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FINAL REPORT

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KENORA & RAINY RIVER DISTRICTS

Kenora & Rainy River Districts 2017 Final Report

Northwest Training and Adjustment Board
113-100 Casimir Avenue
Dryden, ON P8N3L4
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***employer**one®* SURVEY RESULTS 2017

Kenora & Rainy River Districts

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February 2018

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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***employer**one*® SURVEY RESULTS 2017

Kenora and Rainy River Districts

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

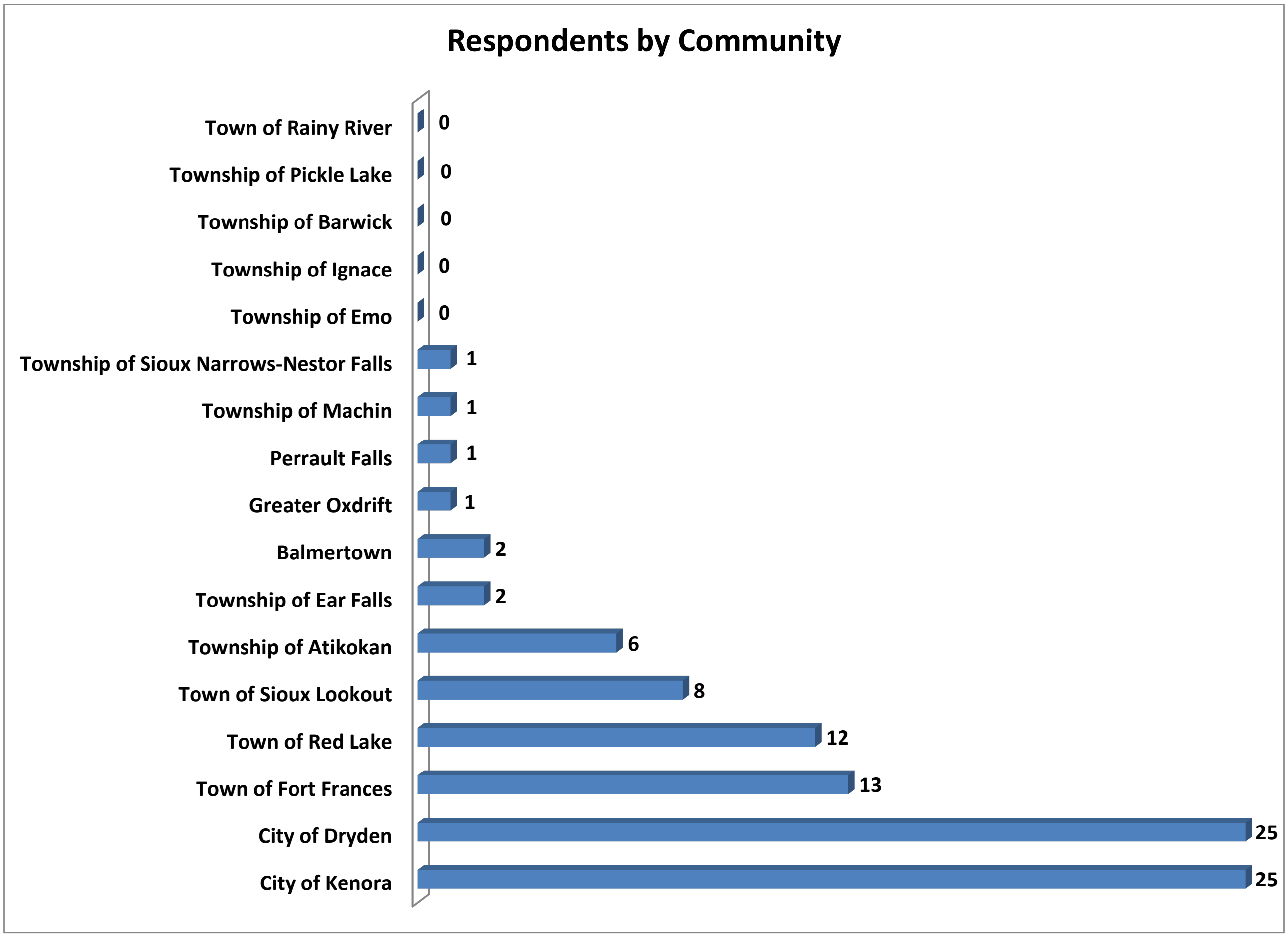
This is the fourth *employerone*® survey that the Northwest Training and Adjustment Board (NTAB) have used to get direct information from employers across the Kenora and Rainy River Districts. In doing this it was our reach out to local employers to give them a chance to have their voices heard. What are their workforce needs? Have these needs changed in four years? If so, what have the changes been and what can we learn from doing this survey?

As the Executive Director of NTAB I can say that the participation rate did increase each year and I am very pleased to see that. We understand that employers are there to do business and competition for their time to complete surveys can be a hindrance to what they do. However, with that said it is also so important for us as Labour Market Information gatherers to receive that input.

2014	2015	2016	2017
23	73	85	97

Respondents by Community

City of Kenora	25
City of Dryden	25
Town of Fort Frances	13
Town of Red Lake	12
Town of Sioux Lookout	8
Township of Atikokan	6
Township of Ear Falls	2
Balmertown	2
Greater Oxdrift	1
Perrault Falls	1
Township of Machin	1
Township of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls	1
Township of Emo	0
Township of Ignace	0
Township of Barwick	0
Township of Pickle Lake	0
Town of Rainy River	0
Total	**97**



The most responses came from *Retail Trade* followed by *Other*. Next was *Accommodation* and *Food Services*.

These responses represented 2,487 employees, from 35,750 employed residents in the two districts or about 7%. More jobs were full time versus part-time, contract or seasonal.

FULL TIME	PART TIME	CONTRACT	SEASONAL
61%	24%	2%	10%

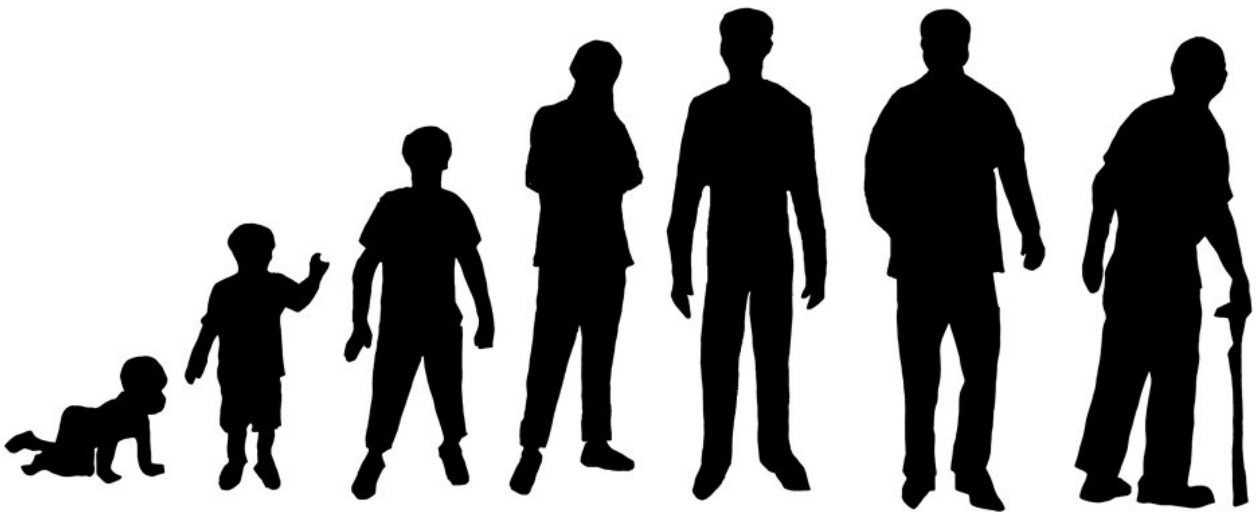
AGES OF THE EMPLOYEES

Approximately 60% of respondents stated that less than 10% of their jobs were filled by employees under the age of 25.

