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SURVEY

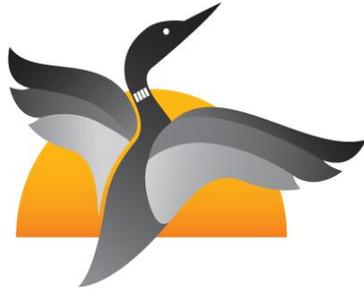


2017 employerone SURVEY RESULTS

DISTRICTS OF SUDBURY & MANITOULIN

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EMPLOYER ONE SURVEY 2017

Sudbury & Manitoulin Districts RESULTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2017 EMPLOYERONE SURVEY RESULTS

According to Canadian Business Counts data from Statistics Canada (June 2017) for Greater Sudbury and the Districts of Sudbury and Manitoulin, the area boasts 13,588 businesses; however, upon closer examination, 7,657 of those businesses (or 60%) have no employees. This means that they are either run by a sole proprietor (self-employed) or are part of a group of businesses that are run by another business. Additionally, another 2,351 businesses have 1-4 employees which means that for the entire area, 70% of all businesses fit into Statistics Canada's definition of *micro-enterprises*, a newer term that is being used to quantify these small and/or "no-employee" businesses.

As a result, trying to reach all businesses (or an appropriate sample size) to better understand the workforce needs of local employers is a daunting, if not impossible task. While some industries, such as forestry, mining, and manufacturing, have conducted industry-specific research, there is no good mechanism to gather information directly from employers about current and emerging workforce issues. While limited labour market information is available through various sources such as Statistics Canada, job vacancy postings, key stakeholder consultations and other labour market research that Workforce Planning for Sudbury & Manitoulin (WPSM) is engaged in, trying to identify and pinpoint the diverse needs of employers regarding their workforce is challenging to say the least.

The best that we can do is try to reach out to as many employers as possible and hear from those who are willing to share information about their workforce. This of course is a significant limitation of the annual employerone survey that WPSM has been conducting over the last four years as part of its mandate with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD). Even with this significant research limitation, WPSM has been successful in hearing from over 700 employers over the past four years. While not all have completed the entire survey, we have been able to gather bits and pieces of information to help us better understand the workforce needs of those who have responded.

While the number and business size of respondents and industries they represent has varied, year after year, there have been some striking similarities regarding turnover rates, recruitment methods and challenges, top competencies that employers are looking for and plans to hire for the next 12 months. However, the 2017 employerone survey results have also highlighted some subtle differences such as increases in turnover rates due to retirements and employees quitting and decreases in those who provide experiential learning opportunities or training for students.

Again, we want to express caution, as the data that is being collected is only a snapshot of those employers who are willing to complete the survey. To say that this represents all employers would be a misstatement. What about the employers we have not been able to reach, or those who do not want to complete the survey? What could they tell us? and would it be different than what our small sample size is saying?

The only thing we can say with any degree of confidence is that surveys, such as *employerone* do help us to better understand the workforce needs of some employers across various industries. When this is combined with other data sources such as those noted above, it provides yet another interesting piece of an enormously complex picture regarding the workforce needs of local employers.

INTRODUCTION

As noted in previous reports, good labour market information (LMI) is essential to a wide variety of workforce and employment stakeholders. Employment Ontario and other employment services use LMI to identify in-demand job skills and training to assist those looking for work. The education system uses it to guide programs and identify career options for students. Postsecondary institutions rely on LMI to identify specialized training for both highly skilled professional and skilled trades occupations. Others

such as those in local government and economic development use it to support strategic planning and, in some cases, allocation of resources.

Digging for good LMI can be challenging. While WPSM uses traditional sources of LMI (such as Statistics Canada and Census data), other credible reports and local consultations, further research is often required to supplement what is available. As well, as noted, some industries are collecting their own LMI to help identify current and future workforce challenges specific to their industry. Such LMI is not as readily available, nor does it apply to the needs and challenges being faced by all employers in all industry sectors. The other challenge, as always, is engaging employers to answer the survey.

