

GORDON REPORT
Special 50th Anniversary Edition
from Imperial Consulting Corporation

From 1968 to 2018 Imperial has provided an evolving combination of human development services. Over the course of 50 years, our business began with educational services (1968), moved into the business training and development marketplace (1979), and finally grew into a distinctive consulting practice in talent development (1989).

Here are a few notable highlights:

- Over 30,000 people received education and training services
- North Central Association accreditation of our educational programs in 1982
- Over 300 businesses, government agencies, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations across the United States and in other nations have been Imperial clients
- Research findings included in 21 books and over 150 articles
- Over 2,000 presentations given at conferences sponsored by international, national, state, and local organizations.

An outstanding team of employees and consultants are responsible for this impressive record of accomplishments. Their superlative contributions remain at the heart and soul of Imperial's outstanding talent network.

Very early in Imperial's development, we adopted Cicero's words of wisdom, "He/she who does not progress falls behind," as our business motto. Imperial's leadership has always championed the importance of flexibility and openness to change. This is more important today than in 1968. As the world continues to transition at an ever-increasing pace, lifelong learning is a necessity for everyone, no matter what their organizational rank, status, or level of education.

In its "Knowledge Shock Series" prior Gordon Reports have explored the failure of key elements of U.S. society to keep pace with the knowledge and skills demands of technological change. By 2022, nearly 75 percent of American jobs will require post-secondary education and specific skills training. But unless our educational and training systems are significantly upgraded and expanded, only about 25 percent of Americans will be able to meet these standards.

Imperial started with one-on-one educational programs. As it expanded into training and development, its research increasingly demonstrated that educational progress is cumulative – starting in the home, and then continuing in K-12 education, post-secondary programs, and in the workplace. A weakness in one link of the educational chain can make remedial programs necessary at the next stage causing extra expense and time and sometimes failure to attain the goal. For instance, at least 25 percent of beginning college students starting college immediately after high school must take remedial courses. The odds that such students will fail to complete a post-secondary degree or certificate are dramatically increased. Overall according to the report of the National Student Clearinghouse on 2017 outcomes, only 56.9 percent of U.S. students seeking post-secondary certificates or degrees completed them within a six-year period.

Today Imperial Consulting focuses on ways to improve educational programs and to better coordinate education-to-employment systems. To achieve these objectives, Imperial is promoting the development of RETAINs, regional cross-sector partnerships that act as catalysts for creating significantly updated talent pipelines.

RETAINs help communities continuously adjust education/training to address a highly changeable 21st-century labor economy. In the short term, they facilitate the alignment of job training programs with local employers' job requirements. In the long-term, they coordinate career information programs starting in elementary schools, develop high school career academies, and support post-secondary certificate, apprenticeship, and degree programs.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Today is a watershed era similar to the Industrial Revolution of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Then new methods of production required more educated workers. The factory system and the consequent growth of American cities sparked the development of public schooling at local levels, that in turn led to the passing of compulsory schooling laws at the state level. The United States was the first nation in the world to institute compulsory tax-supported public education, and it was a key component in the economic and industrial expansion of the United States. It was history's first comprehensive education-to-employment system.

The spread of computer technology in today's workplaces is again raising the demand for a more educated workforce. While there are some pockets of progress, too many Americans are not receiving the education and training needed for 21st-century jobs and careers. Our education-to-employment system clearly needs re-invention, but entrenched bureaucracies in business, education, and government stand in the way. Too many components of American society are caught in the blame game, instead of working together to find solutions.

There were deep divisions in American society one hundred years ago. Just as today immigration and economic inequality stoked tensions. Yet as community after community discovered that the pain of defending the status quo was greater than that of systemic change, solutions were forged. I believe that we are at this point again. The United States was founded and still stands because of our belief in a better future for all. Americans have overcome formidable obstacles in the past. We can do it again!

Edward E. Gordon is president and founder of Imperial Consulting Corporation (www.imperialcorp.com). His book, *Future Jobs: Solving the Employment and Skills Crisis*, winner of an Independent Publishers award, is now available in a updated 2018 paperback edition.

Imperial Consulting Corporation
220 E. Walton Place #8E
Chicago, IL 60611