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A REPORT TO  
ALBERTA CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

## AB PERSPECTIVES SURVEY

Skills, Training, Labour Market Policy

April, 2021

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# 1

## ABOUT THE RESEARCH

## About the Research

- The ACC has engaged The Strategic Counsel, a national market research advisory firm with an office in Alberta, to develop a research program that will include surveys of Chamber members and the public at regular intervals.
- The ACC will make use of these surveys in a number of ways:
  - Use the findings to broaden and deepen the evidence the ACC and local Chambers can table to articulate the perspective of the province's business community; and
  - Make the research available to individual Chambers for their own use with local municipalities.
- This survey is the second designed to explore business needs related to their skills requirements and options for enhancing access to skills.
- Results are compared with the 2020 survey on skills needs and requirements.



- This survey was sent by ACC to members via the province's 120 local Chambers. It was fielded on the Alida platform and in all 674 individuals responded.
- The survey took on average just under 7 minutes to complete.
- The completion rate was 50% (1341 started, 674 completed).
- The Alberta Perspectives business insight community has grown to 880 active members since launching August 2020. A majority of these members, 72%, are senior leaders in their organization (CEO, partner, associate, C-suite, owner, or executive director).
- Surveying was undertaken between March 1<sup>st</sup> and March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

# 2

## KEY FINDINGS

# Key Findings

## LONG-TERM FUTURE OF ALBERTA

### **In 2021, businesses are feeling more positive about the long-term future of the province.**

- Over the year, even while remaining in a pandemic, there has been an increase of 11-points to 53% of businesses now reporting they feel positive about the long-term future of Alberta.
- Regionally, businesses in the Calgary (64%), Edmonton (59%) and Northwest (59%) areas are the most positive. The reverse is true for Mountain Parks (27%).
- Since 2020, there have been increases in positive feeling about the future in all regions except Mountain Parks.

## EASE OF HIRING PEOPLE WITH THE SKILLS THEY NEED

### **Businesses continue to report they are finding it difficult to hire people with either the entry-level or mid-level skills they need to manage their business.**

- Half (51%) of businesses report it is 'difficult' to hire people with the entry-level skills they need to manage their business. This increases to 63% when looking for people with mid-level skills. These results are similar to a year ago.
- In most (65%) cases businesses do not put a priority on new entry level hires having relevant experience, this is split between those that do not require any relevant experience (31%) or require only one year (34%).

# Key Findings

## TOP PEOPLE/TECHNICAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES NEEDED

**The people and technical skill-sets that businesses look for when hiring tend to be quite basic and straightforward.**

- The top tier people competencies that businesses look for when hiring at any level within the organization continue to be problem-solving skills, service orientation, and a commitment to quality.
- And, in the March '21 wave of research, there has been an increase in those wanting collaboration/team skills, interpersonal skills, and adaptability/resiliency – possibly in connection to the impact of the pandemic on businesses.
- Consistent with last year, for technical skills and competencies, six-in-ten (61%) look for industry-specific technical skills followed by the basic skill sets of numeracy and literacy, business acumen, and science/math skills.

## AREAS OF EXPECTED SKILLS SHORTAGES AND IMPACT ON BUSINESS

**However, while industry-specific technical skills are needed by many businesses, this is where the largest skills shortages are expected over the next three years.**

- Among businesses that already find it difficult to hire people with the entry or mid-level skills they need, the largest skills shortages over the next three years are expected for industry-specific technical skills, with four-in-ten (38%) businesses expecting shortages – an increase of 10-points compared to a year ago.

# Key Findings

## BARRIERS FOR RECRUITING SKILLS BUSINESS NEEDS

**Lack of people skills, lack of technical skills, and lack of applicants are the top cited barriers for recruiting the skills businesses need.**

- Presently, 44% of businesses cite either a lack of people skills/qualifications or technical skills/qualifications as top barriers for recruiting the skills they need. And, compared to a year ago, there has been a significant increase regarding a lack of technical skills/qualifications.
- Of note, a lack of applicants has increased to 42%, up 14-points compared to last year and occurring in all regions of Alberta.
- However, while there have been increases reported for a lack of technical skills/qualifications and a lack of applicants, recruitment methods have not changed. About half of businesses continue to rely on either employee referrals (54%) or social media tools and online networks (52%) to recruit employees and the skills they require.

## WILLINGNESS TO TRAIN NEW EMPLOYEES

**Among businesses that have found it difficult to hire people with the required entry or mid-level skills, 60% report they have undertaken training, up 9-points compared to last year.**

- That said, similar to a year ago, most businesses report limited spending on training per employee over the next year. Two-in-ten (17%) businesses continue to report no planned spending, while similar proportions plan to spend under \$500 (34%) and over \$500 (31%) per employee.

# Key Findings

## WORKING WITH POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS AND WIL

**There continues to be a high level of willingness to work with post-secondary institutions (public or private) or provide Work Integrated Learning (WIL) to recruit or acquire skilled workers.**

- Overall, 37% are either currently working with post-secondary institutions or have worked with them in the past. As well, an additional 33% would consider doing this.
- And, while 27% of businesses are either currently providing WIL opportunities or have provided them in the past, another four-in-ten (38%) would consider doing this.
- This level of willingness has remained consistent with last year's results.

## WORKING WITH CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

**There also continues to be a high level of interest in working with chambers of commerce to connect with and recruit skilled workers.**

- In all, three quarters (75%) have or are currently doing this (22%) or would consider (53%) doing this. The proportion willing to consider this is up slightly over a year ago.

# Key Findings

## INVESTING IN CAPITAL EQUIPMENT/TECHNOLOGIES

**Consistent with previous results, almost six-in-ten businesses that have had difficulty hiring people with the skills they need have either invested in capital equipment/other technologies (38%) or would consider this (19%) to overcome skills shortages.**

- A major challenge in dealing with skills shortages is that three-quarters (74%) of businesses report that there is no equipment or technology available to replace the skilled workers they require.
- Among the 16% that say it is available, the top cited barrier continues to be the upfront investment cost, although this has declined compared to a year ago. However, while investment costs may be somewhat less of an issue, access to capital may now be more of a problem; this has increased by 9% over last year.

