

**WHY TOFFLER  
ASSOCIATES  
CONDUCTED THIS  
STUDY**

"The desired short-term outcome here was to increase awareness of workforce development (policies and investments that enhance the skills of citizens) as a priority issue for California legislators and other leaders. The long-term goal was to spur legislation and programs that rationalize the use of public money for workforce development initiatives, leverage private sector money more effectively, and build public-private partnerships to grow the future workforce California needs. Toffler Associates accomplished that and more."

-Toffler Associates  
Engagement Leader

## Toffler Associates Helps Create California's Workforce of the Future

For the California Workforce Association (CWA), the need was clear: the state's economic future and the quality of life of its citizens required a strategy for developing the skills of its workforce. As a result, CWA turned to Toffler Associates to facilitate collaboration among the state's legislators, labor leaders, educators, and other stakeholders to develop creative but practical solutions to how they could work together to invest in California's workforce of tomorrow so it can keep up with emerging economic trends.

The primary issue Toffler Associates faced was that while the stakeholders had similar goals—to grow California's economic and social prosperity—they had different ideas on how to achieve them. Business needs, school training, and government guidance didn't appear to be in line with each other. Toffler Associates acted as a catalyst to inspire discussion between these interest groups that ultimately enabled them to find the common ground and develop a joint strategy to develop the skills of the state's growing workforce.

Toffler Associates was chosen for this challenging project because of its track record of getting clients to "stand in the future" and envision what "success" looks like, then guiding them back from the future to the present so they can see what steps they must take to get to the that preferred future. Scenarios and other creative-thinking techniques are part of how Toffler Associates consultants help their clients visualize the future they want to create for themselves and understand what investments and other actions will enable them to create it. The proven Toffler Associates approach was the perfect fit for this assignment.

### **APPROACH: CREATIVE THINKING SPURS ACTION**

To stimulate creative solutions, Toffler Associates brought together leaders from business, academia and government and presented two fictitious futures for Orange County, which is a

microcosm of the state's economy, and facilitated a dialogue among participants about what these futures portended. In each scenario, different collaborative arrangements among businesses, government, and schools resulted in different degrees of success in developing the skills of the state's workforce—and different results in terms of economic growth, social cohesion, and quality of life for communities throughout California. Participants in the day-long session were able to see and “feel” the future outcomes of different actions they might take today, next month, next year. Sharing this “experience of the future” together enabled them to quickly come to a consensus on what actions they wanted to take to invest in the development of California's workforce.

### **THE RESULTS: COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION**

As a result of the discussion inspired by Toffler Associates' scenarios, the different stakeholders began to work together and move forward with a single strategy that will enrich the lives of California's workers and families. In addition, instead of spending time and money on a variety of individual solutions, funds will now be more efficiently spent on a single workforce strategy, which includes:

- Stakeholders saw how important it is to expand the reach and power of social and business networks. As a result, work has begun on establishing a clearinghouse for workforce development information and spurring knowledge-sharing partnerships between business, government and education.
- Community leaders, business leaders, and educators agreed they need to understand the economic and demographic trends, the resulting cultural issues, and the skills that will be necessary to thrive in the emerging future. Proactive and collaborative research and analysis is imperative. Since the Toffler Associates project, stakeholders have begun working together to do this research and use it to inform legislative and business decision making.
- Businesses need an economic environment where they can create wealth for themselves as well as for the workers who



get this skill-development support and the communities in which they live. Government needs to look at what policies, processes, and laws may make it hard for businesses to do that. As a result of the dialogue Toffler Associates facilitated, new programs, legislation and tax breaks have emerged as tools with which the government can affect positive change.

Looking back at this project, the Toffler Associates Engagement Leader said, "The desired short-term outcome here was to increase awareness of workforce development as a priority issue for California legislators and other leaders. The long-term goal was to spur legislation and programs that rationalize the use of public money for workforce development initiatives, leverage private sector money more effectively, and build public-private partnerships to grow the future workforce California needs. Toffler Associates accomplished that and more."