

Collectively, they are not getting the quality they need to compete internationally.

Canadians believe the business community should get more involved in developing curricula.

Canadians say that if we want to get quality results we have to ensure that pre-school children are ready to learn. We must do what needs to be done to ensure that kids from disadvantaged homes get help in overcoming handicaps in learning. Because if we don't do that, disadvantage, with its social and economic costs, will be passed on from one generation to the next as another unpaid debt.

We have a shorter school year in Canada than in many other countries -- 185 days compared with 240 in Japan, for example.² That practice dates back to a time when most children were needed to help on the farm in the summer. We shouldn't lengthen the year for its own sake. But we should, if that's what it takes to accommodate quality education.

We also compete on training. A better trained work force is a more productive work force. The country that deploys it comes in with an insurmountable edge.

It is time to start thinking about training as a lifelong process -- training before the first job, training during jobs, training between jobs. It is time to look at better training as a common interest -- to be pursued co-operatively by management, labour, government and educators.

Another area in which we compete is the quality of management. Relative to the competition, it's time for managers to ask some tough questions while looking into the mirror. Compared with our opposite numbers in Osaka or Frankfurt or Atlanta, how do we rate as managers? How do we rate on innovation and on receptiveness to new technology? Compared with companies in other countries, do quality, flexibility of process and dedication to results rate high in our management values? In the drive for higher productivity, this is where the rubber meets the road.

When it comes to the quality of management, the buck stops with the managers, and no one else.

Let's also understand whose desk it lands on. When we talk about the need to improve management, we're not talking about other folks in other sectors. We're talking about everyone -- in both the private and public sector. Canadian management, collectively, must do a better job.

2 Diane Francis, *Financial Post*, May 6, 1993.