# 3

## DETAILED FINDINGS

## LONG-TERM FUTURE OF ALBERTA

Over a year, even while remaining in a pandemic, there has been an increase of 11-points to 53% (and a 17-point increase since July 2020) of businesses now reporting they feel positive about the long-term future of Alberta.

- This more positive outlook occurred among men, increasing from 42% in March 2020 to 57% in 2021.

### VIEW ON THE LONG-TERM FUTURE OF PROVINCE

	Jul 2019	Nov 2019	March 2020	July 2020	Nov 2020	March 2021	NET Change March 2020 – March 2021
<b>TOTAL POSITIVE</b>	62%	42%	42%	36%	41%	53%	+11
Very positive	10%	6%	6%	3%	5%	8%	+2
Somewhat positive	52%	36%	37%	33%	36%	45%	+8
Somewhat negative	27%	36%	35%	43%	37%	32%	-3
Very negative	6%	18%	17%	17%	20%	12%	-5
<b>TOTAL NEGATIVE</b>	33%	54%	53%	60%	57%	44%	-9
Don't know/not sure	5%	4%	5%	3%	2%	3%	-2

Regionally, businesses in the **Calgary** (64%), **Edmonton** (59%) and **Northwest** (59%) areas are the most positive. The reverse is true for **Mountain Parks** (27%). Since 2020, there have been increases in positive feeling about the future in all regions except **Mountain Parks**.

Q1. Overall, how do you feel about the long-term future of the province?  
 Base: Total sample (Jul 2019 n=714; Nov 2019 n=1028; March 2020 n=353; March 2021 n=674)

## TOP PEOPLE/TECHNICAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES BUSINESS LOOKS FOR

The top tier people competencies that businesses look for when hiring at any level within the organization continue to be problem-solving skills, service orientation, and a commitment to quality.

- And, in March '21 there was an increase in those wanting collaboration/team skills, interpersonal skills, and adaptability/resiliency.
- Consistent with last year, for technical skills and competencies six-in-ten (61%) look for industry-specific technical skills followed by the basic skill sets of numeracy and literacy, business acumen, and science/math skills.

### TOP PEOPLE SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

	March 2020	March 2021
Problem-solving skills	60%	60%
Service orientation	56%	59%
Commitment to quality	54%	58%
Collaboration/team skills	47%	54% ↑
Interpersonal skills	45%	53% ↑
Adaptability/resiliency	36%	45% ↑
Relationship-building skills	34%	33%
Continuous learning	31%	30%
Leadership and decision-making skills	30%	30%
Personal management	16%	20%
Judgement and risk-management skills	25%	19%
Negotiation	4%	3%
We do not hire/have not hired in years	2%	2%
Don't know	-	1%

### TOP TECHNICAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

	March 2020	March 2021
Industry-specific technical skills	61%	61%
Basic numeracy and literacy	54%	51%
Basic business acumen	44%	40%
Basic science and math skills	33%	34%
Skilled trades (e.g. construction, electrical)	25%	28%
IT and data management	27%	23%
Financial/accounting skills	28%	22% ↓
Experimentation and design thinking	15%	19%
Digital content development	10%	16% ↑
Analytics and quantitative analysis	19%	15%
Software/computer programming	14%	12%
Data analysis	15%	11%
Cyber security	5%	3%
Don't know	-	8%

Women (51%↑) place more value on this skill than men (39%).

Q7. (previously Q4) Of the following, which are the top 5 **people skills and competencies** your business looks for when hiring at any level within the organization? Base: Have more than one staff (2020 n=325; 2021 n=516)

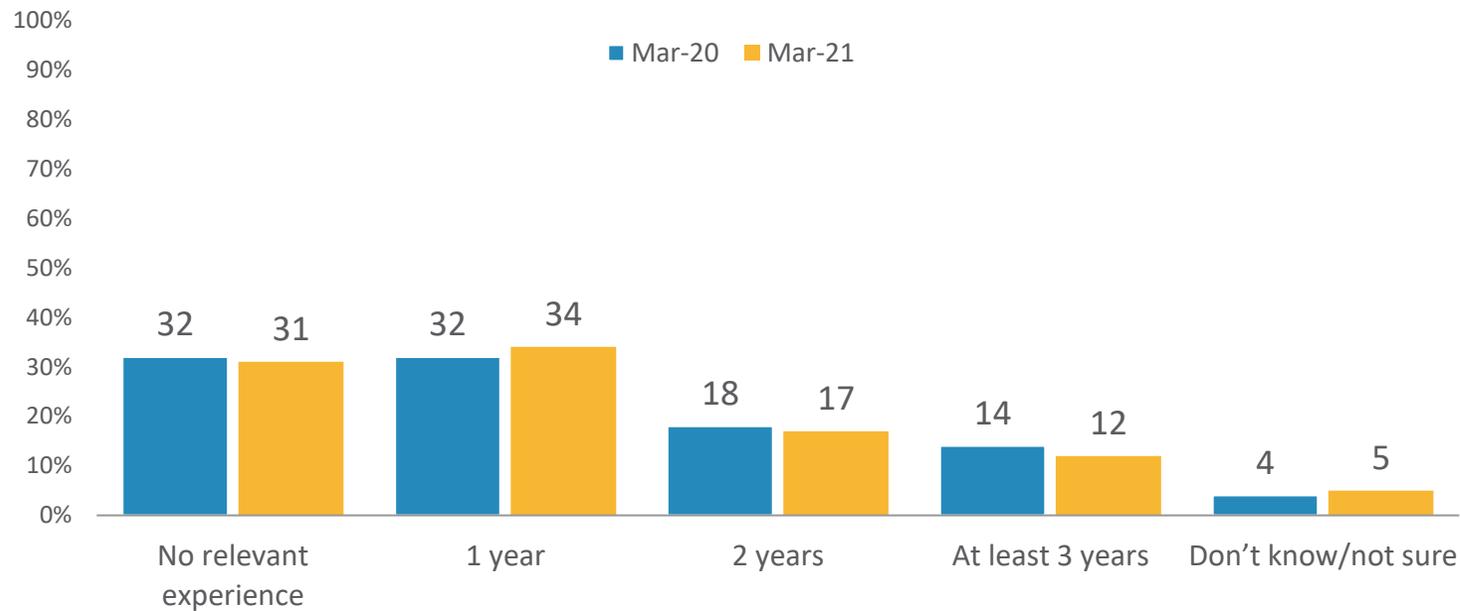
Q8. (previously Q5) Of the following, which are the top 5 **technical skills and competencies** your business looks for when hiring at any level within the organization? Base: Hire staff (2020 n=317; 2021 n=516)