Since 2014, workforce planning boards across the north and elsewhere in Ontario have been conducting the employeronone survey. Each year the survey instrument has undergone slight modifications and refinement. Although it is difficult to do direct comparisons to previous years given these changes, many questions remain the same and continue to be related to: demographics of the workforce; separations; current and projected hiring; recruitment strategies/challenges; perspective on candidate skills, education, and training; top competencies required; training provided; and workforce challenges over the last twelve months.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

OUTREACH STRATEGY and SELECTION PROCESS: Regardless of size, industry or location, all businesses in Greater Sudbury and the Districts of Sudbury and Manitoulin that WPSM connects with are added to our business directory. Various strategies have been used to reach out to these businesses about the survey such as: business-targeted and personalized emails; posting a link to the survey on the WPSM website and on other employer-related websites; media releases; employer site visits; use of other business association networks to promote the survey; and disseminating survey information at events that employers attend.

FINDINGS

LIMITATIONS: Anecdotally, we still hear that some employers are expressing concern about: completing the same survey year after year; the repetitiveness of the questions; the annual nature of the survey; and the time required to complete the survey. We acknowledge and respect that for private business, time means money. This is in part why we have shortened the survey.

The employeronone survey has been modified and shortened over the last four years of implementation, and we recognize that this limits our ability to compare survey results across the years, and further limits our ability to identify significant trends. Interestingly however, although specific questions have changed and have been modified to tease out relevant information, each year, the results have been rather consistent.

One last point re: limitations. From a research perspective our approach has been broad-brush; in other words, since it is so difficult to get employers to respond, there is no selection process as we take information from any employer who is willing to provide it regardless of size or industry sector.

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS: For the 2017 survey, a variable number of respondents answered each question. In total, 110 employers started the survey, and there was an average of 77 responses per question. In 31% of the responses, the survey was completed by the business owner, in 26% of the cases by the supervisor or manager, in 10% by the HR person, and 33% of the time by “other.” 42% of the respondents listed their main business location as Greater Sudbury, 39% as the Manitoulin District and 21% as the Sudbury District.

Respondents represented a range of industries as seen in Table 1. The figures are shown as percentages by industry and these percentage distributions are compared with the distribution of

businesses in Manitoulin, Sudbury, and Greater Sudbury in June 2017. The colour-coding for survey results highlights where the survey percentage share is much greater (green) or much lower (red) than the actual distribution.

TABLE 1: NUMBER AND PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS BY INDUSTRY			
INDUSTRY	SURVEY RESPONDENTS		ACTUAL
	NUMBER	PERCENT	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	2	1.9%	1.6%
Mining, Quarrying and Oil and Gas Extraction	5	4.7%	0.7%
Utilities	0	0.0%	0.2%
Construction	9	8.3%	12.5%
Manufacturing	7	6.5%	3.9%
Wholesale Trade	2	1.9%	4.8%
Retail Trade	13	12.0%	15.7%
Transportation and Warehousing	1	0.9%	3.2%
Information and Cultural Industries	4	3.7%	1.0%
Finance and Insurance	5	4.6%	3.5%
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	1	0.9%	4.8%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	7	6.5%	7.6%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	0.0%	0.4%
Administration and Support, Waste Mgmt	1	0.9%	4.0%
Educational Services		--	1.3%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	12	11.1%	13.2%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	1	0.9%	2.0%
Accommodation and Food Services	5	4.6%	9.2%
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	3	2.8%	9.6%
Public Administration	13	12.0%	0.8%
Other	17	15.7%	--
TOTAL	106	100.0%	100.0%

Unfortunately, revisions made to the 2017 employerone survey resulted in an inadvertent omission for *Educational Services*, so this particular sector was not registered. Otherwise, the over-representation in the survey is among establishments in *Public Administration*; and *Mining, Quarrying and Oil and Gas Extraction*; and under-representation among firms in *Construction*; *Real Estate and Rental and Leasing*; *Accommodation and Food Services*; and *Other Services*. Nevertheless, in many instances the survey distribution is quite close to the actual distribution of firms by industry in the study area. (There was an option of *Other* also provided, and a rather high 15.7%, selected this option.)

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 data, for which the latest figures are June 2017.