Employee's ages 25 – 49 tended to fill most of the jobs in the responding workforces.

Females equalled more than half of the jobs 62% of the time.

Newcomers and persons with disabilities tended to fill less than 10% of the jobs, however Indigenous people filled more than 50% of the jobs 10% of the time.



SEPARATIONS

This fiscal's report showed that SEPARATIONS outnumbered HIRES which is opposite of last year.

895 Separations versus 612 Hires **except** when it came to FULL TIME JOBS.

895

Separations

612

Hires

REASONS FOR HIRING

The greatest response here was for EXPANSION or RESTRUCTURING which shows a positive outlook from the employers followed by OTHER or RETIREMENTS.

RECRUITMENT METHODS

Word of Mouth 93%

Online Job Boards 70%

Company's Own Website 55%

While 2% of the respondents reported that they did not recruit in either of the two districts.

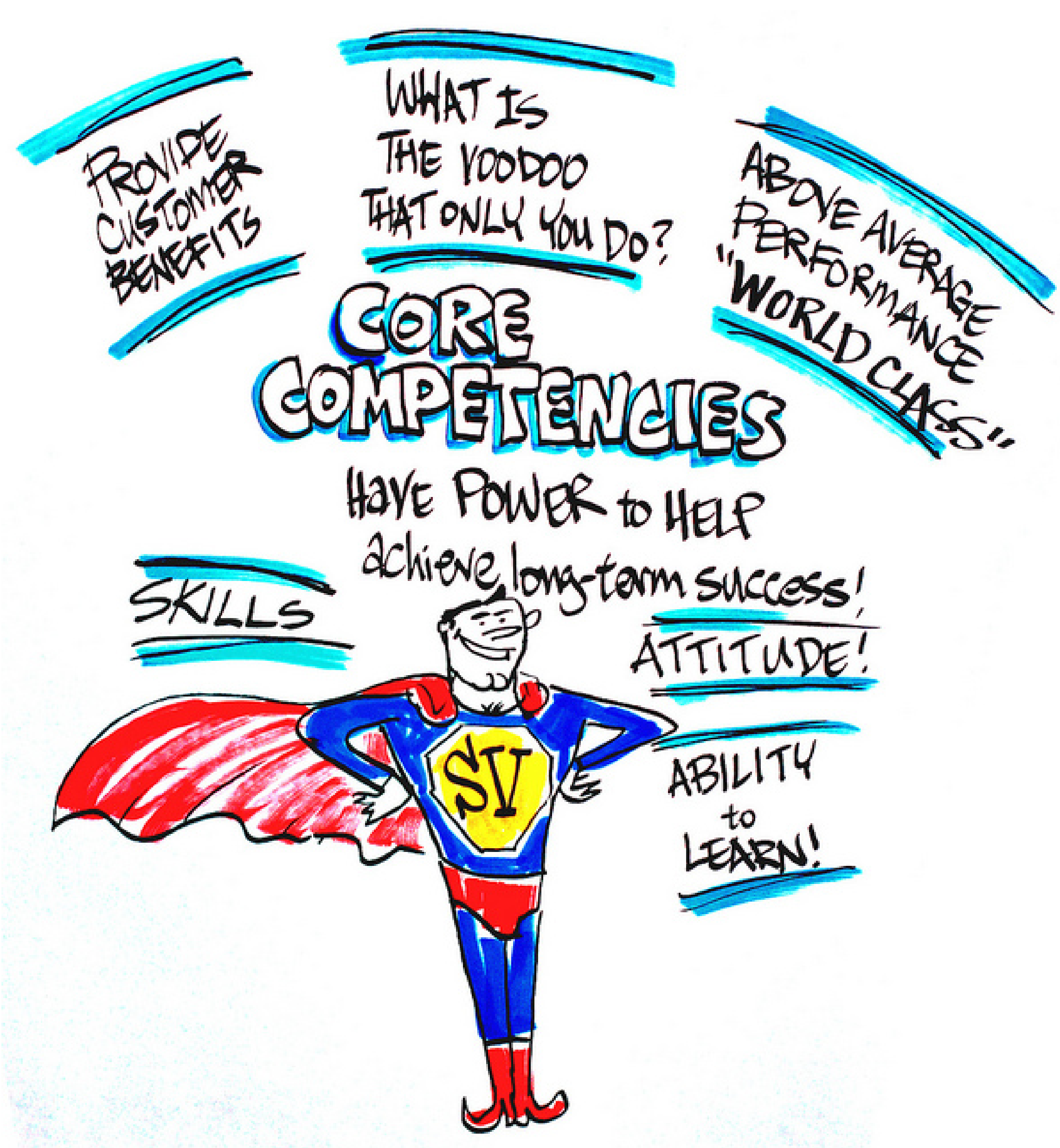
TRAINING

Cost, distance and the fact that the training required was not available in either of the two districts was a major factor therefore it was reported that on the job training, peer to peer and distance/online training percentage usage increased from the 2016 survey results.

TOP COMPETENCIES

The top three competencies reported were WORK ETHIC, ABILITY TO FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS and WILLINGNESS TO LEARN.

The bottom three competencies listed were PROBLEM SOLVING, COMMUNICATION and COMPUTER LITERACY.



INTRODUCTION

We tried to have the survey more user friendly for 2017. We hope that as the respondents you did find it improved from the previous years. This labour market information is so essential to our partners and stakeholders in the Employment Service provider fields as well as our funders; MAESD, educators, students, post-secondary institutions and municipalities for Economic Development.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

For this fiscal NTAB used the services of a call centre to reach out to our employers across the two districts. We also continued to use our local Chambers of Commerce, personalized emails, site visits, web-sites, newspapers and other methods utilizing our partners throughout the two districts.

FINDINGS

After compiling the data I do want to comment on the fact that the respondents stated that having a trade certificate (18%) as being very important dropped considerably from the previous year's surveys.

Education levels for both of the districts are still lagging but there is a need for future employees to increase those grade levels. When speaking to employers it is was very clear that *there is a severe shortage of skilled trades workers*.

Succession planning or lack thereof was flagged. Small and Medium Entrepreneurs are the backbone of our two districts so it is important to keep these businesses versus closing. Yet only 45% were sure they had a succession plan ready, while 38% said NO and 17% were uncertain if they had anything in place.

It continued to be a challenge to get employers to respond to the 2017 survey. Not everyone who started completed it all and some respondents gave multiple answers to some of the questions resulting in some of the outcomes coming in at more than 100%.