## YEARS OF RELEVANT EXPERIENCE FOR ENTRY-LEVEL HIRES

Similar to previous results, about two-thirds of businesses (65%) do not put a priority on new entry level hires having relevant experience, split between those that do not require any relevant experience (31%) or require only one year (34%).

- Only one-in-ten (12%) look for entry-level hires with at least three years of experience.
- Of note, there are not any significant differences in required relevant experience by size of business.

NUMBER OF YEARS OF RELEVANT EXPERIENCE FOR ENTRY-LEVEL HIRES



NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 1-5 26%; 6-10 26%; 11-50 35%

There is a 10-point difference between **men** (37%↑) and **women** (27%) on typically not requiring relevant experience.

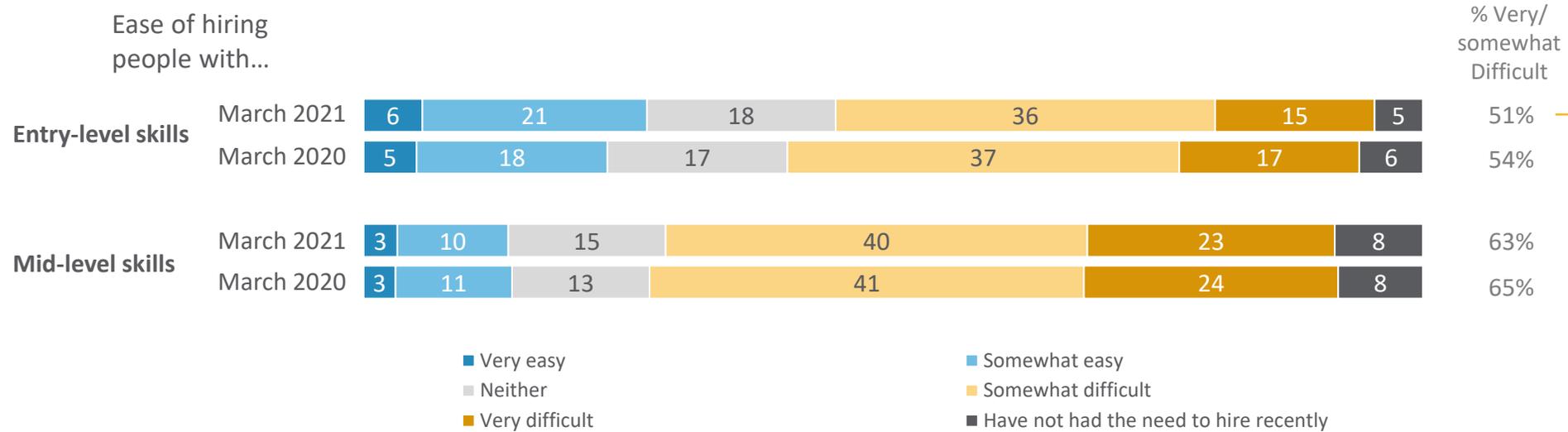
Q9. (previously Q6) How much relevant experience do you typically look for in entry-level hires?

Base: Hire staff (2020 n=317; 2021 n=505)

## EASE OF HIRING PEOPLE WITH ENTRY-LEVEL/MID-LEVEL SKILLS

Half (51%) of businesses report it is ‘difficult’ to hire people with the entry-level skills they need to manage their business. This increases to 63% when looking for people with mid-level skills. These results are similar to a year ago.

- However, in March’21 there has been a slight increase to 27% indicating it is ‘easy’ to hire people with the entry-level skills they need, up from 23% a year ago. There has been no change regarding mid-level skills.



While a small base size (n=21), businesses in **Mountain Parks** (76%) are the most likely to report that hiring people with entry-level skills is ‘difficult’.

Q10. (previously Q7) How easy or difficult is it to hire people with the entry-level skills you need to manage your business?  
 Q11. (previously Q8) How easy or difficult is it to hire people with the mid-level skills you need to manage your business?  
 Base: Hire staff (2020 n=317; 2021 n=505)

## AREAS OF EXPECTED SKILLS SHORTAGES AND IMPACT ON BUSINESS

Among businesses that already find it difficult to hire people with the entry or mid-level skills they need, the largest skills shortages over the next three years are expected for industry-specific technical skills, with four-in-ten (38%) businesses expecting shortages - an increase of 10-points compared to a year ago.

- Overall, among all businesses, four-in-ten (40%) anticipate that skills shortages will have a significant or moderate impact on their ability to thrive over the next year – a slight softening compared to a year ago.

