employerone
SURVEY 2015-2016

Kenora & Rainy River Districts Final Report

Northwest Training and Adjustment Board
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EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO

NORTHERN ONTARIO WORKFORCE PLANNING

employerone SURVEY RESULTS 2015
Kenora & Rainy River Districts

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employerone SURVEY RESULTS 2015

Kenora and Rainy River Districts

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Good labour market information is critical to our understanding of the current and projected workforce needs of local employers. While limited information is available through various sources such as Statistics Canada, labour market research, job vacancy postings and key stakeholder consultations, it has been difficult to pinpoint exactly what employers are looking for now and into the future.

Currently there is not a good mechanism to gather information directly from employers. To help supplement what is available, in 2014, the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU) asked all six Northern Ontario Workforce Planning (NOWP) Boards, including the Northwest Training and Adjustment Board (NTAB) to conduct a survey of employers.

In 2014, the *Employerone* survey yielded responses from 45 employers representing 1,004 employees from the NTAB area. For the 2015 *Employerone* survey, NTAB continued to reach out to all employers. As a result, responses were received from 102 public and private-sector employers, however, these employers represented 4,643 employees; roughly 17% of the total workforce for the Districts of Kenora and Rainy River.

Even though the number of respondents and employees represented increased, it is important to be cautious about the data. In the National Household Survey, the NTAB area accounted for 29,615 jobs. For example, most employers in the NTAB area are SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises), so while some of the data reflects businesses with a larger employee base, smaller companies continue to make up the backbone of our Districts. As well, on closer examination of the data we see that in some cases, only a handful of employers accounted for the highest number of hires and separations. Here is a snapshot of what employers told us:

SEPARATIONS: 80 companies responded to this question. Of these 58% reported a separation. This resulted in a turnover rate of 15.2% or 705 separations in the previous 12 months, but this includes one employer responsible for 90% of all separations (quits among Production Workers); the next biggest separations are lay-offs, both permanent and temporary;

HIRING: 90 different occupations were among the highest frequency for hires, but many of them were one or two people; only 11% were re-hires of previous laid-off workers; 904 people were hired in the previous 12 months which is hirer than the 705 separations; 67 employers reported hiring last year; Service Workers accounted for the largest amount of hires;

HIGH FREQUENCY HIRING OCCUPATIONS (25 people or more): Team Member (N=50); Equipment Operator (N=46); General Labourer (N=46); Food and Beverage Server (N=32);

RECRUITMENT METHODS: Word of mouth and personal contacts/networks/referrals continue to be the most frequently reported method of recruitment followed by online job boards then newspaper ads; most workers were recruited within the two districts of Kenora and Rainy River;

TRAINING: Almost 87% of employers provide ongoing support for employee training and education; employers that cited barriers to training identified the challenges as "cost, not available locally and the distance to travel, as well as the loss of productivity during training time". 61% said they offer more than one support;

TOP COMPETENCIES FOR CURRENT/FUTURE WORKFORCE: work ethic, dedication & dependability, customer service skills, self-motivated, teamwork & interpersonal skills and willingness to learn.

Surveys such as *Employerone* help us to better understand the workforce needs of employers. While challenges continue to exist with getting employers to respond, their information is critical to the development, growth and sustainability of our current and future workforce.

INTRODUCTION

It goes without saying...good labour market information is essential to various stakeholders such as: Employment Ontario's Employment Services network who help match local job seekers with available jobs; educators and guidance counsellors who help students explore career options; postsecondary institutions who provide specialized training for both highly skilled professional and skilled trades occupations; towns and municipalities engaged in economic development; and others.

However, obtaining good local labour market data is challenging without further research. Some industries have taken it upon themselves to identify current and future workforce needs within their own industry; however this information is not readily available or consistent across all industries.

In 2014, the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities provided funding to all six Northern Ontario Workforce Planning boards to pilot an online employer survey. Employers were asked to answer questions about: demographics of their workforce; current and projected vacancies; recruitment strategies/challenges; perspective on candidate skills, education and training; top competencies required in their business; training they provide and any ongoing workforce concerns. While this survey yielded some interesting results, a limited number of employers completed the survey, often citing that it was cumbersome and long.

In 2015, NTAB reassessed the survey instrument and reduced the number of key questions to make the survey easier to complete. While it was recognized that the majority of businesses in northern Ontario and the NTAB area are Small and Medium Enterprises, outreach strategies included efforts to engage employers with larger numbers of employees.

The survey was implemented June 2015 and ended November 2015. Respondents were asked to report on the previous 12 months. This report summarizes responses provided by 102 employers in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts representing 4,643 employees; roughly 15% of the total workforce.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

OUTREACH STRATEGIES: Common NTAB branding and timelines continued to be used for the 2015 *Employerone* survey. Other local strategies included: personalized emails; employer site visits; posting the survey on websites (NTAB and other employer-focussed sites); employer connections through other organizations; attending employer-related events; and use of a summer student dedicated to *Employerone* contacts.

EMPLOYER/SECTOR SELECTION PROCESS: While employers of all sizes were targeted with the above outreach efforts, NTAB reached out to larger local employers.

