth of the trades in the Canadian economy.

“The reality is that we don’t really have shop classes left in our high schools and we’ve sent all sorts of signals to young people that they can’t realize their potential if they end up working with their hands rather than getting an academic degree.”

-Jason Kenney, speaking at Canada’s New Industrial Revolution in Toronto, January 2014



Industry input at the 2014 Cardus conference **Canada’s New Industrial Revolution** set the direction of the Building Meaning Project.

Read the conference discussion paper at www.cardus.ca/research/workandeconomics

WHY CARDUS?

At Cardus, we understand that people are made to work. We are made to make things, to use both our minds and our hands to create. If we believe that certain types of work should be deemed second-rate—and if we create political, economic, and social structures to mirror that belief—we are demeaning ourselves, and doing harm to our society.

Cardus has studied the intersection of work and economics since 2000.



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