EXPECTED SKILLS SHORTAGES	March 2020	March 2021
Industry-specific technical skills	28%	38% ↑
Problem-solving skills	30%	28%
Service orientation	24%	28%
Commitment to quality	26%	26%
Interpersonal skills	15%	23% ↑
Skilled trades (e.g. construction, welding, electrical)	15%	22% ↑
Adaptability/resiliency	13%	19%
Leadership and decision-making skills	14%	16%
Relationship-building skills	15%	12%
Basic business acumen	13%	12%
Collaboration/team skills	12%	12%
Basic numeracy and literacy	10%	12%
Financial/accounting skills	9%	10%
Basic science and math skills	6%	10%
Continuous learning	6%	8%
Judgement and risk-management skills	13%	6%
Experimentation and design thinking	5%	6%
Information technology and data management	6%	5%
Analytics and quantitative analysis	6%	4%
Personal management	5%	4%
Data analysis	3%	3%
Software/computer programming	3%	3%
Digital content development	2%	3%
Negotiation	3%	1%
Cyber security	1%	1%
I don't expect a skills shortage for the kinds of staff we hire	10%	-
Don't know/not sure	6%	-

## IMPACT OF SKILLS SHORTAGES

	March 2020	March 2021
<b>SIGNIFICANT/MODERATE IMPACT</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>40%</b>
Significant impact	15%	14%
Moderate impact	29%	26%
Slight impact	26%	32%
No impact	25%	23%
<b>SLIGHT/NO IMPACT</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>55%</b>
Don't know/Not sure	5%	5%

Increases were measured in **Edmonton** and the **North East** and **North West** areas of Alberta compared to a year ago.

Businesses with **20-49 employees** tend to be the most impacted by skills shortages (51%).

Q16. (previously Q9) Of the top skills important to your organization in hiring at any level, which areas do you expect to experience skills shortages over the next three years? Base: Very/somewhat difficult to hire people with entry or mid-level skills (2020 n=233; 2021 n=356)

Q12. (previously Q10) To what extent do you anticipate skills shortages will impact your business's ability to thrive over the next year? Base: Hire staff (2020 n=317; 2021 n=505)

## BARRIERS FOR RECRUITING SKILLS BUSINESS NEEDS

Presently, 44% of businesses cite either a lack of people skills/qualifications or technical skills/qualifications as top barriers for recruiting the skills they need.

- And, compared to a year ago, there has been a significant increase regarding a lack of technical skills/qualifications.
- Of note, a lack of applicants has increased to 42%, up 14-points over the year occurring in all regions of Alberta.

### BARRIERS FOR RECRUITING SKILLS NEEDED

	March 2020	March 2021
Lack of people skills or qualifications	40	44%
Lack of technical skills or qualifications	35	44% ↑
Lack of applicants	28	42% ↑
Can't afford the going rates for the staff we would like to hire	36	37%
Business budget constraints	36	29%
Competition for skills from other employers	23	28%
Candidates unwilling to relocate	18	23%
Lack of management and/or leadership skills	19	17%
Candidates cannot pass screening (drug, criminal record check, etc.)	10	11%
Applicants cannot access adequate childcare	9	11%
Applicants don't have adequate transportation	9	10%
Applicants do not have accessible housing to relocate	8	8%
Government regulation for hiring workers from outside Canada	6	8%
Language barriers (English as a second language)	9	6%
Lack necessary language skills (require recruits to be bilingual or multilingual)	3	3%
Interprovincial credential recognition	3	3%
Foreign credentials recognition	2	2%
There are no significant barriers	-	4%
Other	7	7%
Don't know/not sure	3	1%

This increase occurred in regions other than in the **Edmonton and Calgary** areas.

Q17. (previously Q11) What are the top barriers for recruiting the skills your business needs?

Base: Hire staff (2020 n=317; 2021 n=356)

## TOP BARRIERS FOR RECRUITING SKILLS BUSINESS NEEDS

Top barriers for businesses when recruiting for skills their business needs are a lack of people applying for the position and a lack of people with the technical skills or qualifications.

- This is followed by wage concerns in that they can't afford the going rates for the staff they would like to hire.