FINDINGS

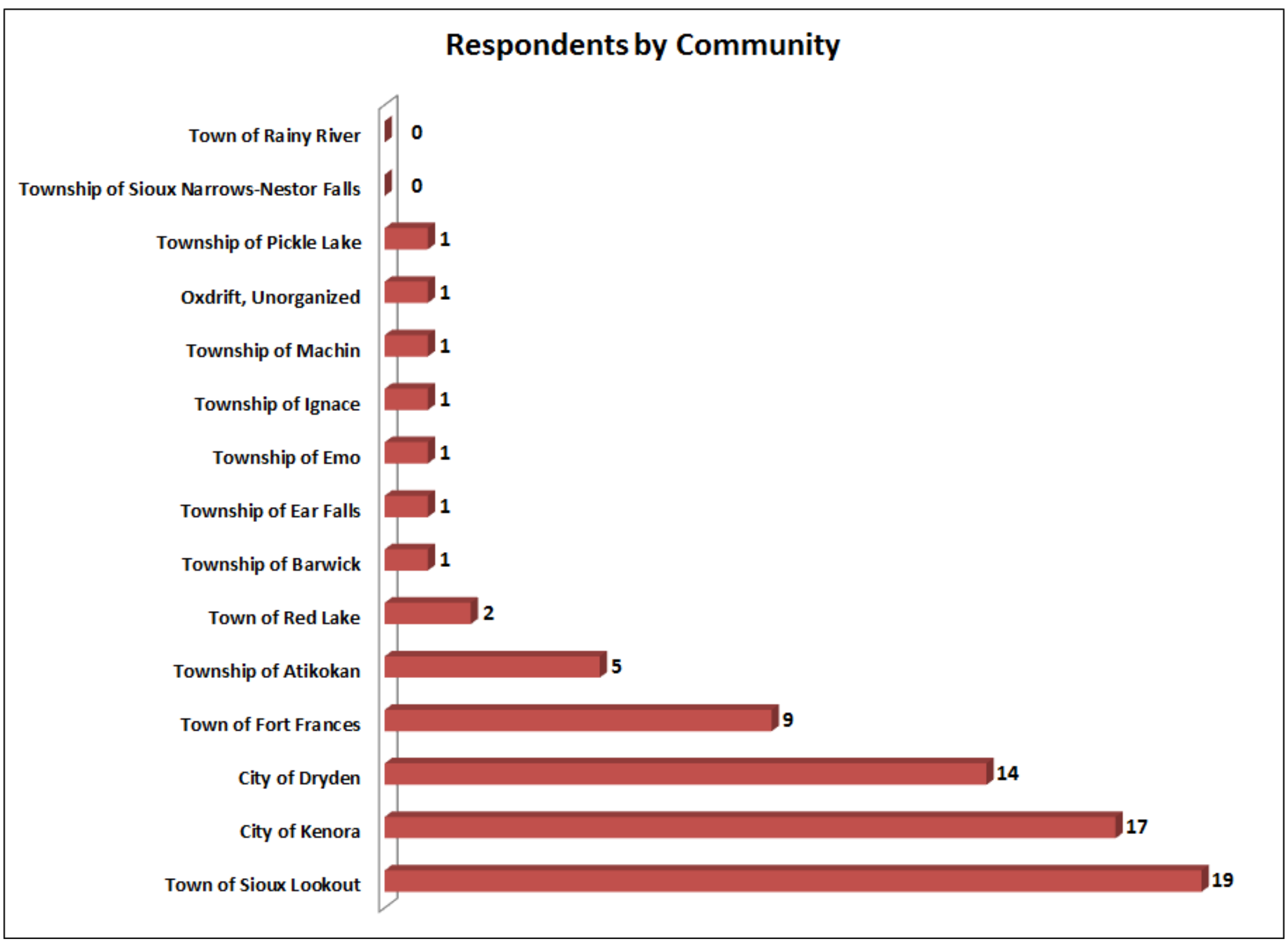
LIMITATIONS: While some of the previous limitations with the 2014 pilot were overcome by significantly reducing the overall length of the survey, it was still challenging to get employers to respond to the 2015 survey despite various outreach efforts. Interestingly, the majority of the employers who did respond said they had not responded to the 2014 survey; in other words the 2015 *Employerone* survey was completed by a different cohort of employers. Additionally, not all employers who started the survey completed the survey. Last, not all respondents answered every question so some survey responses will include the total number who responded to that question.

Profile of Respondents

In total, 102 employers started the survey and 73 completed it, with a variable number of respondents for each question. 22 respondents indicated that they had been part of the survey last year, when 45 employers had participated.

Table 1: Respondents by Community

Town of Sioux Lookout	19
City of Kenora	17
City of Dryden	14
Town of Fort Frances	9
Township of Atikokan	5
Town of Red Lake	2
Township of Barwick	1
Township of Ear Falls	1
Township of Emo	1
Township of Ignace	1
Township of Machin	1
Oxdrift, Unorganized	1
Township of Pickle Lake	1
Township of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls	0
Town of Rainy River	0

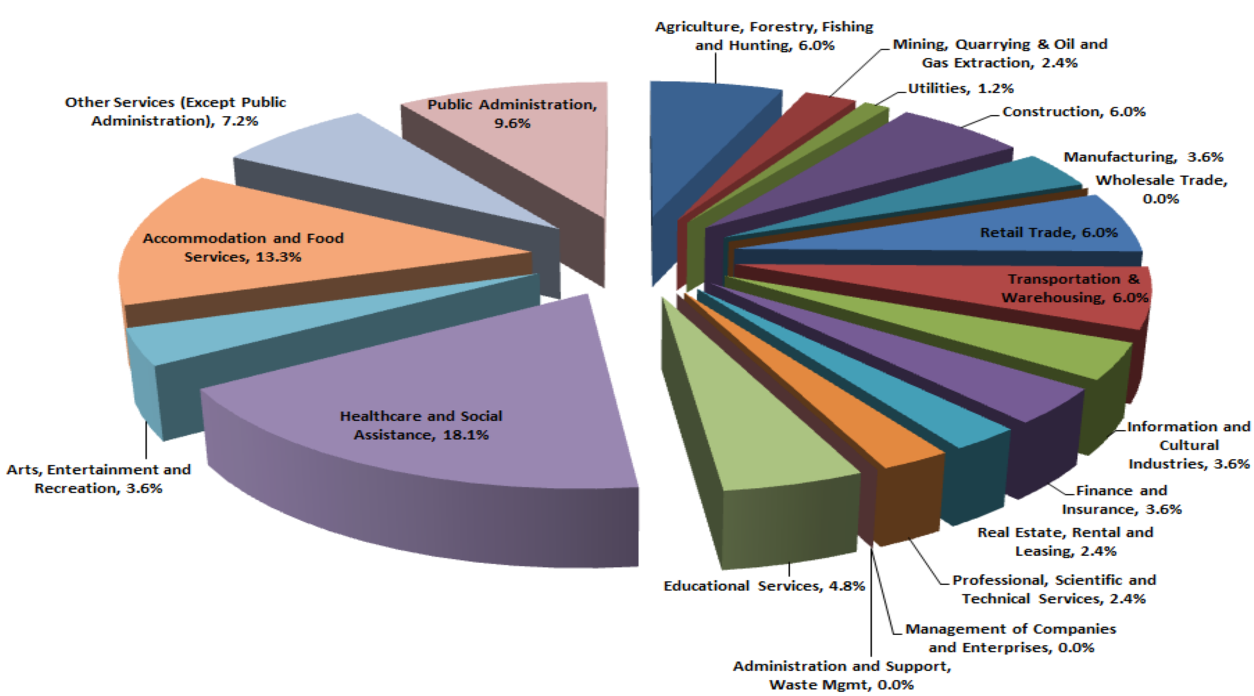


Respondents reflected a range of industries. Table 1 provides the breakdown of respondents by industry and compares the percentage distribution with the distribution of businesses in the NTAB area (the Rainy River and Kenora Districts) in June 2015. The colour-coding for the survey results highlights where the survey percentage share is much greater (green) or much lower (red) than the actual distribution.