I want to personally thank everyone that did take the time to participate. A board member who promoted it, a Chamber that encouraged their businesses to participate; media for helping us promote it, and of course the EMPLOYERS that did contribute. Each year we have managed to get our numbers up from the previous years. With our smaller population numbers compared to the other workforce planning boards in Ontario, I am very grateful for the responses that NTAB received.

Labour Market Information is

ESSENTIAL

Profile of respondents

In total, 97 employers started the survey and 82 completed it, with a variable number of respondents for each question. Almost half (48%) of the surveys were completed by the business owner, almost a quarter (23%) by a supervisor or manager, 10% by HR, and another near quarter (24%) represented by "Other." (The total adds to more than 100% because some respondents chose more than one category.)

In terms of geography, around a quarter of the responses had their main business location in each of Kenora (26%) and Dryden (26%), with another 13% coming from Red Lake and 13% from Fort Frances.

Respondents represented a range of industries as seen in Table 1. Respondents were asked to indicate the primary and secondary industries represented by their establishments. The figures in Table 1 are the results for the primary industry (there are 108 responses, as some respondents chose more than one primary industry). The percentage distribution of survey respondents by industry is provided and these percentages are compared with the distribution of businesses in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts in December 2017. The colour-coding for survey results highlights where the survey percentage share is much greater (yellow) or much lower (orange) than the actual distribution.

Table 1: Number and percent of respondents by industry

INDUSTRY	SURVEY		ACTUAL
	NUMBER	**PERCENT**	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	8	8.2%	4.6%
Mining, Quarrying and Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0.0%	0.5%
Utilities	2	2.1%	0.4%
Construction	6	6.2%	12.9%
Manufacturing	3	3.1%	1.8%
Wholesale Trade	3	3.1%	2.8%
Retail Trade	21	21.6%	15.5%
Transportation and Warehousing	2	2.1%	6.1%
Information and Cultural Industries	2	2.1%	1.3%
Finance and Insurance	5	5.2%	2.6%
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	3	3.1%	3.7%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	8	8.2%	4.8%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1	1.0%	0.2%
Administration and Support, Waste Management	0	0.0%	2.8%
Educational Services	6	6.2%	1.8%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	3	3.1%	9.3%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	2	2.1%	2.0%
Accommodation and Food Services	13	13.4%	13.9%
Public Administration	5	5.2%	3.6%
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	3	3.1%	9.1%
Other	12	12.4%	--
TOTAL	108	**111.5%**	**100.0%**

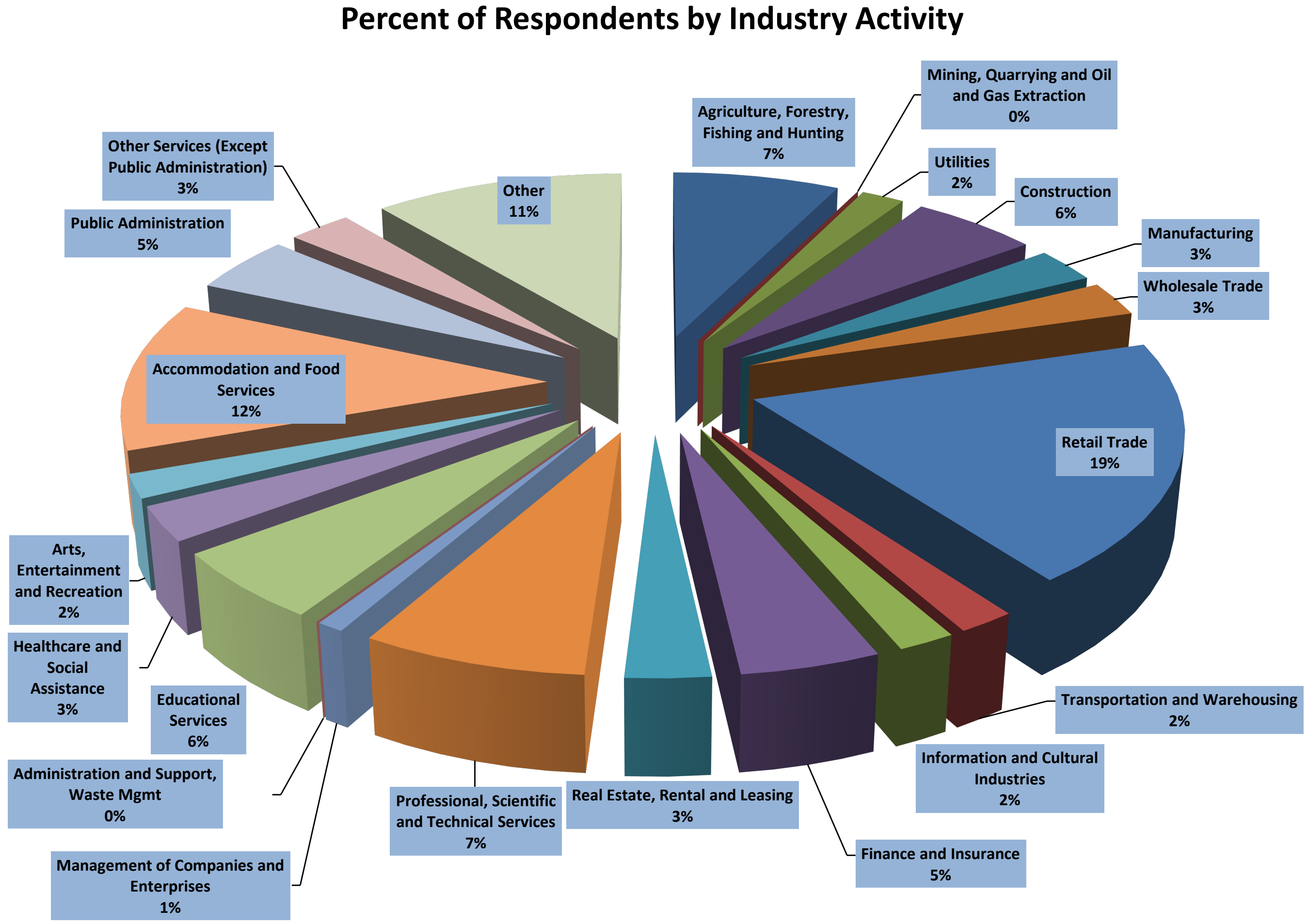
There are some imbalances when it comes to the distribution of respondents by industry, but in many instances the survey distribution is close to the actual distribution of firms by industry in the study area.

Respondents were further asked, apart from the industry which is their primary activity, what other industry categories might describe their establishments. Table 2 provides the percentage distribution of these secondary responses and compares them to the primary activity industry distribution (in this case, the percentages are calculated on the basis of total responses).

Table 2: Percent of respondents by industry activity, primary and secondary

Industry	Primary Percent	Secondary Percent
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	7.4%	3.0%
Mining, Quarrying and Oil and Gas Extraction	0.0%	6.1%
Utilities	1.9%	1.5%
Construction	5.6%	4.5%
Manufacturing	2.8%	6.1%
Wholesale Trade	2.8%	3.0%
Retail Trade	19.4%	10.6%
Transportation and Warehousing	1.9%	6.1%
Information and Cultural Industries	1.9%	3.0%
Finance and Insurance	4.6%	3.0%
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	2.8%	6.1%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	7.4%	4.5%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.9%	4.5%
Administration and Support, Waste Management	0.0%	3.0%
Educational Services	5.6%	9.1%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	2.8%	3.0%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	1.9%	6.1%
Accommodation and Food Services	12.0%	10.6%
Public Administration	4.6%	3.0%
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	2.8%	1.5%
Other	11.1%	1.5%
TOTAL	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

There are some variations between the distribution of industries by primary and secondary activity. Certain activities are less often carried out as secondary activities compared to their engagement as primary activities, namely Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting, and Retail Trade. On the other hand, several items attract a high level of responses as secondary activities: Transportation and Warehousing, Management of Companies & Enterprises, and Educational Services.