### TOP BARRIERS FOR RECRUITING SKILLS NEEDED

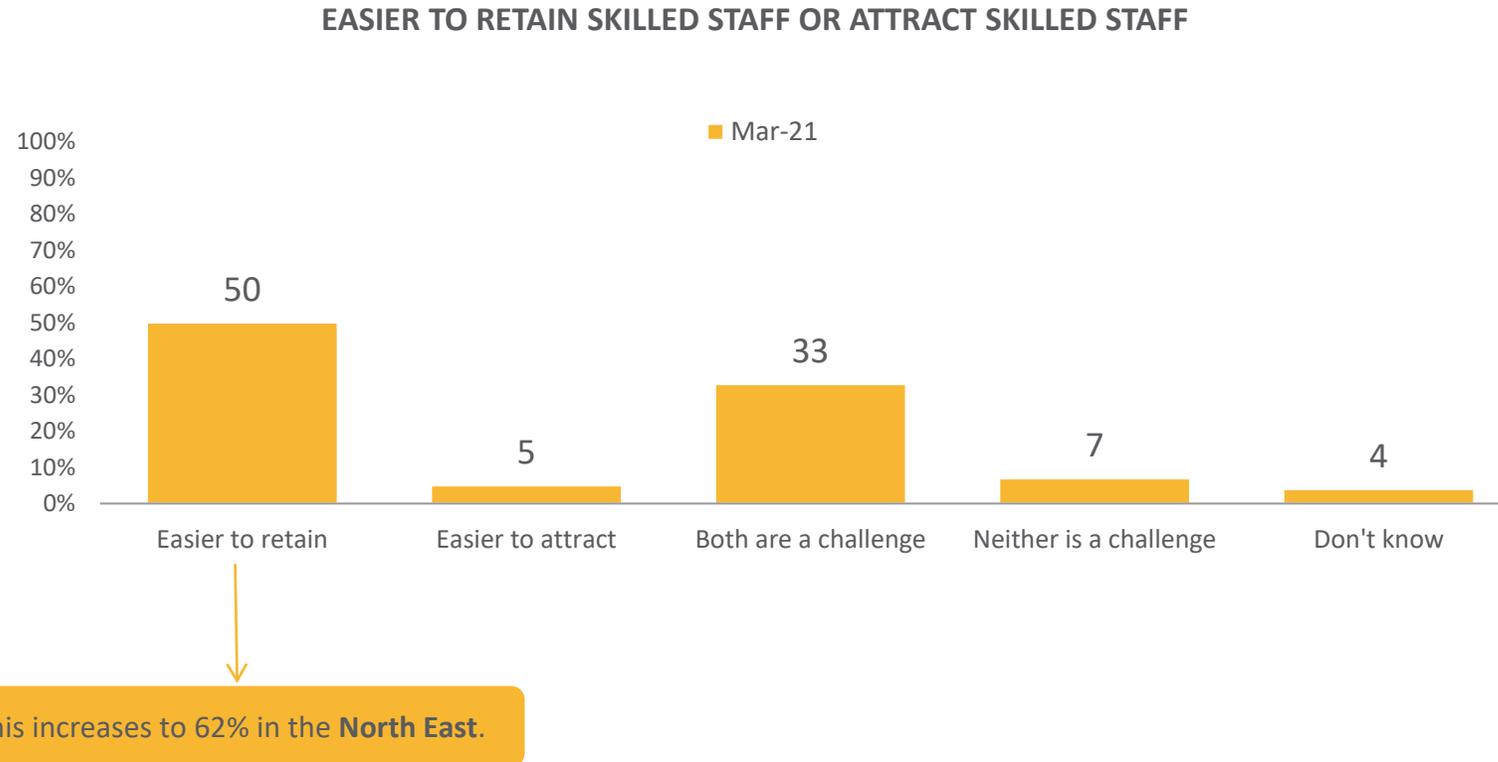
	March 2020	March 2021
Lack of applicants	11	20%
Lack of technical skills or qualifications	11	19%
Can't afford the going rates for the staff we would like to hire	18	16%
Lack of people skills or qualifications	13	12%
Business budget constraints	18	11%
Candidates unwilling to relocate	4	7%
Competition for skills from other employers	5	5%
Lack of management and/or leadership skills	4	2%
Government regulation for hiring workers from outside Canada	3	2%
Applicants do not have accessible housing to relocate	<1	2%
Candidates cannot pass screening (drug, criminal record check, etc.)	1	1%
Applicants don't have adequate transportation	1	1%
Lack necessary language skills (require recruits to be bilingual or multilingual)	1	1%
Applicants cannot access adequate childcare	1	1%
Language barriers (English as a second language)	<1	1%
Interprovincial credential recognition	1	-
Other	7	-

Q19. (previously Q12) Which of the barriers you selected is the largest barrier to recruiting the skills your business needs?

Base: More than one barrier indicated (2020 n=280; 2021 n=343)

## EASIER TO RETAIN OR ATTRACT SKILLED STAFF

Fully half (50%) of businesses report it is easier to retain skilled staff with only 5% saying it is easier to attract this type of staff. However, one-third (33%) say both are a challenge.



Q13. Thinking about the kinds of skills your business needs, is it easier to retain skilled staff or easier to attract skilled staff?

Base: Excludes sole proprietors at Q5 and excludes those who do not hire staff at Q7 n=505

## ORGANIZATION'S TOP RECRUITMENT METHODS

While there have been increases reported for a lack of technical skills/qualifications and a lack of applicants, recruitment methods have not changed. About half of businesses continue to rely on either employee referrals (54%) or social media tools and online networks (52%) to recruit employees and the skills they require.

- There has been a slight increase in those making use of social media/print advertising (44%).

### RECRUITMENT METHODS

	March 2020	March 2021
Employee referrals	52	54%
Social media tools and online networks	50	52%
Social media and/or print advertising	39	44%
Recruitment websites	42	40%
Employment and recruitment agencies	18	17%
Industry associations	14	14%
Campus recruitment	10	10%
Co-operative education and work integrated learning (WIL) programs	9	6%
Job fairs	9	5%
Other	5	8%
We have not hired recently	4	10%
Don't know/not sure	1	-

**Men (62%↑)** are more likely than **women (47%)** to use employee referrals. Businesses with **20-49** (64%) or **50-199** (77%) employees are also more likely to use this recruitment method.

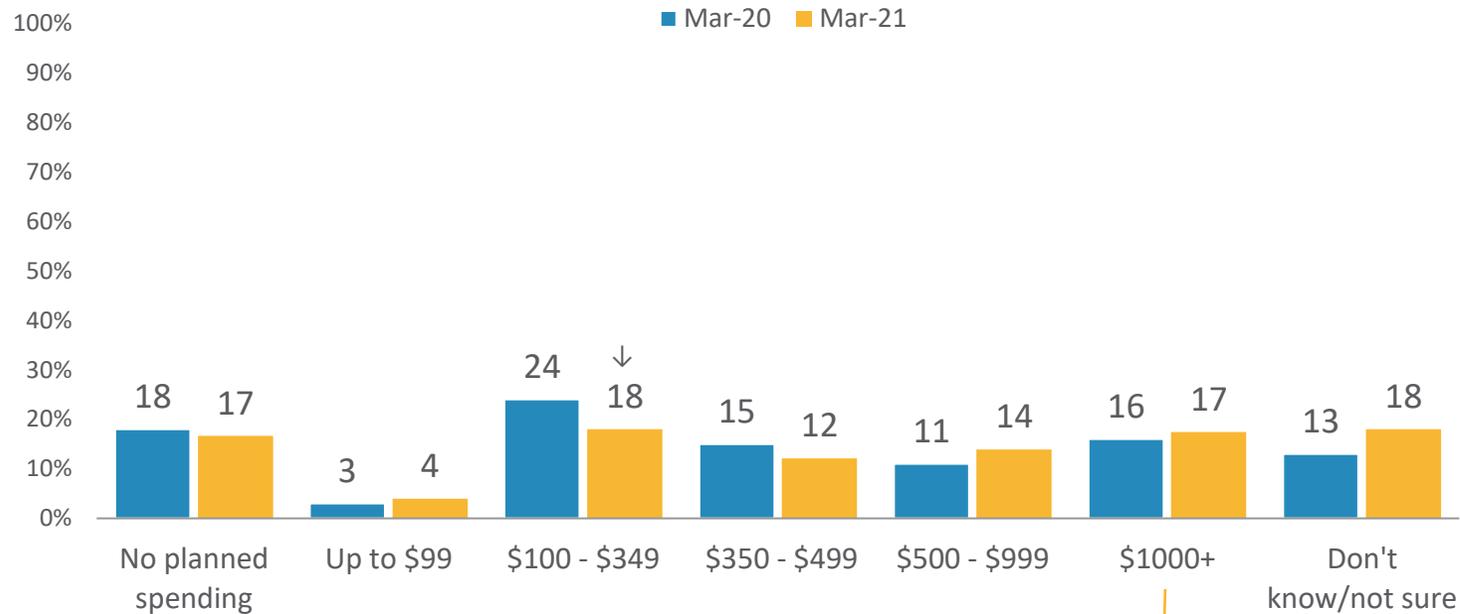
Q15. (previously Q13) What are your organization's top recruitment methods?