TABLE 2: PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES TO ACTUAL PERCENTAGE				
	1-4 EMPLOYEES	5-19 EMPLOYEES	20-99 EMPLOYEES	100+ EMPLOYEES
SURVEY	14%	39%	27%	21%
ACTUAL	48%	36%	15%	2%

Overall, respondents represented 10,691 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 Manitoulin, Sudbury and Greater Sudbury is 90,795. Thus, the number of jobs represented by the employers participating in the survey accounts for around 12% of the employment in the local area. The number of employees represented in each survey year has fluctuated.

According to respondents, around 63% of these jobs were full-time, 22% were part-time, and 5% were contract jobs. Some 10% of jobs were seasonal, more than the number of contract jobs. It is important to note that while it is not possible to know what impact the increase in minimum wage will have on employment, experts believe it will likely impact negatively on the availability of part-time jobs. This is something we will need to keep an eye on.

More than half of respondents said that less than 10% of their jobs were filled by youth under the age of 25 and another 25% of respondents said that youth filled 10-25% of their jobs. Only 7% 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. Adults between these ages filled 26-50% of jobs 42% of the time, and they filled more than 50% of jobs 38% of the time. Respondents said that females fill more than 50% of jobs 47% of the time, and almost a quarter of the time they filled somewhere between 26 and 50% of the time. 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 20% of the time.

SEPARATIONS OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS: Of the 92 respondents who answered this question, 66% said they experienced a separation in the last year. Just under 60 of these respondents provided data. In total, these employers represented 8,435 jobs, around 80% of the jobs represented in this survey. In total, they reported 901 separations, resulting in an estimated annual turnover rate of 10.7%. Last year, the estimated turnover rate was 9.3%.

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF SEPARATIONS BY TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT AND REASON							
EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY	quit	retirement	temporary lay-off	permanent lay-off	dismissal	TOTAL #	TOTAL %
Full time	136	125	19	33	59	372	41%
Part time	107	6	4	6	13	136	15%
Contract	2	0	0	1	0	3	0%
Seasonal	104	2	158	0	11	275	31%
Other	37	2	1	75	0	115	13%
TOTAL #	386	135	182	115	83	901	100%
TOTAL %	43%	15%	20%	13%	9%	100%	

Most separations involve full-time jobs (41%), which could be expected because most jobs are full-time (63%). The largest category for separations was **quits** (43%), followed by **temporary lay-offs** (20%) and **retirement** (15%). The single largest individual category of separations involved **temporary lay-offs** of seasonal staff (18%).

Interestingly, however, in the 2016 employerone survey, **quits** represented only 27% of all separations; in 2015, **quits** represented almost 50% of all separations, and in 2014, **quits** represented 60%. In all four survey periods (2014 – 2017), it is not known why people quit their job. Did the employee leave for a better job? Did they return to school? Were they unhappy in their current job? Did they relocate?

HIRING OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS: The number of hires slightly outpaced the number of separations, but in some categories the reverse pattern was seen. The noticeable differences were among the part-time and seasonal categories. For the part-time category, there were far more hires,

but in the seasonal category there were more than twice as many separations which is quite understandable given the nature of their work status.

TABLE 4: TOTAL NUMBER OF HIRES OVER LAST 12 MONTHS COMPARED TO TOTAL NUMBER OF SEPARATIONS						
HIRING	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME	CONTRACT	SEASONAL	OTHER	TOTAL
Number	446	332	9	135	216	1,138
Percent	39%	29%	1%	12%	19%	
SEPARATIONS	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME	CONTRACT	SEASONAL	OTHER	TOTAL
Number	372	136	3	275	115	901
Percent	41%	15%	0%	31%	13%	

Table 4 (above) lists the number of hires over the previous 12 months by type of employment and compares it to the number of separations during the same period.

In most cases, employers reported both hiring and separation activity in the same year as illustrated in Table 5. Only 10% of respondents indicated that they had neither a hire nor a separation in the previous year.