Table 2: Number and percent of respondents by industry

INDUSTRY	NUMBER	PERCENT	ACTUAL
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	5	6.0%	5.1%
Mining, Quarrying and Oil and Gas Extraction	2	2.4%	0.5%
Utilities	1	1.2%	0.5%
Construction	5	6.0%	12.2%
Manufacturing	3	3.6%	1.9%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.0%	2.9%
Retail Trade	5	6.0%	15.5%
Transportation and Warehousing	5	6.0%	6.0%
Information and Cultural Industries	3	3.6%	1.0%
Finance and Insurance	3	3.6%	2.0%
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	2	2.4%	3.7%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	2	2.4%	4.5%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	0.0%	0.3%
Administration and Support, Waste Mgmt	0	0.0%	2.7%
Educational Services	4	4.8%	1.6%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	15	18.1%	9.1%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	3	3.6%	2.1%
Accommodation and Food Services	11	13.3%	14.8%
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	6	7.2%	10.1%
Public Administration	8	9.6%	3.6%
TOTAL	**83**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Actual figures are from Statistics Canada's Canadian Business Counts, June 2015



There are a few imbalances when it comes to the distribution of respondents by industry, but there are certainly more instances where the survey distribution is quite close to the actual distribution of firms by industry in the study area. The sectors with a disproportionately higher share of responses are either in the public sector or largely funded by government (Educational Services; Healthcare and Social Assistance; and Public Administration). A number of the employers were employment services.

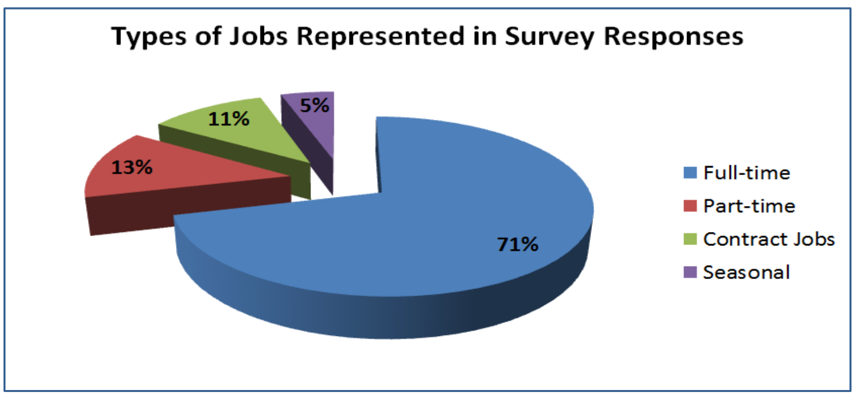
The distribution of respondents by number of employees shows a far greater proportion of respondents with a larger number of employees compared to the actual figures, particularly among those firms with 20 or more employees. Roughly one out of every five firms (13 out of 63) with more than 100 employees participated in the survey.

Table 3: Percent of respondents by number of employees compared to actual percentage

	1-4 employees	5-19 employees	20-99 employees	100+ employees
Survey	19%	41%	23%	17%
Actual	49%	37%	12%	3%

Actual figures are from Statistics Canada's Canadian Business Counts, June 2015

Overall, the respondents represented 4,643 employees. In the 2011 National Household Survey, the NTAB area accounted for 29,615 jobs. While the number of jobs may have grown a few thousand over the last four years, the respondents in the survey are evidently responsible for a considerable chunk of local employment, somewhere around 15% of all jobs.



According to the respondents, around 71% of these jobs were full-time, 13% were part-time, 11% were contract jobs, and 5% of jobs were seasonal.

Around 16% of all jobs were filled by youth under the age of 25 years old, and 18% of the jobs were filled by adults aged 55 years or older.

The survey respondents largely represent older firms, most of which were over 10 years old. In fact, more than half (54%) are over 20 years old, and seven (7) were more than 100 years old.

Table 4: Age of company

Less than 2 years old	Between 2 and 5 years old	Between 6 and 10 years old	Between 11 and 20 years old	Over 20 years old
3	4	11	15	39

The rest of the analysis will present the substantive responses.

Did Your Organization Experience any Separations Over the Last 12 Months?

80 companies provided an answer regarding whether they had experienced a separation in the previous year. Of these, 58% reported a separation in the past year. The total separations amounted to 705, resulting in an annual turnover rate of 15.2%.

Table 5 presents the data on separations by type of occupation and by type of separation.

Table 5: Number of separations, by occupational category and reason for separation

	Quit	Retirement	Temp Lay-off	Perm Lay-off	Dismissal	Other	TOTAL
Managers & Executives	17	9	3	1	8	2	40
Professionals	40	5	0	6	1	5	57
Technical	10	1	6	4	1	4	26
Trades	6	9	0	0	2	0	17
Apprentices	2	0	0	0	0	3	5
Sales & Marketing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Admin & Clerical	12	6	0	8	0	13	39
Production Worker	88	12	11	13	0	0	124
Service Worker	115	4	27	13	25	11	195
Other	80	18	29	43	31	1	202
TOTAL	370	64	76	88	68	39	705