Base: Hire staff (2020 n=317; 2021 n=505)

## SPENDING PLANS FOR TRAINING

Similar to a year ago, most businesses report limited spending on training per employee over the next year. Two-in-ten (17%) businesses continue to report no planned spending, while similar proportions plan to spend under \$500 (34%) and over \$500 (31%) per employee.

SPENDING PLANS FOR TRAINING, PER EMPLOYEE



Small businesses with 1-4 employees (26%) are the most likely to report they have no planned spending.

Businesses in the **Calgary area** (29%) plan to spend the most on training over the next year by employee.

Q14. What are your business' spending plans for training over the next year, per employee?

Base: Hire staff (2020 n=317; 2021 n=505)

## WILLINGNESS TO TRAIN NEW EMPLOYEES

Among businesses that have found it difficult to hire people with the required entry or mid-level skills, 60% report they have undertaken training, up 9-points compared to March'20.

- That said, there was a slight decline in businesses saying they would consider training new employees if skills are in short supply.

### WILLINGNESS TO TRAIN NEW EMPLOYEES IF SKILLS ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY

	March 2020	March 2021
Would consider	36%	31%
Have undertaken	51%	60% ↑
Would not consider	7%	4%
Don't know/Not sure	6%	5%

More **men** (67% ↑) report they have trained new employees when skills were in short supply than do **women** (54%). This is also the case with businesses with **over 10 employees**. There were increases compared to last year in all regions with the exception of the **North East**.

Q18. (previously Q15) To what extent is your business willing to train new hires if skills are in short supply?

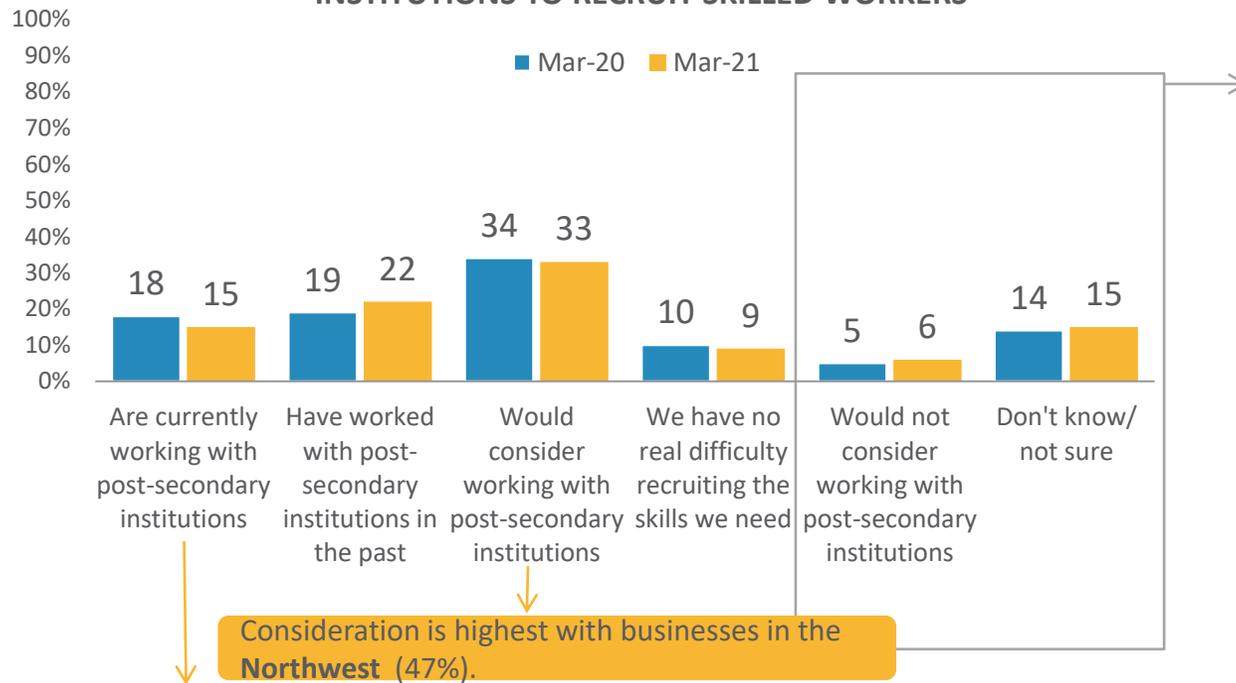
Base: Very/somewhat difficult to hire people with entry or mid-level skills (2020 n=233; 2021 n=356)

## WILLINGNESS TO WORK WITH POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Similar to last year, there is a high level of willingness to work with post-secondary institutions (public or private) to recruit or acquire skilled workers. Overall, 37% are either currently working with post-secondary institutions or have worked with them in the past. As well, an additional 33% would considering doing this.