TABLE 5: PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYERS REPORTING HIRING/SEPARATIONS		
% REPORTING	SEPARATIONS	HIRING
48%	yes	yes
16%	no	yes
1%	yes	no
10%	no	no
0%	--	yes

HIRING - HIGH FREQUENCY OCCUPATIONS AND HIRING CHALLENGES:

TABLE 6: LARGEST NUMBER OF HIRINGS AMONG HIGH FREQUENCY HIRING OCCUPATIONS (20 or more hirings)	
OCCUPATION	NUMBER
part-time faculty and support staff	88
labourer	66
registered nurse	54
trades and safety	50
carpenter	35
ironworker	30
full-time support staff	29
welder/fabricator	25
registered practical nurse	24
summer student	22
housekeeping	21
part-time support worker	20
server	20

Just over 105 different occupations were named as high-frequency hiring occupations, but in almost 60% of the cases, the number of hires was only one or two. Table 6 lists thirteen occupations that experienced at least 20 new hires. These thirteen occupations accounted for 60% of the 806 high-frequency new hires. Please note: the first occupation listed actually includes two occupations, but there is no way to divide the number further, as that is how the information was presented in the survey.

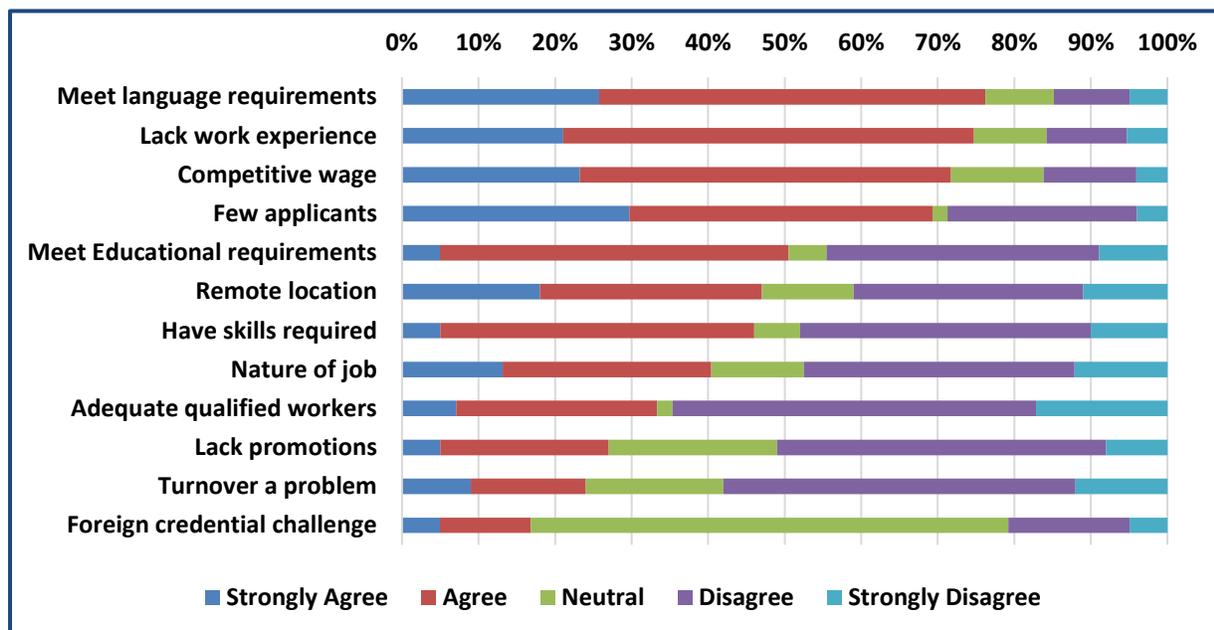
In terms of hiring challenges, employers were further asked whether any of these high frequency hires were hard to fill. Their responses showed that most, or 61 respondents, found positions hard to fill.

Employers were also asked whether or not they experienced difficulties in finding qualified candidates according to categories

of occupations. The most difficulty in finding suitable candidates was expressed in relation to technical positions, at 82%, while the least difficulty was expressed for sales and clerical positions (33%), labourers (39%) and production workers (40%).

Employers were then asked to list their level of agreement/disagreement with a number of statements related to recruitment for hard-to-fill jobs as illustrated in Chart 1 (please note, the full statement as it appeared in the actual survey is located in appendix 1).

CHART 1: ASSESSMENT OF CHALLENGES FILLING HARD-TO-FILL JOBS



See appendix 1 for a description of each of these statement categories

The following statements attract particularly **high levels of agreement** amongst respondents:

- Applicants *meet the language requirements* for the position;
- Applicants *lack work experience* required;
- Our *wage and benefit packages are competitive* with similar employers with whom we compete; and
- There are *few suitable applicants* for positions.

