

CASE STUDY

SalesCamp's Job Placement Support

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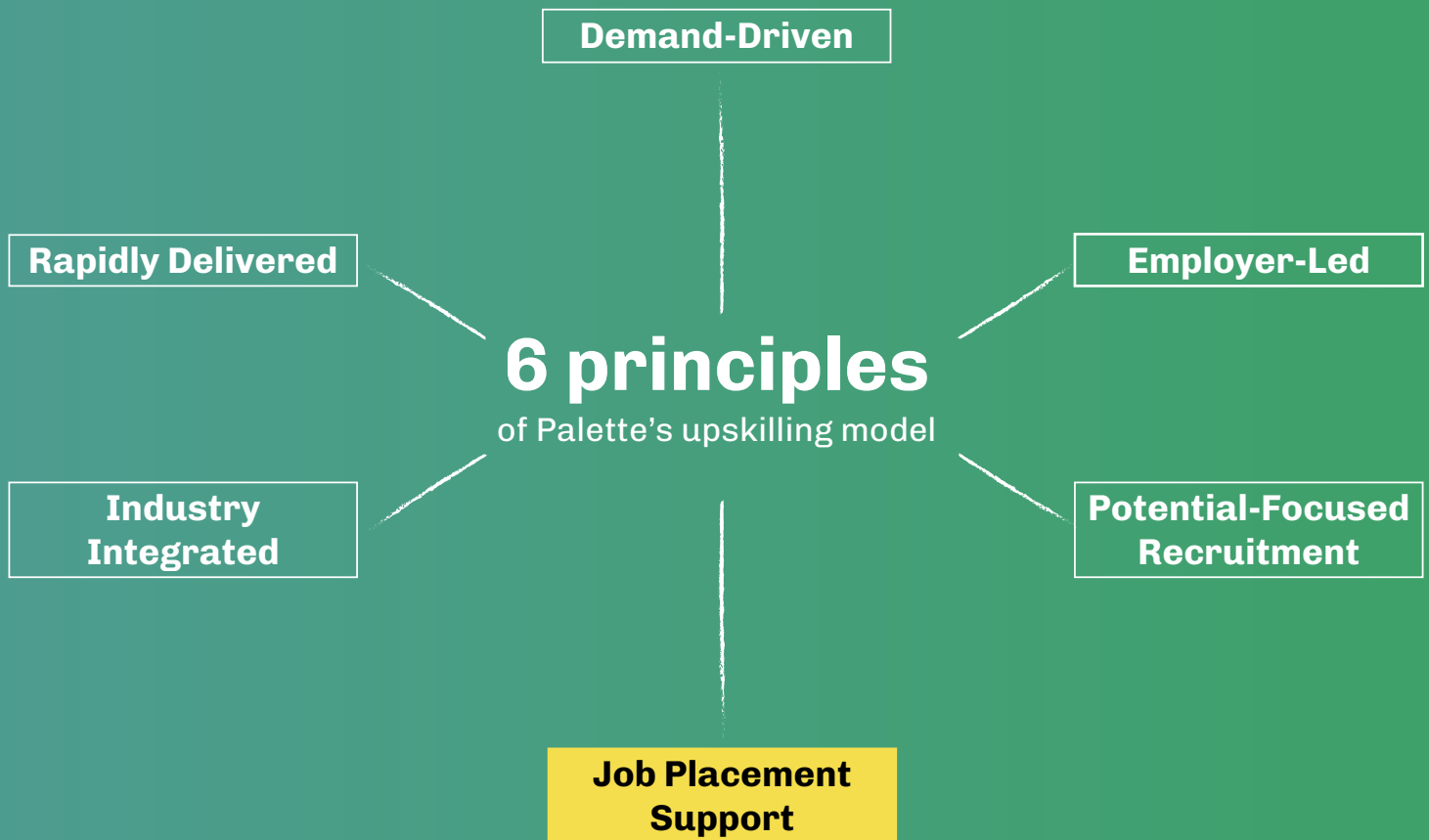


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Why Job Placement Support Matters

When we at Palette Skills launched our first upskilling program in 2019, we knew we wanted SalesCamp to go beyond anything currently available. It wasn't enough for SalesCamp to be a robust boot camp that prepared job seekers for a tech sales career. We also wanted to leverage our new approach to upskilling that centred industry and employers in curriculum design and delivery, with the ultimate aim of successful job placement outcomes for our participants.