- Among those that would not consider doing this (6%) or aren't sure (15%), the main barriers tend to be the fact this doesn't fit into their business model, the expense, or issues regarding post-secondary institutions – either they are difficult to work with or are too far away. However, there have been declines measured in many of these top barriers.

### WILLINGNESS TO WORK WITH POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS TO RECRUIT SKILLED WORKERS



Proportions working with post-secondary institutions **increases with the size of business.**

### BARRIERS

Among those who would not consider/don't know

	March 2020	March 2021
Doesn't fit our business model	32%	36%
Too expensive	21%	13%
Not located near a post-secondary institution	18%	11%
Can't find people interested in learning the skill set	8%	10%
Post-secondary institutions are too difficult to work with	19%	9%
External sources are better equipped to connect with skills we need	8%	9%
Not interested in incorporating learning platforms and/or strategies	6%	7%
Don't have the skill set to manage training	2%	7%
Skill set is too complex to learn on the job	2%	7%
Don't have the technology or equipment	-	1%
Other	6%	13%
Don't know/not sure	27%	22%

Q21. (previously Q17) Would your business be willing to work with post-secondary institutions (public or private) to recruit or acquire skilled workers?

Base: Hire staff (2020 n=317; 2021 n=505)

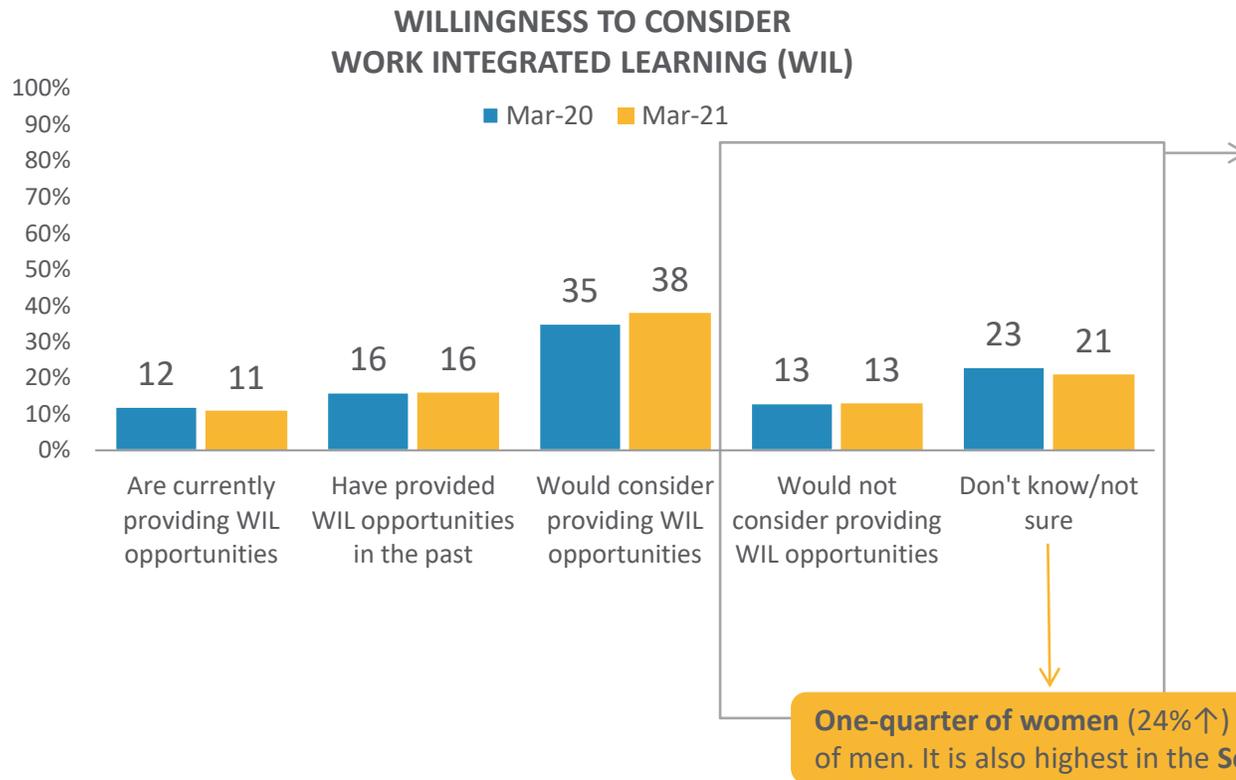
Q25. (previously Q18) Which of the following are barriers to working with post-secondary institutions to recruit and acquire the skills your business needs?

Base: Would not consider working with post-secondary institutions or don't know (2020 n=62; 2021 n=107)

## WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING (WIL)

Results are also similar to last year regarding WIL. While 27% of businesses are either currently providing WIL opportunities or have provided them in the past, another four-in-ten (38%) would consider doing this.

- However, one-in-five (21%) businesses continue to report they are not sure. The top cited barriers to providing work integrated learning opportunities as a strategy to recruit or acquire skilled workers are that it doesn't fit into their business model or the work is too complex for short-term projects.



## BARRIERS

Among those who would not consider/don't know

	March 2020	March 2021
Doesn't fit our business model	34%	42%
Work is too complex for short-term projects	17%	17%
Too expensive	19%	12%
Not located near a post-secondary institution	12%	12%
External sources better equipped to provide skills training we need	7%	12%
Work environment is unsafe for inexperienced people	7%	10%
Not interested in incorporating learning platforms and/or strategies	5%	8%
Skill set is too complex to learn on the job	3%	7%
Don't have the technology or equipment	3%	5%
Don't have the skill set to manage training	1%	5%
Other	13%	9%
Don't know/not sure	21%	20%

Q22. (previously Q19) Would your business be willing to consider providing work integrated learning (WIL) opportunities (co-operative education placements, internships, applied research projects, etc.) to post-secondary students as a strategy to recruit and/or acquire skilled workers?