In the case of these first four statements, between roughly 70% and 75% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agree. Overall, the top four statements speak to a mix of topics. Half of them speak to qualifications of the job applicant, and the other half speak 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, 65% disagreed and only 33% agreed.

These three statements had **high levels of disagreement** amongst respondents:

- The *supply of qualified workers is adequate* in my community;
- Employee *turnover is a problem* in our organization; and
- We have difficulty competing with other employers, due to *limited promotional opportunities*.

RECRUITMENT METHODS: Respondents were asked to indicate what mechanisms they used to recruit job candidates for any hiring. Answers were provided by 75 respondents and the frequency of use for each recruitment method is listed in Table 7 together with the percentage frequency for that method registered in last year's survey.

The top three recruitment methods in this survey have been the same for four years now, and *word-of-mouth* continues to occupy the top spot, followed by the more hi-tech approaches of *online job boards* and the *company's own website*. *Job fairs* came in near the bottom once again. It is noteworthy that *job fairs* continue to come in as one of the recruitment methods least used, however it is not clear if this means that employer respondents don't host job fairs, or they don't participate in job fairs organized

by others (such as employment services, post secondary institutions and/or others). Also, of note is that more than two-thirds of employers (68%) used three or more methods when it comes to recruiting.

Employers were also asked if they received any assistance from a free employment service agency. For this survey period, 24% said they did but the type of assistance received was not defined.

TABLE 7: FREQUENCY OF USE FOR EACH RECRUITMENT METHOD (in 2017, n=75 respondents; in 2016, n=74 respondents)		
RECRUITMENT METHOD	% FREQUENCY OF USE	
	2017	2016
word of mouth / personal contacts / referrals / informal networks	89%	77%
online job boards / postings	78%	66%
company's own website	73%	51%
on-site recruitment at schools, colleges, or universities	59%	20%
newspaper ads	57%	45%
government employment centres or websites	57%	42%
unsolicited resumes	54%	39%
non-government or community employment service centres/websites	52%	20%
on-site job signs or posters	41%	27%
trade or professional association publications	35%	15%
job fairs	32%	8%
executive search companies or temporary help agencies	18%	10%

RECRUITMENT AREAS AND ASSISTANCE: Respondents were asked to indicate the areas their recruitment efforts targeted. Table 8 lists the percentage of employers selecting each option based on both the 2017 and 2016 employer surveys.

Most of the recruitment efforts of employers is focussed on Sudbury/Manitoulin, with a fair amount of outreach extending to the province as a whole. Very little recruitment extends across Canada or internationally. Perhaps what is surprising, is that 7% of the respondents who replied (only 5 employers) claimed that they do not recruit within Sudbury/Manitoulin, but there was no mechanism to find out why. Note: percentages add up to more than 100% because some employers listed more than one option.

TABLE 8: GEOGRAPHIC AREAS FOR JOB RECRUITMENT (2017 & 2016)				
	SUDBURY/ MANITOULIN	WITHIN ONTARIO	WITHIN CANADA	INTERNATIONALLY
REGULARLY	90%	43%	11%	1%
SOMETIMES	6%	38%	34%	13%
NEVER	4%	19%	55%	86%

HIRING PLANS FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS: Just over half (59%) of employers indicated that they planned on hiring over the next 12 months, slightly below the number who indicated this in the 2016 survey (67%) and the 2015 survey (70%). However, this year a further option beyond yes or no was included, that of *uncertain* and another 22% had picked that response.

Table 9 provides the breakdown of the number of projected hires by type of employment and compares the figures to the reported hires undertaken in the previous 12 months. The projected full-time hires for the coming year are more than double the actual number of hires from the previous year, while

part-time hires almost precisely match. This would represent an optimistic hiring outlook. The contract projections appear unreasonably low based on past year hiring practices.