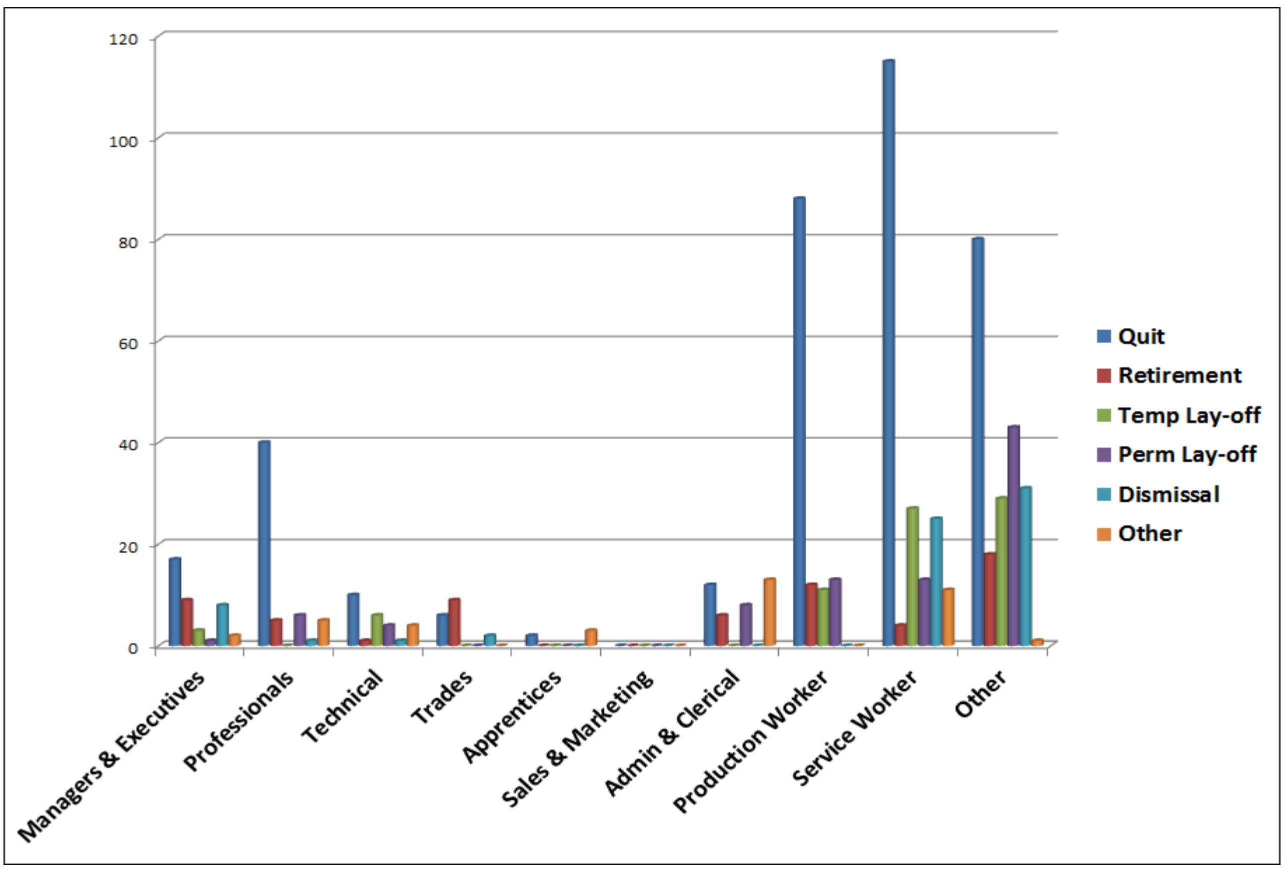


Table 6 presents these same figures as a percentage distribution, in order to make comparisons between the categories easier.

Overall, Quits account for over half (53%) of all separations, and in most occupational categories, Quits are the largest single reason for a separation. Quits are particularly pronounced among Production Workers, Service Workers and Other worker categories. (The numbers may be skewed somewhat among Production Workers, however: one employer is responsible for over 90% of the Quits among Production Workers.)

The next most prominent reasons for separations are lay-offs, both Permanent (88) and Temporary (76), although all the other categories are more or less of the same proportion.

Table 6: Percentage distribution of separations, by occupational category and reason for separation

	Quit	Retirement	Temp Lay-off	Perm Lay-off	Dismissal	Other	2015 TOTAL
Managers & Executives	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	**2%**
Professionals	6%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	**6%**
Technical	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	**1%**
Trades	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	**1%**
Apprentices	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	**0%**
Sales & Marketing	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	**0%**
Admin & Clerical	2%	1%	0%	1%	0%	2%	**2%**
Production Worker	13%	2%	2%	2%	0%	0%	**13%**
Service Worker	16%	1%	4%	2%	4%	2%	**16%**
Other	11%	3%	4%	6%	4%	0%	**11%**
2015 TOTAL	**2%**	**1%**	**0%**	**0%**	**1%**	**0%**	**2%**

Did Your Organization Hire Anyone Over the Last 12 Months?

Table 7 lists the figures for total hires over the previous 12 months, by occupational categories and by type of employment. The column shaded green list the numbers for separations in the same period.

Overall, there were 904 hires over the last 12 months, considerably higher than the 705 separations over the same period. 67 employers reported hiring last year, 85% of the respondents to this question, considerably more than the 46 employers who reported separations, all of which suggests hires did indeed outpace separations last year.

When comparing the hires and the separations by occupational category, most of the categories have a rough balance between hires and separations, with a consistent gain in employment, although there is quite a wide margin between separation and hires in the Service Worker category.

Only around 11% of the hires involved the re-hiring of previously laid-off workers.

Table 7: Total number of hires, comparison to total number of separations

	Full-time	Part-time	Contract	Seasonal	TOTAL		SEPARATIONS
Managers & Executives	44	1	1	2	**48**		**40**
Professionals	45	3	24	6	**78**		**57**
Technical	28	1	2	2	**33**		**26**
Trades	20	0	1	2	**23**		**17**
Apprentices	8	0	0	9	**17**		**5**
Sales & Marketing	2	0	0	0	**2**		**0**
Admin & Clerical	25	4	25	6	**60**		**39**
Production Worker	93	2	0	33	**128**		**124**
Service Worker	154	56	34	58	**302**		**195**
Other	67	23	75	48	**213**		**202**
TOTAL	**486**	**90**	**162**	**166**	**904**		**705**

In the Last 12 Months, Please List the Occupations (Up To 3) For Which You Hired the Most Employees

There were close to 90 different occupations named among these high frequency hiring occupations, but in many instances, the number of hires was only one or two (for example, 26 occupations were a single hire). Table 7 lists those occupations with at least 15 new hires. These 16 occupations accounted for almost two-thirds (65%) of the 642 frequent hires.