For us, this meant it was important to understand the individual journey of each participant, not only as they learned the material in the program but also as they followed the path toward securing a new job. The more we could learn about this journey, the more we could develop and hone the support we had put in place to connect our participants to future job placement and a new career.

The closer we listened to our participants and employer partners, the more we realized that this stage of the job placement journey is not just about equipping a person with the right skills, it's also about the emotional and human experience of navigating the unknown. Without the proper support, even great candidates risk failing to succeed when it comes to job search success. With this in mind, we want to share a case study focused on the job placement support we offer in our SalesCamp program.

This support isn't just a part of the SalesCamp program; it's a critical component to its success.



Understanding Talent Acquisition

From the very beginning, Palette Skills set out to understand the nature of the skills gap in the Canadian labour market and discover why existing training approaches weren't able to address it. Palette Skills undertook customer discovery sessions with employers. Through these, we learned that the issue was not simply one of missing skills but a broader one of talent acquisition and underutilization.

Our research into hiring processes told us that employers were using the wrong kinds of indicators to evaluate job candidates. For example, although employers told us they valued attributes such as a growth mindset and the ability to hit the ground running, they often evaluated them using indicators such as prior sector experience or a professional referral. Not only were these indicators unable to “capture” the attributes employers told us they were

looking for, but relying on them exclusively resulted in employers struggling to fill roles while overlooking large pools of skilled and diverse talent.

Our hypothesis was that developing upskilling programs required an employer-led approach to program development and delivery, a potential-focused lens to recruitment and a holistic and structured approach to job placement support. Combining these elements would ensure the relevance of curriculum design, prepare participants for the job market, and offer a more effective way of connecting employers to the talent they might have overlooked, often precisely the kind of talent they told us they were looking for. SalesCamp was built to pilot this new approach.



Developing the SalesCamp Experience

After extensive consultations with industry leaders, employers, and educators, SalesCamp launched as a comprehensive four-week tech sales boot camp with a focus on attracting participants with customer-facing experience, as well as mid-career professionals looking to make a dedicated career change. The curriculum starts with an intensive core week that delves into the foundational aspects of B2B sales with experiential activities and interactive sessions. The program then strategically integrates a networking day, providing a unique opportunity for participants to interact face-to-face with potential employers actively seeking new talent.

Following this core week, SalesCamp continues with three part-time weeks that feature workshops that guide participants through the challenges of the job search process.

Although we were pleased to see that SalesCamp was empowering participants to secure roles in tech and B2B sales while helping address the talent needs of employers, we could still see that some participants experienced difficulties that affected their job search and confidence. This realization prompted the team at Palette Skills to find out how we could do better.



Evolving SalesCamp

Because our approach to upskilling success is built on insights gathered through research, we knew that to improve the program, we had to commit ourselves to collecting data from participants and employers. Fundamentally, the purpose of SalesCamp was not just to help people get jobs but to learn what it takes to transition people across the labour market in a systematic and repeatable way. What we learned from gathering this information helped us achieve both these outcomes.

As a result, the Palette Skills team made significant changes to SalesCamp in 2022. Some of these insights included:

- While participants were confident in their ability to transition careers upon completing the program, some expressed hesitancy to start their job search early in their SalesCamp journey. With resume support not scheduled until the latter half of the four-week program, participants didn't always feel confident applying to jobs or connecting with an employer. This led to a delay in the job search process and resulted in missed opportunities to connect with potential employers.
- Networking Day provided participants with a valuable opportunity to connect directly with employers. However, with only one networking day scheduled per cohort, some participants inevitably felt pressure and believed their success hinged on this one event.
- Following the intensity of the full-time core week, the transition to part-time workshop programming was challenging for some. These participants felt a lack of structure when transitioning to an independent job search. They missed the regular interactions with Palette Skills staff, coaches, peers, and the structure and discipline these elements provided.



With the evidence of a disconnect, we understood that we needed to evolve the structure to support participants better. Our team created a new job readiness prep week, followed by structured job search support, monthly networking events, and the formalization of what we called a participant success team. Below is a breakdown of how we decided to integrate job placement support activities throughout SalesCamp week-by-week:



Week 1: Job readiness preparation

The enhanced job readiness prep week was added to create a more impactful kick-off experience. During this week, participants connect one-on-one with **career coaches** and **Palette staff** to build relationships and understand expectations for the program.

Participants are also given the tools and guidance to update their **resumes** and LinkedIn profiles to highlight their transferable skills and reflect their commitment to a successful career transition. As participants build their knowledge, the SalesCamp team helps refine their job search toolkit to highlight transferable skills and experiences relevant to sales roles.

