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Foreign corporate investment inflows to Canada were booming in 2007 and hit the half a trillion dollar mark at the end of 2007, an increase of 14.4% over 2006.

This increase was led by takeovers of Canadian firms by foreign investors. Foreign direct investment acquisitions surpassed that realized during the high-tech bubble of 2000.

For the 2nd year, the increase of foreign corporate investment in Canada originated mainly from non-US countries. The United Kingdom and other European countries accounted for a large portion of this activity.

The total foreign direct investment position in Canada was still dominated by American investors who accounted for 58% of the total, down from 61% in 2006. Direct investors from the United Kingdom rose significantly (+37.5%) to $54.7 billion, principally from acquisitions. The Netherlands, France, Switzerland, Germany and Sweden are the other European countries in the top 10 for FDI.

FDI from Asia/Oceania increased steadily in the past five years, mainly driven by Japan. Foreign corporations directed their investment into the manufacturing and oil and gas industries, (55.0% of total FDI). Financial, insurance and management industries combined amounted to 22.7%.

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Top Ten Leading Indicators

Gross Domestic Product	Canadian GDP increased 1.5% in February 2008 versus the same month last year but declined 0.2% versus the previous month. Manufacturing industries were -3.6% versus year ago while wholesale trade was +5.7% and retail trade was +5.8%
Consumer Price Index	The National CPI was +1.7% in April 2008 versus last year following March at +1.4%, February at +1.8% and January at +2.2%. Key increases on shelter (+4.3%) and energy (+8%) with clothing –5.1% and fresh vegetables -17.3%. Ontario's CPI was a more modest 0.8% increase.
Exchange Rate	The Canadian $ traded at .99 cents to the US $ at the end of April having achieved parity in September 2007. The dollar was in the .60 to .70 cent range from 1998 to mid 2003, crossed .80 in 2004 and .90 in mid 2006
Interest Rates	The Bank of Canada interest rate was set at 3.25% at the end of April, down a full point from April 2007. Over the last 10 years, the key bank rate peaked at 6.0% in 2000 and has been in a downward trend since then.
Retail Sales	Ontario retail sales in January 2008 were $10.3B, a 8.8% increase versus year ago. There are 80,783 retail locations employing just over 1M people or 12% of the workforce. Gas Stations were +21% while the only decrease was in computer stores at -2%.
Manufacturing Shipments	National manufacturers sales in March 2008 of $49B represents a –7.7% decrease VYA of $53B. New orders received in March were $51.2B a - 4.1% decrease from year ago. There has been a steady downward trend since 2007 due to off shoring and exchange rates, except in resource industries.
Home Re-Sales	April's resale housing activity was -7% from year ago with Toronto -10% and the 905 region -5%. The average GTA price was $398,687 (+5%) with Toronto at $446,781 (+6%) and the 905 at $367,196 (+5%).
Building Permits	National building permits in March declined -4.5% VYA and the first quarter 2008 was +1.9% VYA. Ontario was +4% in 1Q 2008 VYA and the Toronto CMA was +2.1% for the quarter.
Employment	Ontario employment in April was 6,700,400, an increase of 2.2% VYA. Declines in Manufacturing (- 5.2%), Accommodations (-3.9%) and Agriculture (-18.3%) were offset by strong gains in the Business Services (+15.0%), Education (+9.5%) and Public Administration (+12.8%).
Un-Employment	Ontario's unemployment rate declined 0.3 percentage points to 6.3.% in April versus the same month last year. Nationally the rate was 6.1%.

GTA Employment

Employment in the Greater Toronto Region grew 8.9% between 2001 and 2006 to 2,627,400. However, this was about half the pace of the 17.0% growth from 1996 to 2001. In 2006, 63.7% of the working-age population was employed, down from 64.7% in 2001 and the unemployment rate rose from 5.9% to 6.7%.

Employment growth was hampered by the manufacturing sector, most notably textiles and computer manufacturing. However, these losses were offset by gains in health care and social assistance and financial services.

Workers in clothing manufacturing fell by 5,000 between 2001 and 2006, and in computer equipment manufacturing by just over 4,400. Despite these manufacturing losses, employment increased mostly in services.

The largest employment gains over 5-years were in the health care and social assistance (30,800 or +3.1% per year). Gains were in hospitals (+9,000) and nursing and residential care facilities (+6,300). Employment in educational services grew by 3.6% per year as teachers (+12,200) and professors (+7,500) were added.

The number of food wholesalers workers rose by 5,700 and workers in wholesalers of pharmaceuticals, toiletries rose by 2,500.

Real estate agents added 5,400 workers, or 5.3%. The GTA also experienced growth in its construction industry. Between 2001 and 2006, 21,900 workers were added to the industry, an annual average growth rate of 3.4%.

April Job Postings +40%

In April 2008, employers in York Region advertised for 4,972 jobs, a significant +40)% increase versus the same month last year. April witnessed a broader distribution of the job postings by area municipality.

Markham accounted for 30.5 % of all job postings in April although the quantity decreased by -10% versus last year. The northern six municipalities all posted strong increases in job postings however the absolute numbers are small in some cases.

Newmarket accounted for 12% of all job postings with 612, a +57% increase versus last year.

Municipality	Apr-07	Apr-08	Variance
Aurora	153	355	132.03%
East Gwillimbury	4	23	475.00%
Georgina	2	34	1600.00%
King	24	63	162.50%
Markham	1683	1517	-9.86%
Newmarket	390	612	56.92%
Richmond Hill	396	788	98.99%
Stouffville	19	93	389.47%
Vaughan	631	660	4.60%
York Region	243	827	240.33%
Total	**3545**	**4972**	**40.25%**

Job postings by occupation reveals that the largest categories were for general help, administrative, retail and business services. Although a smaller category, manufacturing with 169 job postings achieved a +11% increase versus last year.

Category	Apr-07	Apr-08	Variance
Engineers, Architects, IT, Natural Science	325	339	4.31%
Retail and Services	363	508	39.94%
Sales	299	312	4.35%
Health	63	131	107.94%
Business, Finance, Accounting	437	531	21.51%
Administrative and Legal	470	663	41.06%
Help Wanted (including warehouse jobs)	427	818	91.57%
Other	196	374	90.82%
Education	57	75	31.58%
Arts, Cultural, Recreation, Sports	74	136	83.78%
Social, Gov't, Religious Services	26	39	50.00%
Trades, Transport, Construction	244	437	79.10%
Farming, Fishing, Natural Resources	3	2	-33.33%
Processing, Manufacturing, Utilities	152	169	11.18%
Management	409	438	7.09%
Total	**3545**	**4972**	**40.25%**