The distribution of respondents by number of employees shows a considerably greater proportion of respondents with a larger number of employees compared to the actual figures. The actual figures are derived from Statistics Canada's Canadian Business Counts, for which the latest figures are June 2017.

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	26%	40%	29%	5%
Actual	46%	39%	12%	3%

Overall, the respondents represented 2,487 employees. The 2016 Census data for the number of jobs in the survey area has not yet been released, but we do know that the total number of employed residents living in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts is 35,750. Thus, the number of jobs represented by the employers participating in the survey accounts for around 7% of the employment in the local area.

According to the respondents, around 61% of these jobs were full-time, 24% were part-time, and 2% were contract jobs. Some 10% of jobs were seasonal, around double the percentage of contract jobs.

Roughly 60% of respondents said that less than 10% of their jobs were filled by youth under the age of 25 years old whereas only 12% of respondents said that youth filled more than 50% of jobs. Conversely, adults between the ages of 25 and 49 tended to fill the most jobs in the responding workforces. Adults between these ages filled 26-50% of jobs 42% of the time, and they filled more than 50% of jobs in a firm 33% of the time. Respondents said that females fill more than half of the jobs 62% of the time, and around one-fifth of the time they filled somewhere between 26 and 50% of the positions. Newcomers and persons with disabilities tended to fill less than 10% of jobs in respondent firms, however Indigenous peoples filled more than 50% of jobs nearly 10% of the time.

The rest of the analysis will present the substantive responses.

Did your organization experience any separations over the last 12 months?

Of the 95 respondents who answered the question, roughly 73% said they experienced a separation in the last year, only one of whom did not provide more data. In total, these employers represented 2,159 jobs, around 87% of the jobs represented by employers taking the survey, and they experienced a total of 895 separations. This resulted in an estimated annual turnover rate of 36%. When the turnover rate is calculated by different categories of employment, the picture looks slightly different: turnover among full-time jobs of 14%, among part-time jobs – 58%, among contract jobs – 206% (two possible explanations: employers have either under-estimated the number of contract positions when they answered that question, or else many contracts run for less than a year, resulting in a larger number of separations each time a contract ends), and among seasonal jobs – 88% (this figure should be 100% but it is certainly in that ballpark).

Table 4 presents the data on separations by type of employment and by type of separation.

Table 4: Number of separations, by type of employment and by reason for separation

	Quit	Retirement	Temp Lay-off	Perm Lay-off	Dismissal	TOTAL
Full-time	204	4	2	7	2	**219**
Part-time	216	1	124	1	0	**342**
Contract	4	10	4	79	0	**97**
Seasonal	122	0	13	85	0	**220**
Other	4	6	4	3	0	**17**
TOTAL	**550**	**21**	**147**	**175**	**2**	**895**

Table 5 presents these same figures as a percentage distribution, in order to make comparisons between the categories easier.

Table 5: Percentage distribution of separations, by type of employment and by reason for separation

	Quit	Retirement	Temp Lay-off	Perm Lay-off	Dismissal	TOTAL
Full-time	23%	0%	0%	1%	0%	**24%**
Part-time	24%	0%	14%	0%	0%	**38%**
Contract	0%	1%	0%	9%	0%	**11%**
Seasonal	14%	0%	1%	9%	0%	**25%**
Other	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	**2%**
TOTAL	**61%**	**2%**	**16%**	**20%**	**0%**	**100%**

Most separations involved part-time jobs (38%). The largest category for separations was Quits (61%), followed by permanent lay-offs (20%) and Temporary lay-offs (16%). The single largest individual category was Part-time Quits (24%).

Did your organization hire anyone over the last 12 months?

Table 6 lists the figures for total hirings over the previous 12 months, by type of employment, and compares it to the number of separations during the same period.

Table 6: Total number of hires over the last 12 months, comparison to separations during same period

	Full-time	Part-time	Contract	Seasonal	Other	Total
Hiring						
Number	271	187	12	137	5	612
Percent	44%	31%	2%	22%	1%	100%
Separations						
Number	219	342	97	220	17	895
Percent	24%	38%	11%	25%	2%	100%

The number of hires was significantly below the number of separations, except in the full-time job category. The largest differences were in the part-time and contract categories. This may be explained by the fact that for the same part-time or contract position, there were several hires, because of turn-over or, in the case of a contract position, because the contract was for less than a year.

In most cases, employers reported both hiring and separation activity in the same year (Table 7). Only 10% of respondents indicated that they had neither a hire nor a separation in the previous year.

Table 7: Instances of hiring and/or separation

Hiring	Separation	% Reporting
YES	YES	61%
YES	NO	8%
NO	YES	14%
NO	NO	10%
YES	---	7%

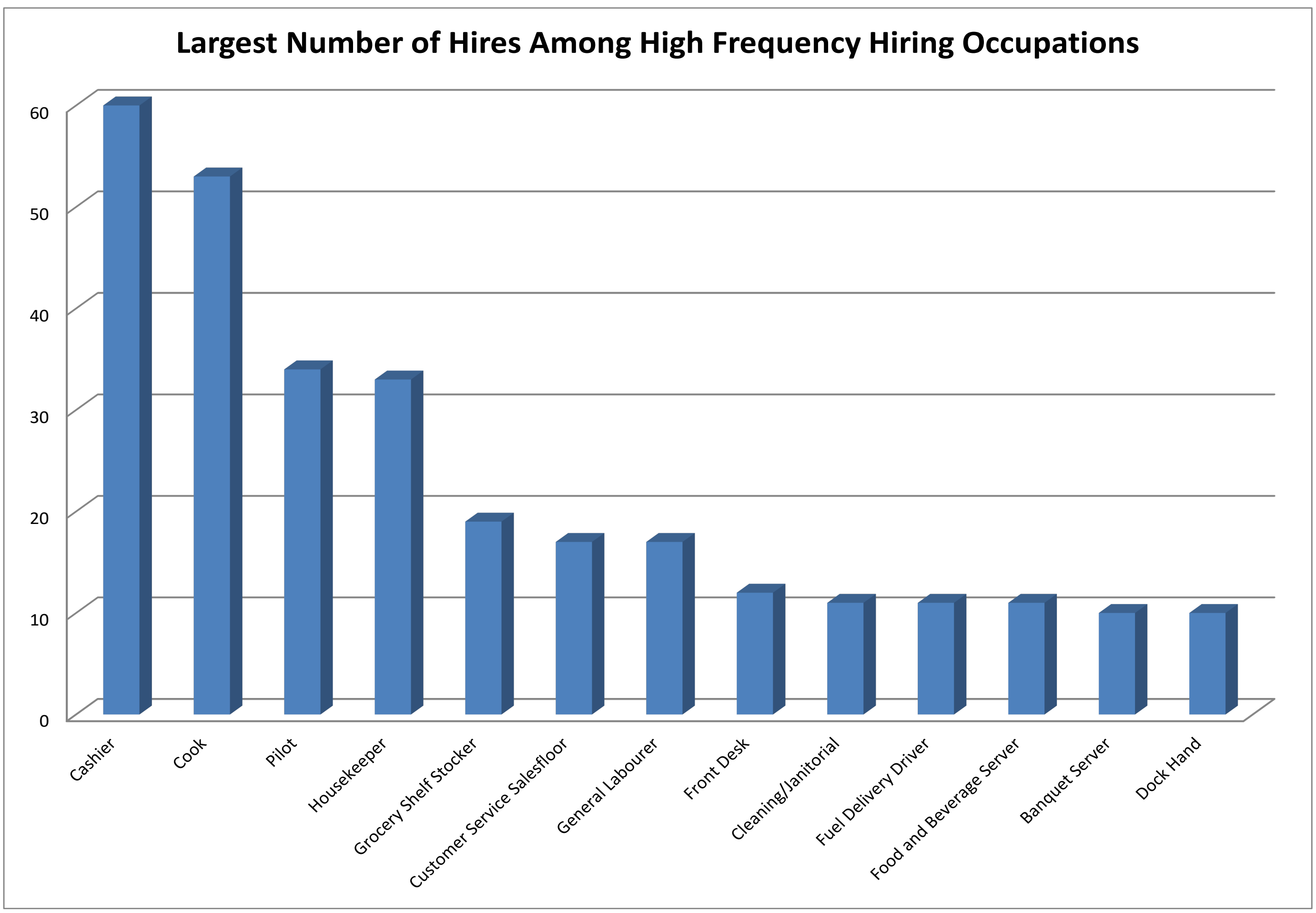
Respondents were further asked the question: Of the total number of hires in the past 12 months, how many were previously laid-off employees who were re-hired? Of these 612 hires, 111 of these were rehires, or 18%.