Table 8: Largest number of hires among high frequency hiring occupations

OCCUPATION	NUMBER	OCCUPATION	NUMBER
Team Member*	50	Casual Education Assistant	19
Equipment Operator	46	Teacher	19
General Labourer	46	Registered Nurse	17
Food & Beverage Server	32	Outcomes Support Facilitator	16
Occasional Teacher	30	Daycare	16
Cook	28	Children's Mental Health	15
Summer Student	28	Day Care Casual Teacher	15
Housekeeper	26	Service Clerk	15

* It is unclear what function is performed by a Team Member.

Employers were further asked whether any of these high frequency hires were hard to fill. Six out of ten employers (61%) who identified high frequency hires said yes. Table 8 lists the top five reasons cited and compares these results to the top five reasons cited for the same question in last year's survey. Several of the reasons are the same; however this year's results place an even greater emphasis on qualities lacking in the job candidates.

Table 9: Top five reasons cited for difficulty in hiring for high frequency hires, 2015 and 2014

2015	2014
Applicants not meeting qualifications (education level/credentials)	Applicants not meeting motivation, attitude, or interpersonal abilities
Applicants not meeting skills requirements	Applicants not meeting skills requirements
Not enough applicants	Not enough applicants
Applicants not meeting work experience	Inability to compete with other employers due to pay and benefits
Applicants not meeting motivation, attitude, or interpersonal abilities	No local qualified applicants

Table 10 shows the proportion of employers claiming difficulties in hiring for high frequency hiring positions by the specific reasons for their difficulties.

Table 10: Reasons for which it is hard to recruit and the proportion of employers citing that reason

REASON	PERCENT OF EMPLOYERS
Applicants not meeting qualifications (education level/credentials)	69%
Applicants not meeting skills	64%
Not enough applicants	51%
Applicants not meeting work experience	33%
Applicants not meeting motivation, attitude, or interpersonal abilities	31%
No local qualified applicants	26%
Inability to compete with other employers due to nature of work (seasonal, shift work, irregular hours, job content)	21%
Inability to compete with other employers due to remote location/poor public transit	21%
Inability to compete with other employers due to pay and benefits	18%
No applicants at all	13%
Inability to compete with other employers due to promotion opportunities	5%
Applicants not meeting language requirements	5%
Other	5%
Inability to assess a foreign educational qualification or credential	0%

What Recruitment Methods Were Used To Find Job Candidates?

Respondents were asked to indicate what mechanisms they used to recruit job candidates, for any hiring. Answers were provided by 65 respondents and the percentage citing each recruitment method is listed in Table 11. (The total responses add up to more than 100% because almost every employer cited more than one method of recruitment.)

Table 11: Frequency of use of recruitment methods (Number of respondents: 65)

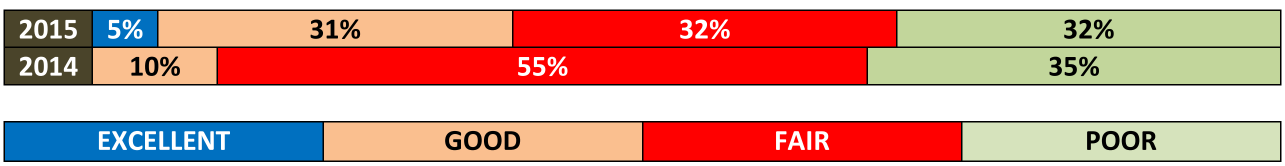
RECRUITMENT METHOD	FREQUENCY OF USE
Word of mouth/personal contacts/referrals/informal networks	74%
Online job boards/postings	72%
Newspaper ads	55%
Company's own website	48%
Government employment centres or websites	37%
On-site job signs or posters	35%
Unsolicited resumes	34%
Non-government or community employment service centres or websites	26%
On-site recruitment at schools, colleges, or universities	20%
Trade or professional association publications/websites	15%
Job fairs	12%
Executive search companies or temporary help agencies	6%
Other	2%

In terms of frequency of use by employers, the top two methods were the same as last year's results. In terms of the more frequently used methods of recruitment, the Rainy River and Kenora Districts employers rely on a mix of the tried-and-true (word-of-mouth, newspaper ads, unsolicited résumés) and the new (on-line job boards, company's own website).

How Do You Rate the Availability of Qualified Workers in the Rainy River And Kenora Districts?

Employers had a lukewarm opinion about the availability of qualified workers in the Rainy River and Kenora Districts. Of the 65 responses, a third (32%) said "Poor" and another third (32%) said "Fair." That being said, these responses are an improvement over last year's results. If one assigned a numerical value to each choice, where "3" = Excellent, "2" = Good, "1" = Fair, and "0" = Poor, then added up the scores and divided by the total number of responses, the average figure would be 1.08, only slightly higher than Fair (1.0). Last year, this composite score was a low of 0.76.

Diagram 1: Rating the availability of availability of qualified workers in the Rainy River and Kenora Districts (N=65)

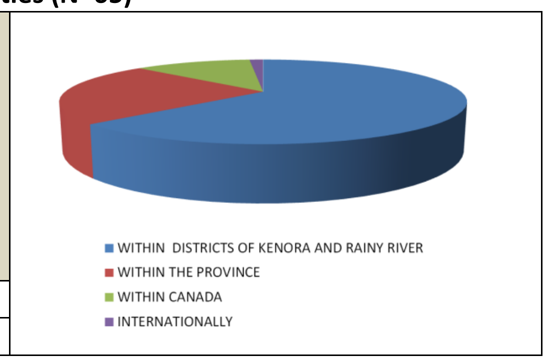


Which of the Following Geographic Areas Were Targeted for Recruitment?

Respondents were asked to indicate the areas their recruitment efforts targeted. Table 12 lists the responses by number of employers selecting each option, together with the percentage of respondents choosing each of the options.