TABLE 9: NUMBER OF PROJECTED HIRES FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS COMPARED TO REPORTED PAST YEAR HIRES BY EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY					
	FULL TIME	PART TIME	CONTRACT*	SEASONAL	TOTAL
PROJECTED HIRES*	513	218	6	163	1,004
PAST YEAR HIRES	224	223	588	52	1,087

*does not include the one employer who projected 300 contract hires over the next 12 months

Employers were further asked to name the top three occupations they planned to hire for. Over 66 occupations were named, and once the duplications were reduced, around 60 different occupations, spanning different skill levels (from housekeeping and general labourer to engineer and registered nurse) and numerous industries were named. Occupations that were cited several times by different employers included the above as well as summer students, waitresses, servers, and support workers.

REASON FOR EXPECTED HIRING:

Employers were asked about the reason for their forecasted hiring – the question was not in relation to a specific hire, but generally, why they might hire. The following pie chart illustrates employer responses. Several employers chose more than one reason, so the percentage distribution of the responses adds up to more than 100%. For all occupations, the main reason for hiring was for *expansion/restructuring* purposes. This was followed by *other* and *retirement*.



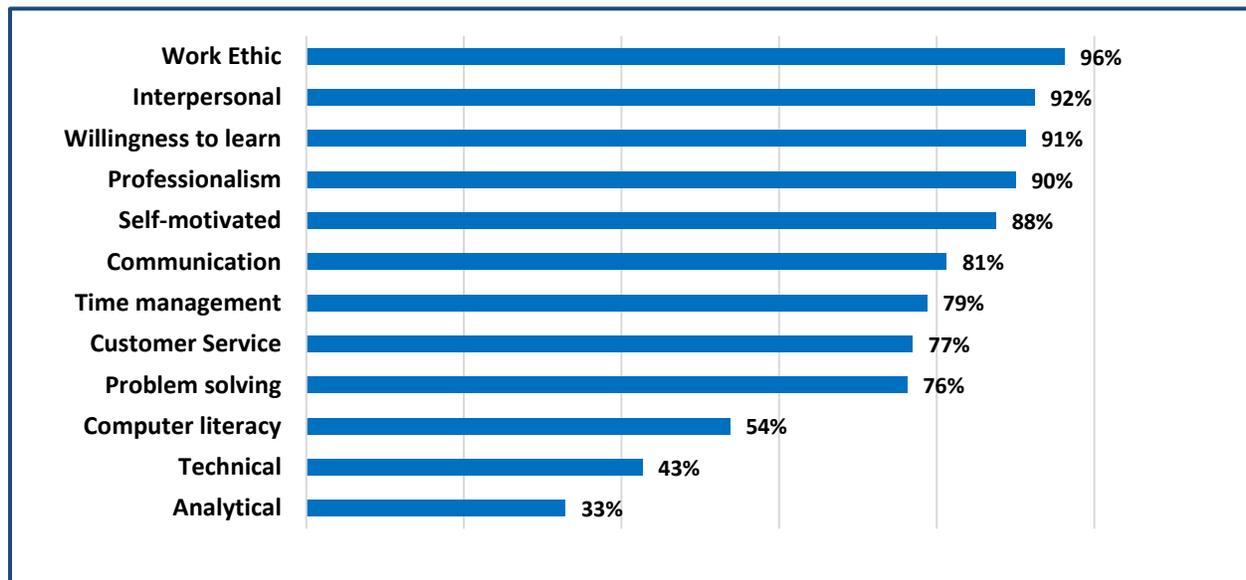
LEVEL OF EDUCATION – NEW HIRES: Employers were asked to list what level of education they preferred for new hires. The survey did not distinguish between different types of occupations. Employers often indicated more than one level of educational attainment, so that the percentage distribution of their 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, while more respondents last year listed having a college degree as an important minimum requirement, far more respondents this year listed having a *high school diploma* as *very important* (76%) compared to the other categories. Having *some post-secondary* (49%) and having a *college diploma* (43%) came second and third. The categories that had the highest number of *not important at all* were *trade certificates* (37%), *undergraduate degree* (32%), and *professional accreditation or graduate degree* (31%).