In the last 12 months, please list the occupations (up to 3) for which you hired the most employees

There were slightly over 146 responses provided to this question, naming some 98 occupations. Table 8 lists the 13 occupations with at least 10 new hires. These 13 occupations accounted for 298 of the high-frequency new hires (total: 526), a 57% share. 49 of the high-frequency hires represented only one or two hires.

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

Occupation	Number
Cashier	60
Cook	53
Pilot	34
Housekeeper	33
Grocery Shelf Stocker	19
Customer Service Salesfloor	17
General Labourer	17
Front Desk	12
Cleaning/Janitorial	11
Fuel Delivery Driver	11
Food and Beverage Server	11
Banquet Server	10
Dock Hand	10

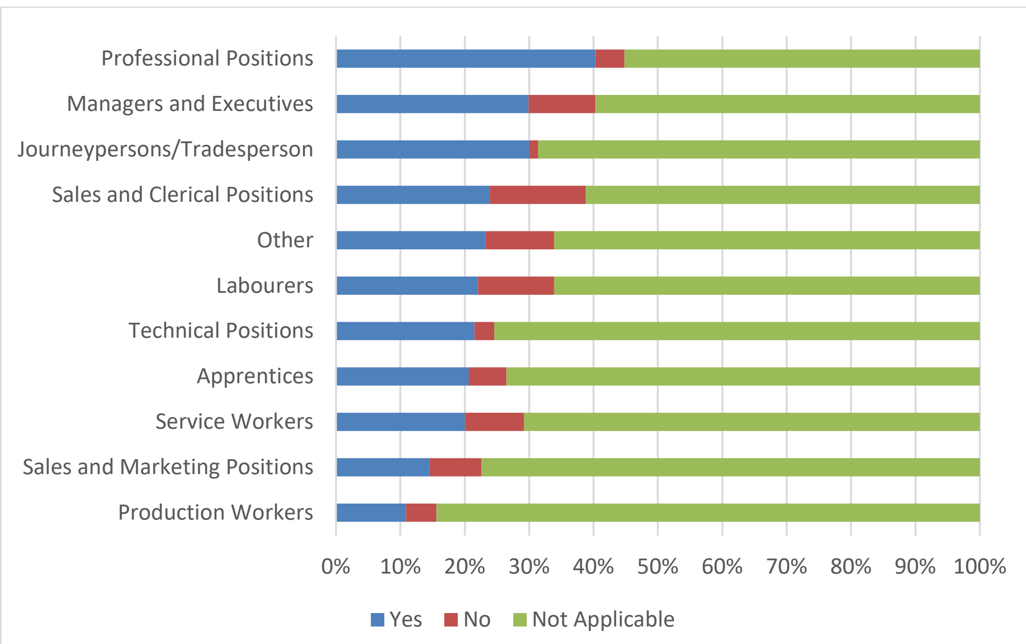


Employers were further asked if they found any of their positions hard to fill. Their responses showed that the majority, or 74 respondents, found positions hard to fill (86%), 7 said they were not hard to fill (8%), and 5 were uncertain (6%).

When hiring, does your business/organization find that some positions are hard to fill (challenging to find suitable candidates)?

Forty percent of employers find it difficult to find suitable candidates among professional occupations (Chart 1). Other occupations where employers also expressed recruitment challenges included Managers & Executives, as well as Journeypersons/Tradespersons. In most instances, employers stated that the question was not applicable, presumably because they had not recently hired for that occupation. Excluding the not applicable responses and only focusing on the “Yes” or “No” responses results in a slightly different hierarchy of occupations with recruitment challenges: of those employers who expressed an opinion, 21 of 22 (96%) said it was challenging to find a journeyperson. Using the same approach, the difficulty score for several other occupations were as follows: professionals (90%) and technical positions (87%).