Table 12: Geographic target areas for job recruitment activities (N=65)

	WITHIN DISTRICTS OF KENORA AND RAINY RIVER	WITHIN THE PROVINCE	WITHIN CANADA	INTERNATIONALLY
Number	60	23	11	1
Percent	92%	35%	17%	2%



Most of the recruitment effort of employers is focused on the Districts of Rainy River and Kenora, with considerable outreach extending to the province as well. Some recruitment extends to Canada and almost none internationally. Perhaps what is surprising is that 8% of the respondents who replied claimed that they do not recruit within the Rainy River and Kenora Districts. (The percentages add up to more than 100% because some employers listed more than one option).

Did You Receive Any Assistance From a Free Employment Service Agency Representing One of the Following Groups When Recruiting for These Occupations?

Employers were less likely to receive employment services from an agency providing assistance on behalf of a particular demographic group. Of the respondents who provided a response to this question, 60% said they received no such assistance. Apart from help in securing youth job candidates (which represented a considerable minority) and, to a lesser extent, Aboriginals, reliance on such assistance amounted only to a small proportion of survey respondents, as follows (some employers received assistance in relation to more than one category):

- 34% of respondents indicated they received employment services from an agency assisting youth (15-24 years of age)
- 19% received assistance from an agency serving Aboriginals
- 8% received assistance from an agency serving persons with disabilities
- 7% received assistance from an agency serving older workers (55 years and older)
- 5% received assistance from an agency serving immigrants or visible minorities

Did You Use a Paid Recruitment Agency?

Only three employers indicated that they used a paid recruitment agency, while 62 said they had not, resulting in 5% of those responding to the question confirming that they used a paid recruitment agency (this figure is lower than the 11% response in last year's survey).

Do You Plan On Hiring Anyone Over the Next 12 Months? In What Occupational Categories? What Is the Reason For the Job Opening?

Seven out of ten (68%) respondents indicated that they planned on hiring over the next 12 months, somewhat lower than the hiring intentions expressed in last year's survey (81%). The project number of hires is considerably lower than last year's hires – the same pattern was evident last year (projected hires being considerably less than actual hires in that year, roughly in the same proportions).

Table 13 shows the number of expected job hires over the next 12 months, by occupational category and by employment type (tan cells), and compares the figures to the reported hires over the past year (green cells) (from Table 6), and the same figures reported from last year's survey (yellow cells).

Several observations:

- The projected hires amount to roughly two-thirds of the actual hires, and that proportion is roughly similar across full-time, part-time, contract and seasonal hires;
- There is a considerable difference between actual hires and projected hires in one occupational category, namely Service Workers, where projected hires for next year are around 40% of actual hires this year; it is possible that in this category, there is more turnover, but employers may only be counting in terms of the actual job, not the number of times they end up hiring for that job;

- All things considered, it would warrant further inquiry to determine if employers actually are more pessimistic about the coming year or if they are simply exercising a high level of caution in not projecting future hiring.

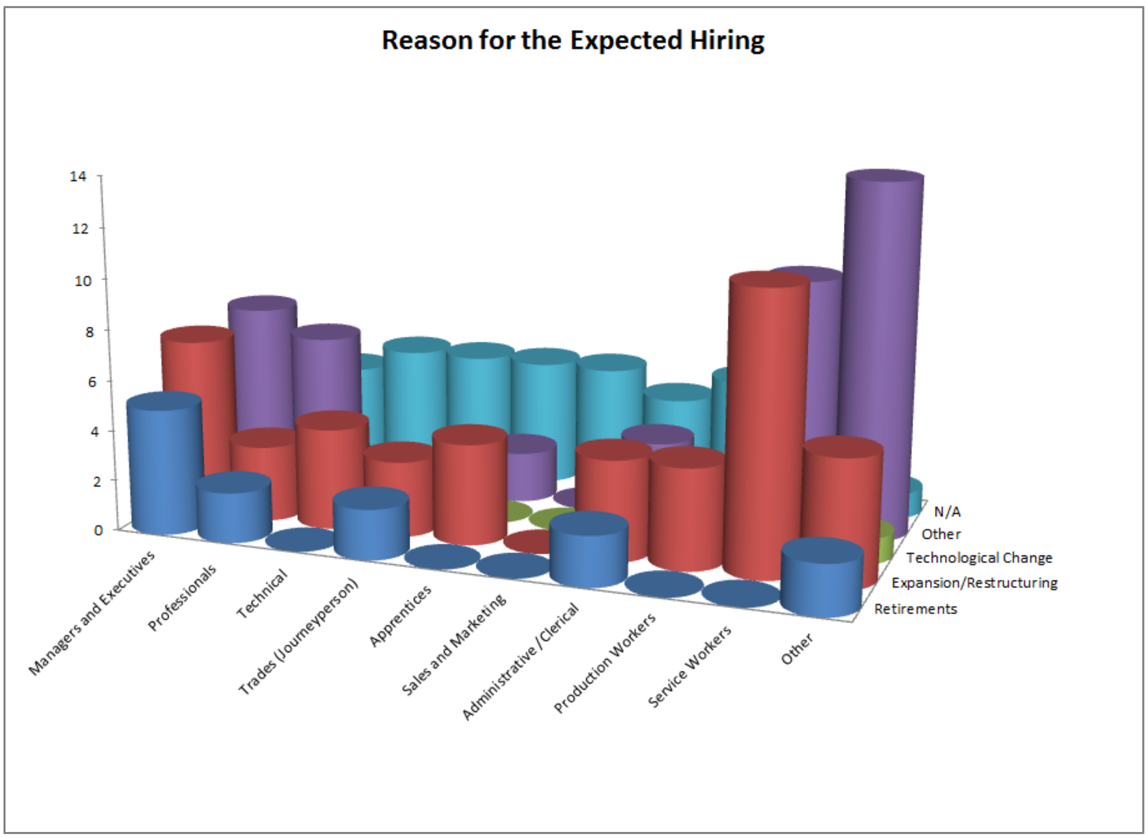
Table 13: Projected number of hires in coming year, compared to hires in past year

	Full-time	Part-time	Contract	Seasonal	TOTAL PROJECTED HIRINGS		PAST YEAR HIRINGS		2014 PROJECTED HIRINGS	2014 ACTUAL HIRINGS
Managers & Executives	22	2	0	3	**27**		**48**		**23**	**12**
Professionals	32	0	17	5	**54**		**78**		**2**	**5**
Technical	25	0	0	0	**25**		**33**		**3**	**1**
Trades	42	1	0	0	**43**		**23**		**9**	**15**
Apprentices	10	1	2	9	**22**		**17**		**4**	**3**
Sales & Marketing	0	0	0	0	**0**		**2**		**9**	**4**
Admin & Clerical	16	3	6	3	**28**		**60**		**4**	**9**
Production Worker	118	2	0	14	**134**		**128**		**34**	**135**
Service Worker	51	39	12	20	**122**		**302**		**73**	**97**
Other	21	9	53	66	**149**		**213**		**18**	**52**
PROJECTED HIRINGS	**337**	**57**	**90**	**120**	**604**		**904**		**179**	**333**
HIRINGS PAST YEAR	**486**	**90**	**162**	**166**	**904**					

Employers were asked why they expected to have job openings (Table 14).