TABLE 10: MINIMUM EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW HIRES						
PREFERENCE	HIGH SCHOOL	SOME POST SECONDARY	TRADE CERTIFICATE	COLLEGE DIPLOMA	UNDERGRAD DEGREE	PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION OR GRADUATE DEGREE
Very important	76%	49%	34%	43%	28%	25%
Somewhat important	18%	42%	29%	42%	41%	44%
Not important at all	6%	9%	37%	14%	32%	31%

TOP COMPETENCIES: Employer respondents were asked to rate the importance of each of the following competencies for their employees and assess each competency according to its level of importance. Each response was assigned a score as follows: 4 = extremely important; 3 = very important; 2 = moderately important; 1 = slightly important and 0 = not important at all. The scores for each competency was added, and then divided by the number of responses to produce an average score that is illustrated below in Chart 2.

CHART 2: RATING OF COMPETENCIES



The three **most important competencies** (very important and extremely important) were:

- *work ethic, dedication, dependability;*
- *teamwork/interpersonal; and*
- *willingness to learn.*

The three **lowest ranking competencies** (moderately important and slightly important) were:

- *analytical/research;*
- *technical; and*
- *computer literacy.*

It is noteworthy that among these 12 competencies, the one that by definition would be considered a hard skill (*technical*) ranks second-to-last on the scoring, compared to what are otherwise primarily soft skills. Furthermore, the ranking of the top three is almost exactly identical to last year’s survey, except that *willingness to learn* and *teamwork/interpersonal* have exchanged positions.

TRAINING/EDUCATION: 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. Nine out of ten (90%) said they provided on-the-job training, and 71% said they offered educational programs delivered by third parties. Just over half (54%) said they provided opportunities to upgrade skills or knowledge in-house.

Respondents were further asked in what specific ways they supported training or education for their employees. Table 11 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, three quarters (75%) of employers provided more than one support. Table 11 also lists the percentage breakdown for responses to this question from the previous two surveys.

TABLE 11: PERCENT OF EMPLOYERS PROVIDING TRAINING/EDUCATION SUPPORTS			
METHOD OF SUPPORT	2017	2016	2015
Fund it (fully or partially)	78%	77%	77%
Supply information on career advancement	68%	30%	25%
Offer flexibility in work schedule	61%	41%	44%
Use government hiring and training incentives	35%	24%	21%
Other	8%	17%	14%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	76	66	101

Employers offer 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. It is not clear whether employers did not use government incentives available to them, or simply did not know they existed. During other consultations with key stakeholders however, employers have told us that the forms and reporting requirements are sometimes too cumbersome and time consuming to make it worthwhile.

Employers were also asked about common sources used for training and education and obstacles they encounter. Common sources include: *on-the-job training* (97%); *peer-to-peer training* (82%); *industry and professional association programs* (76%); *distance/online education* (66%); *college – continuing education* (59%); and *university* (35%). Top 3 obstacles to training include: *cost of training* (47% very significant, 38% somewhat significant); *distance to travel to education or training* (44% very significant, 35% somewhat significant); and *relevant programs not offered in region* (33% very significant, 37% somewhat significant).

WORKPLACE TRAINING FOR STUDENTS/FUTURE WORKERS: In terms of providing workplace-relevant training to students, more than half (51-61%) said they did not offer such programs (the figure last year was lower, at 27%). Of all respondents (including those who said they did not provide any such opportunities), Table 12 provides the percentage breakdown for employers providing each type of workplace-relevant training to students (including providing none).

TABLE 12: PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYERS PROVIDING WORKPLACE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES (n = 69-72)						
	paid co-op	unpaid co-op	paid internship	unpaid internship	apprentice	none
High school student	14%	21%	4%	0%	8%	61%
College student	17%	14%	11%	9%	13%	51%
University student	16%	15%	20%	4%	6%	55%

About two out of ten employers provide an unpaid co-op placement for high school students and there is only a 50-50 chance that a university or a college co-op placement will be paid. Internships are generally more likely to be paid. Almost 50% of employers who do provide such opportunities offer more than one kind of such placement.

However, it is not clear whether or not the employer’s business is/is not conducive to student co-ops as employers were not asked this question. For example, some job sites prohibit entry by someone under the age of 18. This would then obviously exclude most high school students from participating in a paid or un-paid co-op, internship, or apprenticeship opportunity.

For those employers who did say that they offer paid internships it is unclear whether or not they use current government funding sources such as those offered by FedNor or the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) or wage incentives through Employment Ontario.