Chart 1: Results regarding hard-to-fill occupations



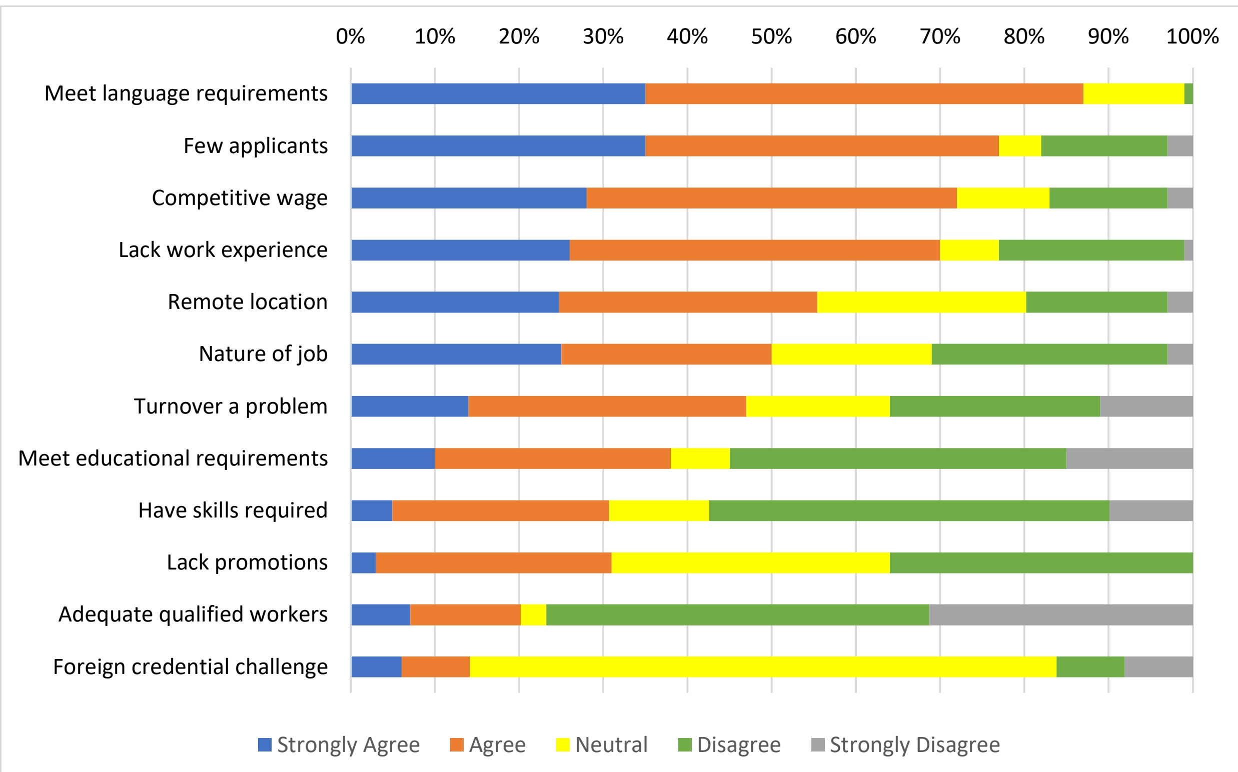
Reasons why occupations are hard to fill

Employers were then asked to list their level of agreement or disagreement with a number of statements relating to recruitment for hard-to-fill jobs. The full statement in the survey is provided in the table below, together with its abbreviated form used to report the results. Chart 2 presents the responses of employers.

Statements about recruitment for hard-to-fill jobs

Statement	Abbreviated
The supply of qualified workers is adequate in my community	Adequate qualified workers
There are few suitable applicants for positions	Few applicants
Applicants have the required credentials and meet the educational requirements for the position	Meet educational requirements
Applicants have the technical skills required for the position	Have skills required
Applicants do not have the work experience required	Lack work experience
Applicants meet the language requirements for the position	Meet language requirements
We have difficulty competing for good employees due to our remote location and transportation issues	Remote location
We find it challenging to compete with other employers due to the nature of our work (seasonal, shift, irregular hours, job responsibilities)	Nature of job
Our wage and benefit packages are competitive with similar employers with whom we compete	Competitive wage
We have difficulty competing with other employers, due to limited promotional opportunities	Lack promotions
Employee turnover is a problem in our organization	Turnover a problem
We have difficulty evaluating credentials of foreign workers who apply for positions with us	Foreign credential challenge

Chart 2: Assessment of challenges filling hard to find jobs (Blue line signifies no challenge experienced)



The challenges in the table are listed in order of agreement, from the most agreement to the least agreement. The ranking was achieved using a numerical formula which gave a +2 to each “strongly agree” assessment, +1 for “agree,” -1 for “disagree,” -2 for “strongly disagree,” and a zero for either “don’t know” or “neutral.” The total score was divided by the total number of respondents for each item, resulting in an average score, listed in Table 9.

Table 9: Scoring for assessment of challenges filling hard-to-fill jobs (Higher score signifies lack of challenge)

Statement	Score
Meet language requirements	1.21
Few applicants	0.90
Competitive wage	0.81
Lack work experience	0.71
Remote location	0.58
Nature of job	0.42
Turnover a problem	0.14
Lack promotions	-0.03
Foreign credential challenge	-0.06
Meet Educational requirements	-0.21
Have skills required	-0.34
Adequate qualified workers	-0.81

Four statements attract particularly high levels of agreements (an average score of 1.0 would represent "agree"):

- Meeting language requirements
- Having few applications
- Believe they have a competitive wage
- Applications do not have enough experience

In the case of these first four statements, between 70% and 90% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed. Overall, the top four statements spoke to a mix of topics. Half of them spoke to qualifications of the job applicant, and the other half spoke about having not enough applicants (nearly 70% thought there aren't enough) or about the competitiveness of their business. In response to the statement that "there is an adequate supply of qualified workers in your community," 76% disagreed and 20% agreed.

The three statements that had the highest levels of disagreement were:

- Adequate qualified workers
- Have skills required
- Meet educational requirements

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 86 respondents and the percentage frequency of use for each recruitment method is listed in Table 10.

Table 10: Frequency of use of recruitment methods (Number of respondents: 2017 = 86, 2016 = 65)

Recruitment Method	2017 Frequency Of Use	2016 Frequency Of Use
Word of Mouth / Personal Contacts / Referrals / Informal Networks	93%	81%
Online Job Boards / Postings	70%	68%
Company's Own Website	55%	52%
Unsolicited Resumes	53%	36%
Newspaper Ads	48%	42%
On-Site Job Signs or Posters	45%	37%
Government Employment Centres or Websites	40%	29%
Non-Government or Community Employment Service Centres/Websites	40%	16%
Trade or Professional Association Publications	22%	3%
Job Fairs	19%	8%
On-site Recruitment At Schools, Colleges, or Universities	19%	16%
Executive Search Companies or Temporary Help Agencies	9%	10%

The most used recruitment method in this survey by a substantial margin was word of mouth (93%), followed by online job boards (70%) and company's own website (55%). 71 respondents (83%) used three or more methods. The top three methods haven't changed since last year, and apart of minor shuffles in the order, the ranking by frequency of use hasn't changed much. There have, however, been a few notable changes, including the 12% increase in the use of word of mouth, and the 19% increase (from 3%) in the use of trade or professional association publications.

Which of the following geographic areas were targeted for recruitment?

Respondents were asked to indicate the areas their recruitment efforts targeted. Table 11 lists the percentage of employers selecting each geography and the frequency of search in that geography.

Table 11: Geographic target areas for job recruitment activities) (Number of respondents: N=86)

2017	Within the Kenora and Rainy River Districts	Within the Province	Within Canada	Internationally
Regularly	90%	35%	21%	3%
Sometimes	8%	42%	20%	12%
Never	2%	23%	59%	85%

Most of the recruitment effort of employers is focused locally, with around one-third of employers extending their recruitment efforts across the province. Slightly less recruitment extends to Canada, and almost no recruitment extends Internationally. What may be surprising is that 2% of the respondents who replied claimed they do not recruit within the Kenora and Rainy River Districts.

Did you receive any assistance from an employment program or service to assist with your requirement or hiring activities?

Last year, the question asked if employers received any assistance from a free employment service agency *representing one of the following groups when recruiting for these occupations*, and then listed a number of demographic categories. However, this year the question asks for a yes or no answer to using employment services when hiring at all. Of the respondents, 26% said they received such assistance and 6% were uncertain if they had. Last year, 18% indicated they had received such services.

Do you plan on hiring anyone over the next 12 months? In what employment categories? Which occupations are forecast to be in demand? What is the reason for the job opening?

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of respondents said they plan to hire over the next 12 months, which is only slightly down from last year's figure (67%). Table 12 provides the breakdown of the number of projected hires by type of employment and compares the figures to the reported hires undertaken in 2017.