Table 14: Reason for the expected hiring

	Managers and Executives	Professionals	Technical	Trades (Journeyperson)	Apprentices	Sales and Marketing	Administrative /Clerical	Production Workers	Service Workers	Other	TOTAL	2014 TOTAL
Retirements	5	2	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	**13**	**4**
Expansion/Restructuring	7	3	4	3	4	0	4	4	11	5	**45**	**24**
Technological Change	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	**2**	**0**
Other	7	6	1	1	2	0	3	2	10	14	**46**	**15**
N/A	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	1	**43**	**22**
TOTAL	**23**	**15**	**10**	**12**	**11**	**5**	**13**	**11**	**26**	**23**	**149**	**65**



Three reasons are in a virtual tie for the reason for expected hiring: Other (46), Expansion/Restructuring (45) and N/A (43). Evidently, there is need for more categories to capture reasons not listed. Some ideas can be drawn from comments some employers provided when citing Other – 8 mentioned they were hiring to fill a vacancy caused by a separation; 7 mentioned seasonal work; and 4 referred to hiring to fill in for a maternity or paternity leave.

What Is the Minimum Level Of Education Required For New Hires in the Various Occupational Categories?

Employers were asked to list the minimum educational attainment requirements for the broad occupational categories. Table 15 lists the percentage distribution of the responses by each occupation.

Table 15: Minimum educational requirements by occupational categories

	NONE	HIGH SCHOOL	SOME POST-SECONDARY	TRADES CERTIFICATE	COLLEGE DIPLOMA	UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE	PROFESSIONAL OR GRADUATE DEDGREE
Managers and Executives	3%	10%	15%	10%	28%	19%	16%
Professionals (eg: Engineers)	0%	2%	5%	2%	18%	32%	41%
Technical	0%	6%	3%	29%	40%	17%	6%
Trades (Journeyperson)	0%	15%	6%	77%	3%	0%	0%
Apprentices	6%	44%	22%	19%	9%	0%	0%
Sales and Marketing	8%	46%	21%	0%	21%	0%	4%
Administrative and Clerical	2%	47%	24%	2%	20%	2%	4%
Production Workers	28%	69%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%
Service Workers	22%	49%	11%	2%	13%	2%	0%
Other	29%	42%	13%	0%	8%	8%	0%

In Table 15, the light-shaded cells indicate values of over 15%, and the darker shaded cells indicate values of 35% or more. For certain occupations, one specific designation is the clear choice: 77% of employers expect a tradesperson to have a trades certificate; a high school diploma is sufficient for quite a range of occupations in the Rainy River and Kenora Districts. By and large, managers are expected to have a college diploma or higher, as are professionals, with 41% of respondents expecting a professional degree.

Overall, and perhaps surprisingly, a high school diploma still counts as the minimum requirement for many occupations, but a college diploma and higher has more currency for technical, professional and managerial occupations.

Please Select the Top 3 Competencies for Most of Your Employees

Table 16 tabulates the scoring of all respondents who identified the top three competencies that their employees needed to possess, both for their current as well as future workforce.

Table 16: Necessary competencies, current and future workforces, all jobs and hard-to-fill jobs (N=76)

Competency	Current	Future
Work ethic, dedication, dependability	39	36
Customer service skills	35	34
Self-motivated/ability to work with little or no supervision	33	29
Teamwork/interpersonal skills	30	21
Willingness to learn	27	18
Communication skills (both oral and written)	26	23
Problem solving, reasoning, creativity	18	16
Professionalism	17	14
Computer literacy skills	10	8
Technical skills	9	9
Time management or organizational skills	9	6
Analytical/research skills	2	0

These competencies are listed in order of the total number of times they were named for current workers, although the ranking for future workers varies only a little. There is a clear top tier of competencies: work ethic, customer service skills, self-motivated. Analytical/research skills received hardly any votes, and a lower tier of competency expectations consisting of computer literacy skills, technical skills and time management/organizational skills.

Last year's survey produced exactly the same top three competencies, in the same ranking, and communication skills came in fourth.

Training for Incumbent Workers

Employers were asked whether they were able to provide or support ongoing training and education opportunities for their employees over the last year, and a significant majority (87%) said yes.

Among employers who cited barriers to training (8 employers, of whom 7 did not provide training), Table 17 lists the number of employers who identified the following challenges impeding training.

Table 17: Challenges/barriers to employees receiving training or education

Cost	6
Relevant training is not offered locally (in the district)	5
Distance to travel to facility	3
Loss of productivity during training time	3
Awareness of training support programs	2
Other	2
Awareness of existing training programs	1
Losing trained employees to other businesses	1
Awareness of legislated training	0

One needs to exercise caution in attributing too much to these responses, given the very limited sample size. Suffice to say that two barriers were cited most frequently: cost and the absence of relevant training in the local area.

Respondents were further asked in what specific ways they supported training or education for their employees. Table 18 identifies the percentage of employers engaged in training who provided each of the following supports. The figures add to more than 100% because some employers identified more than one support – in fact, roughly six out of ten (61%) employers provided more than one support.