NEW SUMMARY QUESTIONS: Three additional questions were added to the 2017 employerone survey as follows:

Does your business/organization have a succession plan?

Only four in ten (41%) said they have a succession plan; 48% said no and 11% were uncertain. This has significant implications for the future of a business and opportunities for continued and/or future employment.

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, 114 entries were submitted. 43% of the responses cited growth or expansion, which included either geographic expansion, additional product lines or simply more customers. All other themes that had a handful of mentions included the impact of technological change, more tourism, more partnerships, and improving the quality of one's services and/or products.

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

Similar to the previous questions, respondents were given up to four answers to this question, and 139 challenges were identified. A third of these (34%) had to do with employees, mostly with finding suitable employees, but also concerns regarding retention and retirements. This is particularly interesting as for this survey period, the percentage of employees quitting, or retiring has doubled when compared to the results of the 2016 employerone survey. Another 12% cited government policies – everything from minimum wage and changes to employment standards to tax policy and utility rates.

SUMMARY COMMENTS

Workforce Planning for Sudbury & Manitoulin has been conducting the employerone survey for the past four years and the responses with each survey have been strikingly similar. Regardless of industry sector or size of employer, similarities exist in terms of hiring practices, recruitment areas, and top competencies that employers are looking for. The one noticeable change is the decrease in workplace experience opportunities provided by employers for students. This is of particular concern as this comes at a time when the Ontario government is championing and promoting the value of experiential learning for all students. To support this, the province has initiated the *Career Ready Fund* aimed at offering hands-on learning opportunities for college and university students and is providing funding to all school boards to hire Experiential Learning Coordinators. This raises a lot of important questions re: who will reach out to employers? how will they be engaged? will they want to participate? and how will this impact employers in Greater Sudbury, and the Sudbury and Manitoulin Districts when the majority of our employers have no employees or are self-employed?

While the 2017 employerone survey yielded few new insights, as noted, when asked about separations, the percentage of employees quitting or retiring from their job has doubled since the last survey period. Full and part-time hiring and projected hiring have remained relatively consistent with responses from last year's survey; however, employers are reporting far fewer contract hires. Several key occupation categories that employers continue to hire for include: part-time faculty (which may change given the recent strike by faculty in Ontario's community colleges); labourer; trades (carpenter, ironworkers, welder/fabricator); health-related occupations (registered nurse, registered practical nurse, personal support workers); and support staff. This should however be taken with caution as it may simply be a reflection of employers who chose to fill in the survey this past year.

One of the biggest challenges that WPSM continues to face in conducting the employerone survey is getting employers to respond. It also appears that few changes occur from year to year unless there is

an industry crisis such as a major shutdown, lay-offs, increased/decreased demand from global markets, and/or some other form of workplace disruption. One such change that might impact the results of future surveys is the change to minimum wage and employer requirements regarding shift work and personal days. Already we are hearing that Ontario alone has lost close to 60,000 part-time jobs as a result, though we have not seen the data to support/not support this statement. Undoubtedly however, this legislative change will impact industries, businesses, and communities right across the province.

Although there are a lot of insights and take-aways from the last few years of the employerone survey, it is important to point out that employers continue to clearly say something about the calibre of people they want to hire. Most employers continue to want all of the credentials (technical skills and certification) but the competencies they seem to be most concerned about are: work ethic; strong interpersonal skills; willingness to learn; professionalism; self-motivation; and strong communication and time management skills. These are all highly rated competencies.

In summary, just to reiterate, the employerone survey results are really meant to help all those involved in workforce development including economic development leads, educators, employment service providers, decision-makers, students, job seekers and others. When the results are combined with other research and labour market data, it becomes a powerful tool to better understand what is happening in industry (trends, changes, and growth/decline), and the perspectives of employers. This information provides yet another important dimension to a very complex labour market and workforce picture. We need to hear from employers. We need to hear what challenges they are experiencing, the qualities and skills that they are looking for and their willingness to work together with others to adequately train and prepare our current and future workforce.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: STATEMENTS ABOUT RECRUITMENT FOR HARD-TO-FILL JOBS

STATEMENT	ABBREVIATION
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

survey results illustrated on page 7, Chart 1