Table 12: Number of projected hires for the coming year, compared to reported hires in past year, by employment categories

	Full-time	Part-time	Contract	Seasonal	TOTAL
Projected	147	149	9	138	452
Past year	271	187	12	137	612

The projected hires are lower than last year's hires in the full-time and part-time positions (they are spot on for the contract and seasonal hires). It may be that hiring intentions are lower or that employers are simply displaying caution regarding what their hiring intentions might be possible due to the increase in minimum wages.

Employers were further asked to name the top three occupations for which they planned to hire. Over 125 occupations were named. Once the duplications are reduced, there were still around 80 different occupations named, spanning different skill levels (from housekeeping and general labourer to engineer and financial advisor) and numerous industries. Occupations that were cited several times by different employers included cashiers, cooks, front desk and receptionists, and labourers.

Reasons for job openings

Employers were questioned about the reason for their forecasted hiring – the question was not in relation to a specific hire, but generally, why they might hire. Table 13 lists the number and percentage of employers who agreed with the suggested reason for a job opening.

Table 13: Reasons for expected hires (N= 74 to 78)

	Retirements	Expansion/ Restructuring	Technological Change	Other
Number	12	38	6	18
Percent	16%	49%	8%	23%

For all occupations, the main reason for the hiring was for the purpose of expansion or restructuring. Among the other options provided, six mentioned that the staff were seasonal, and another five said they were hiring to deal with turnover and/or unreliable staff.

What is the minimum level of education required for new hires in the various occupational categories?

Employers were asked to list their preference of level of educational attainment for new hires. The survey did not distinguish between different types of occupations. Employers often indicated more than one level of educational attainment, so that the percentage distribution of their responses adds up to more than 100%.

Since last year's question focused on minimum requirements, it is hard to compare the two sets of data. However, the majority of respondents this year said that having a high school diploma was very important (67%) as opposed to the rest of the categories. Following having a high school diploma, the number of respondents who said that having some postsecondary (28%) or having a trade certificate (18%) was very important dropped considerably. Employers were ambivalent about college diplomas being important, where almost equal proportions felt it was somewhat important and not important at all. On the other hand, two-thirds felt that an undergraduate degree was not at all important.

Table 14: Preferred degree of educational attainment for new hires (N=82)

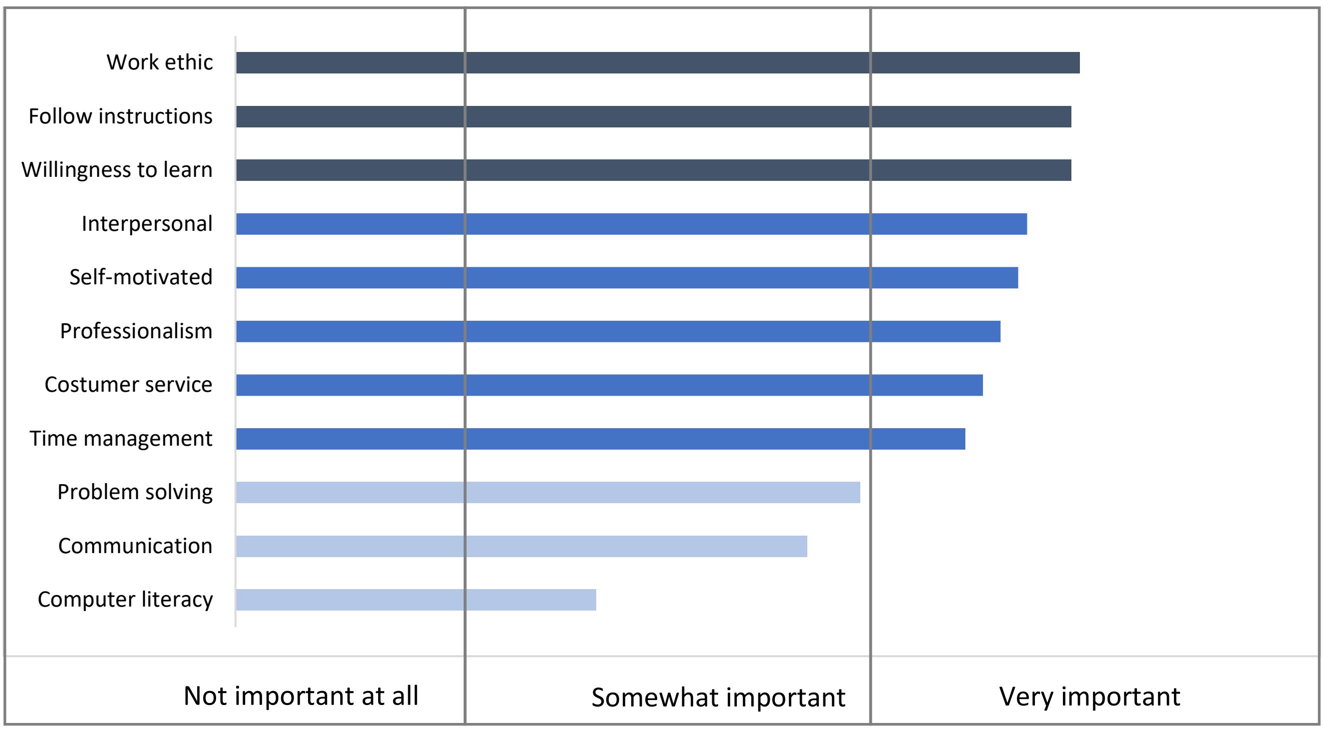
Preference	High School Diploma	Some Postsecondary	Trade Certificate	College Diploma	Undergraduate Degree	Professional Accreditation or Graduate Degree
Very Important	67%	28%	18%	13%	12%	8%
Somewhat important	23%	37%	21%	40%	21%	8%
Not important at all	10%	35%	61%	46%	67%	34%

Competencies expected of employees

Employers were asked to rate the importance of each of the following competencies for their employees (the competencies are provided in their full form and then the abbreviated form used in the chart).

Competency	Abbreviated
Technical	Technical
Analytical/Research	Analytical
Communication (Both Oral and Written)	Communication
Customer Service	Customer Service
Teamwork/Interpersonal	Interpersonal
Work Ethic, Dedication, Dependability	Work Ethic
Computer Literacy	Computer Literacy
Time Management/Organizational	Time Management
Problem Solving, Reasoning, Creativity	Problem Solving
Self-Motivated/Ability To Work With Little or no Supervision	Self-Motivated
Professionalism	Professionalism
Willingness To Learn	Willingness To Learn
Ability To Follow Instructions	Follow Instructions

Chart 3: Rating of competencies



Employers were asked to assess each competency according to its level of importance, with each response assigned a score, as follows:

Very important	2
Somewhat important	1
Not at all important	0

The addition of all the scores for each competency, divided by the number of responses, produced an average score that is illustrated in Chart 3.

The three most important competencies (scoring closer to very important than to somewhat important) were:

- Work ethic
- Follow Instructions
- Willingness to learn

The three lowest ranking competencies shown were:

- Problem Solving
- Communication
- Computer literacy

It should be noted that two categories, Analytical skills and Technical skills, did not make it onto the chart because their percentage score was negative (too few respondents selected "Very important" or "Somewhat important"). This should speak to how little employers cared about these skills. Similarly, computer literacy scored very low. Instead, soft skills and team skills appear in the top five.