Table 18: Percent of employers providing supports

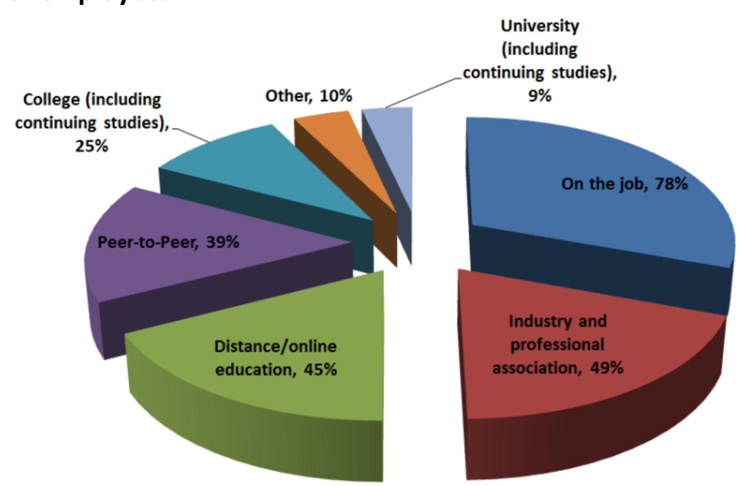
Fund it (fully or partially)	79%
Offer flexibility in work schedule	51%
Supply information on career advancement	34%
Using government hiring and training incentives	28%
Other	16%

Employers offer very concrete forms of support, either through funding the training (in whole or in part) or by providing flexibility in the work schedule, as opposed to simply providing information. There is considerable reliance on government hiring and training incentives. The "Other" category primarily involved on-the-job/in-house training.

In terms of the sources or delivery methods for training or education, by far the most common is on-the-job training. Table 18 lists each method by percentage of employers who undertook training. Once again, the figures add to more than 100% because some employers identified more than one training method. After on-the-job training, there is considerable reliance on an industry or professional association, distance or on-line education, and peer-to-peer training. Further down the list, a quarter of employers make use of colleges, whereas reliance on universities is relatively minimal.

Table 19: Method or source of training/education for employees

On the job	78%
Industry and professional association	49%
Distance/online education	45%
Peer-to-Peer	39%
College (including continuing studies)	25%
Other	10%
University (including continuing studies)	9%



Do You Provide Any Workplace-Relevant Training To Students And Future Workers?

In terms of providing any workplace-relevant training to students or future workers, slightly less than half (44%) respondents said they did not. Of the remaining, the type of training and whether it was paid or unpaid varied, as Table 20 illustrates. Of employers who offered such experiences, roughly two-thirds (68%) offered more than one such opportunity to students or job seekers.

Table 20: Percentage of employers providing workplace experience opportunities (N=41)

	Paid co-op	Unpaid co-op	Paid internship	Unpaid internship	Apprentice
High school student	8	23	0	0	3
College student	6	11	5	3	4
University student	5	5	6	5	0
Job seeker	2	2	5	1	5

By far, the most common form of work experience offered is through unpaid co-op placements for high school students. When it comes to internships, they are more likely to be paid rather than unpaid.

SUMMARY COMMENTS - OBSERVATIONS:

As noted, the number of employers who responded to the *2015 Employerone* survey increased from 2014, as did the number of larger businesses and employees represented. While most businesses reported a number of hirings and separations, this was most evident with the service workers. For the most part, occupations continued to be concentrated in the service industry occupations, manufacturing, and other.

However, apart from actual numbers, responses to other questions did not yield significantly different results from the *2014 Employerone* survey. This might seem to indicate that the results can be generalized to most employers in the area.

OUTREACH EFFORTS**:** As with surveys of this nature, getting employers to respond continues to be a challenge. Although the length of the 2014 survey was cited as a reason for the reduced number of repeat respondents, the shortened version used for the 2015 survey along with various outreach efforts seemed to have had a positive effect. Additionally, other organizations and associations (as identified in the acknowledgements) helped extend the reach by personally promoting the value of the survey to their employer members. NTAB took this same approach and personalized its efforts to reach employers.

RESPONSE SIMILARITIES: It was not unexpected that small, medium and larger employers from both the 2014 and 2015 surveys reported similar strategies and issues related to recruitment methods and challenges, top competencies and commitment to training.

a) ***Recruitment:*** **Word of mouth/personal contacts/referrals and informal networks** continue to be the number one way that employers recruit followed by **online job boards/postings**, **newspaper ads** and a **company's own internet site**. For hard to fill occupations, employers continue to say that applicants did not meet qualification requirements, that applicants did not meet the skills and that there were not enough applicants or applicants did not meet the work experience requirements. Although this is not a surprise, it is important for employers to assess the bar that they have set in terms of qualifications and for educators to identify ways to help students gain the necessary education, skills and experience required. Additionally, employer recruitment activities continue to target the Kenora and Rainy River Districts and about 2% recruitment internationally. Last, use of recruitment agencies and job fairs remain low on reported recruitment strategies.

b) ***Top competencies:*** Once again employers continue to cite "soft" skills as necessary competencies in their current and future workforce. Although the order changed slightly from the 2014 survey, in the 2015 survey, employers again reported work ethic (dedication and dependability); customer service skills; self-motivation (ability to work with little/no supervision) teamwork/interpersonal skills; and willingness to learn as the top five competencies. This should be a "wake-up" call to everyone as these types of skills by their nature are more personal characteristics; they are a learned behaviour and not necessarily something that can be easily addressed without additional education, training and mentoring.

c) ***Training:*** 87% of employer respondents said that they provide training to their employees. For those who do not, various challenges were cited such as **cost, relevant training is not offered locally (in the districts) distance to training facility and loss of productivity during training**. Interestingly a number of employers said that they offer students and job seekers experiential learning opportunities such as paid/unpaid co-ops; paid/unpaid internships; 12% offer apprenticeship opportunities. **This is an area that needs attention.** Various reports have expressed a concern about future skilled trade shortages, so it is essential to encourage more employers to hire an apprentice if they have the capacity to do so. **If they don't, who will?** And how will these good paying jobs be filled and by whom if employers don't provide the necessary training?

While broader labour market data is key to understanding what is happening in industry (trends, changes and growth/decline) and what occupations people are employed in, direct employer information and feedback provides yet another dimension to a very complex picture. Only by hearing from employers who are willing to share information on questions related to their workforce and their workforce needs will we begin to gain a true understanding of what employers are looking for in their current and future workforce. This will in turn help planners, economic development leads, educators, employment service providers, decision-makers, students, job seekers and others to understand where their efforts should be placed and who, at the end of the day is hiring, what they are looking for and why.

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