SalesCamp learners meet with **participant success coordinators** to discuss their strengths and identify areas for improvement. These meetings help participants understand their transferable skills, build their professional skills, and show how to articulate these skills for B2B tech sales positions.

Finally, to help participants identify, plan and track the progress of their goals, we provide four individual sessions with their career coach. The first session takes place during the first week, and the rest are spread across the structured job search support period. Career coaches provide ongoing support to participants in their job search, including resume review, interview preparation, and career goal planning.

Week 2: Core program experience

During this week, job placement activities are integrated throughout the technical sales curriculum. These activities aim to bring about meaningful outcomes, shaping participants' abilities to articulate their goals and present themselves in a compelling and impactful way to potential employers.

At the beginning of core week, participants start by setting a clear trajectory for their aspirations, helping them cultivate a sense of direction and purpose necessary for their job placement journey. First, they work towards defining their SMART goals—clear objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. This goal-setting exercise aligns participants' aspirations with tangible outcomes for their professional goals.

Afterward, participants participate in exercises that allow them to practice communicating their skills and passions to potential employers. These activities empower participants to articulate their strengths precisely, highlight transferable skills, and address possible unspoken objectives. They do this by creating personalized introduction videos, which serve as a means to develop practical skills, such as presentation and communication while breaking away from conventional resume norms.

Week 3-6: Structured job search support

During these weeks, the SalesCamp team provides comprehensive job search support by continuing individual coaching sessions and offering **tailored workshops**. These workshops cover crucial topics, including crafting effective resumes, honing interview skills, mastering networking, LinkedIn usage, salary negotiation, and uncovering the hidden job market. The purpose of these workshops is to empower participants to present themselves effectively to potential employers.

Finally, a key highlight during these weeks is **networking events**. Monthly networking events are open to all past SalesCamp participants to give participants multiple opportunities to connect with employers. These events are conducted virtually and align with market hiring cycles, providing opportunities for one-on-one engagement with potential employers. Participants can attend at least one networking event to enable them to apply their skills and connect with employers ready to hire.

Week 7 – landing a job: Independent job search

After completing the core program, participants begin job searching independently until they land a new role. During this time, the participant success team continues to connect with participants to touch base on progress. On top of that, Palette Skills occasionally offers additional networking opportunities or workshops to continue to support participants in their career development.



Elevating the SalesCamp Experience: The Addition of the Participant Success team

Over many offerings of the SalesCamp program, it became apparent that the relationship between SalesCamp staff and participants was critical to their job search success. To ensure we could provide participants with the support they needed, we established a Participant Success team. This team offers holistic support to ensure participants' overall success and well-being.

Team members coordinate support services, address program-specific needs, and connect participants with resources to enhance employability. They also conduct regular check-ins with participants to ensure accountability and boost motivation, and stay in touch after the program to ease the transition into independent job searching.

Through their ongoing interactions with participants, the Participant Success team keeps us current on participant challenges and successes, including capturing robust job placement data.

SalesCamp's impact

Palette Skills created SalesCamp because an employer-led approach to upskilling can make a real difference in talent acquisition. At the same time, our research has demonstrated that this approach works best when combined with an emphasis on both technical and

professional development in addition to robust job placement support that benefits participants. For employers, success means connecting them with a qualified talent pipeline that addresses their talent needs.

From its initial pilot cohorts and up to our most recent cohorts, SalesCamp has been remarkably successful. Since 2019:

500+
job seekers
have been upskilled

> 85%
job offer rate

After completing the program:

90%
of participants are confident in
navigating a career change

> 30%
have received a promotion within
18 months of finishing SalesCamp

We have also supported participants from diverse backgrounds in transitioning their careers. In the past year alone:

39%
identified as
women

65%
identified as
racialized

23%
were newcomers
to Canada

By these metrics alone, SalesCamp has successfully demonstrated how employer-led upskilling paired with robust job placement support can lead to career

transitions, help employers source needed talent, and help unlock candidates' potential from non-traditional talent pools.

"I myself am a big believer in the "jump in and learn fast" approach since it has served me so well in life. With that being said, I found the interview prep and networking days to be some of the most valuable aspects of the program."

– SalesCamp participant



Palette Skills continues to build its learning sandbox guides and tools that support training providers in designing and delivering demand-driven upskilling programs.

We'd love to share updates and hear your thoughts on what resources you'd like to see in the future. Fill out the form below to stay in the loop and share your suggestions.

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