Soft Skills and Team Skills appear in the top five competencies expected of employees.

Training for incumbent workers

Employers were asked whether they were able to provide or support some form of ongoing training and education opportunities for their employees over the last year. Nearly nine out of ten (87%) said they supplied on the job training, and over one half (59%) offered educational programs delivered by third parties. Just over half (52%) said they provided upgrading programs in-house.

Respondents were further asked in what specific ways they supported training or education for their employees. Table 15 identifies the percentage of employers who provided each of the following supports. The figures add to more than 100% because some employers identified more than one support – in fact, more than three-quarters (83%) of employers provided more than one support. Table 15 also lists the percentage breakdown for responses to this question from last year's survey.

Table 15: Percent of employers providing supports
(Number of respondents: 2017 – 81, 2016 - 56)

	2017	2016
Supply information on opportunities available	74%	---
Supply information on career advancement	---	34%
Fund it (fully or partially)	70%	79%
Offer flexibility in work schedule	70%	50%
Using government hiring and training incentives	25%	14%
Other	14%	5%

The most used method of providing training support for employees was supplying information on opportunities available. Last year the question had different wording ("supply information on career advancement"), and the broad scope of the question may explain the higher scoring. Employers also offered relatively 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 limited reliance on government hiring and training incentives.

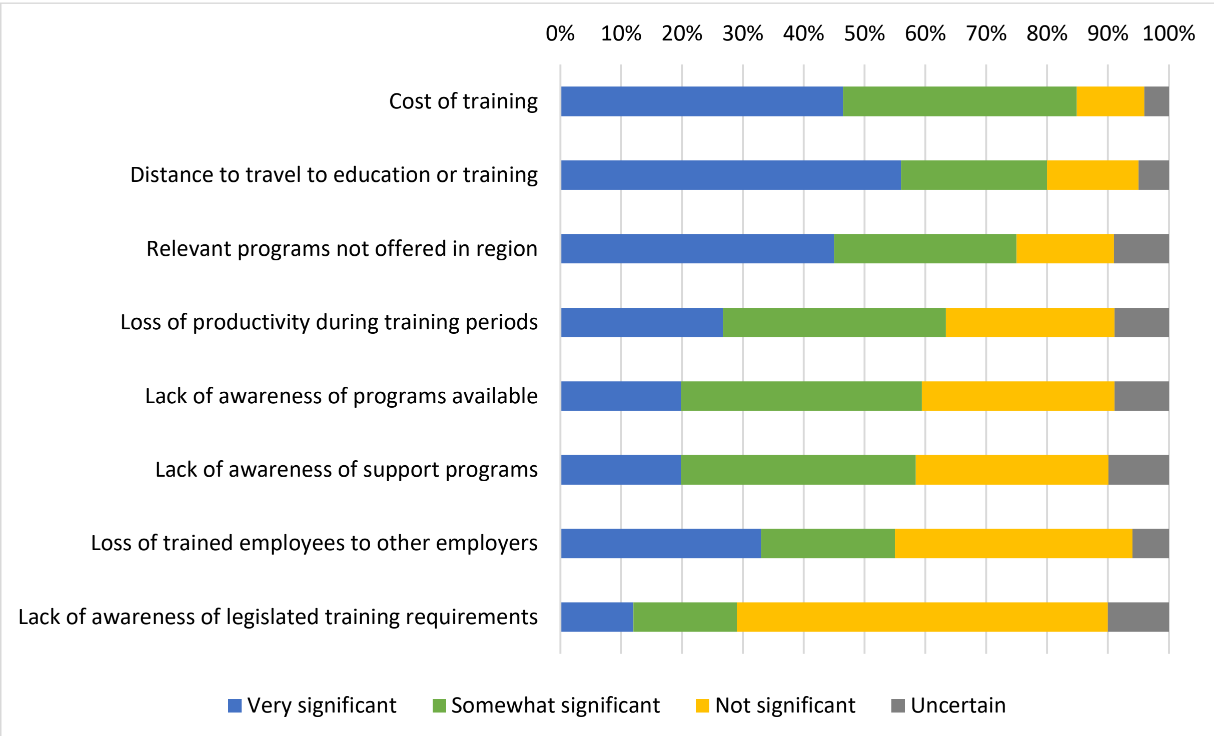
Table 16 shows the use of common sources of training and education for employees. Not surprisingly, on-the-job training ranked the highest, where almost every respondent (95%) said that they rely on it as a source of training and education (the remainder said they were uncertain). Next, 82% of respondents relied on peer to peer training. In the middle of the pack was industry and professional association programs and distance/online education, the use of university was ranked the lowest, at 18%.

Table 16: Commonly used sources of training and education for employees

	2017	2016
On the job training	100%	78%
Peer-to-Peer training	82%	45%
Industry and Professional association programs	59%	52%
Distance/Online education	59%	40%
College (including continuing studies)	33%	15%
University	18%	8%

Chart 4 provides an overview of the significance of obstacles to education and training, as ranked by respondents.

Chart 4: Significance of obstacles to providing or supporting training and education



The top three obstacles to providing and supporting education and training are:

- Cost of training (46% very significant, 39% somewhat significant)
- Distance to travel to education or training (56% very significant, 24% somewhat significant)
- Relevant programs not offered in region (45% very significant, 30% somewhat significant)

Obstacles that related to practicalities (cost or availability of training) were ranked higher than issues related to awareness of programs, of supports for those programs or of legislative requirements.

Do you provide any workplace-relevant training to students and future workers?

In terms of providing any workplace-relevant training to students, three-quarters (52%) of respondents said they did not offer any program, slightly lower than the 58% last year. Of the remaining, the type of training and whether it was paid or unpaid varied, as Table 17 illustrates. The percentages for Table 17 are calculated on the basis of all employers who answered this question, both those providing such an experience and those not.

Table 17: Percentage of employers providing workplace experience opportunities (N=82)

	Paid Co-Op	Unpaid Co-Op	Paid Internship	Unpaid Internship	Apprentice	No Programs Offered
High school student	13%	23%	0%	0%	2%	61%
College student	7%	5%	5%	0%	4%	79%
University student	6%	2%	6%	0%	1%	84%

By far, the most common form of work experience offered is through unpaid co-op placements for high school students. Co-op placements for college and university students tend to favour paid positions, while in the case of internships, all positions are paid.

Does your business/organization have a succession plan in place?

Slightly under half (45%) of respondents were certain that their firm had a succession plan; 38% said no and the other 17% were uncertain.

What do you see as the main opportunities for your business/organization over the next five years?

Respondents were given up to four answers to this question, and in total 150 entries were written in. 43% of the responses cited **GROWTH or EXPANSION**, which included either geographic expansion, additional product lines or simply more customers. Other themes that had a handful of mentions included the impact of technological change, retirements, partnerships and structural changes to the business.

What do you see as the main challenges for your business/organization over the next five years?

In the same way as the previous question, respondents were given up to four answers to this question, and 180 challenges were listed. Just slightly less than a third of these (28%) had to do with staff, mostly with **FINDING** staff or **SKILLED WORKERS**, but also concerns regarding **COMMITMENT TO WORK**. Another 15% cited costs, from concerns over raising the minimum wage to the price of electricity, the price of gas, freight costs and so on.

Thank you very much.
We hope that you enjoyed reading our report.

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