Base: Hire staff (2020 n=317; 2021 n=505)

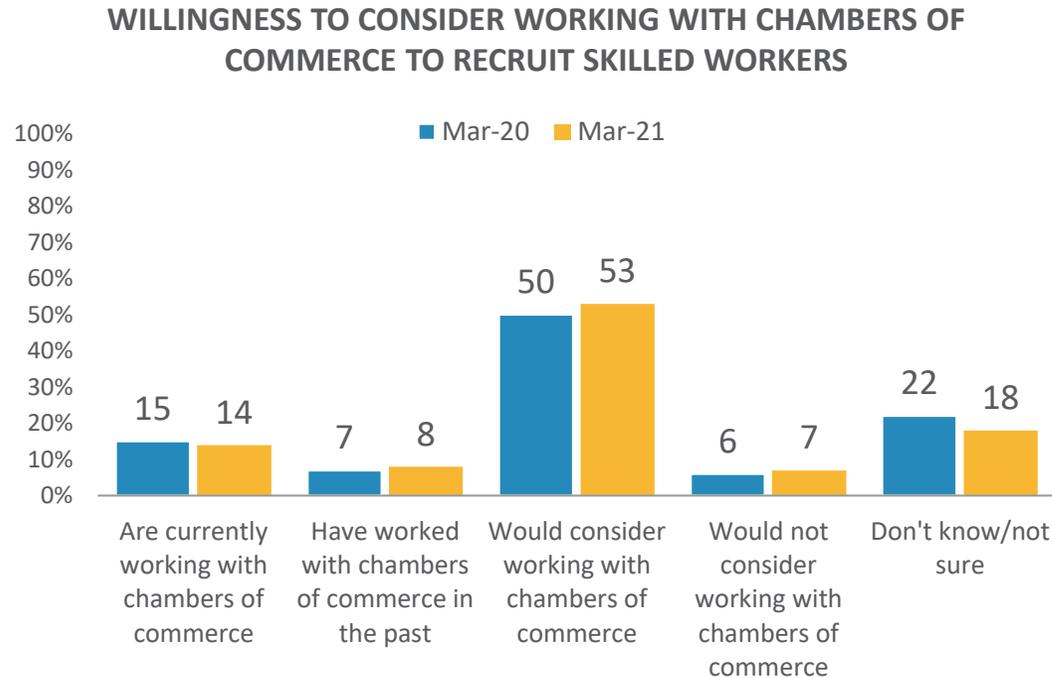
Q26. (previously Q20) What are the barriers to providing work integrated learning opportunities as a strategy to recruit and/or acquire skilled workers?

Base: Would not consider work integrated learning or don't know (2020 n=116; 2021 n=172)

## WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER WORKING WITH CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

Three quarters of businesses in the province are now or have worked with chambers (22%) and another half (53%) would consider doing this.

- While very few (7%) would not consider this, 18% report they are not sure.

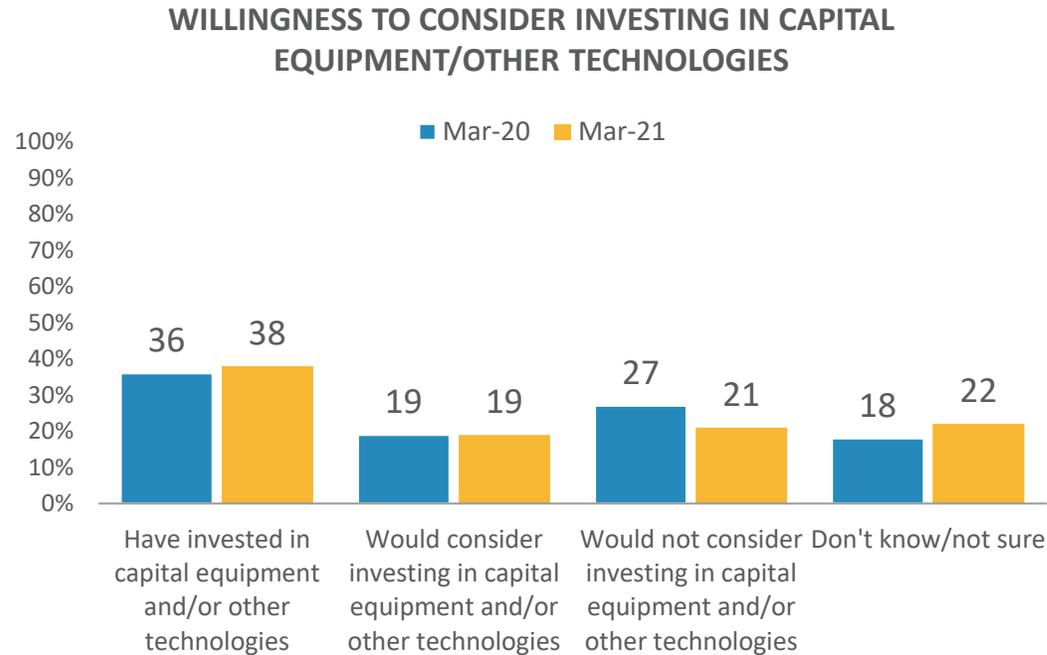


Q23 (previously Q21) Would your business be willing to consider working with chambers of commerce to connect with and recruit skilled workers?

Base: Hire staff (2020 n=317; 2021 n=505)

## WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER INVESTING IN CAPITAL EQUIPMENT/TECHNOLOGIES

Consistent with previous results, almost six-in-ten of businesses that have had difficulty hiring people with the skills they need have either invested in capital equipment/other technologies (38%) or would consider this (19%) to overcome skills shortages.



Consideration is highest in the **North West** (28%) and lowest in the **Calgary area** (4%).

Q20. (previously Q22) Has your business considered investing in capital equipment and/or other technologies to overcome skills shortages (i.e. investment in technology vs. workers)?

Base: Very/somewhat difficult to hire people with entry or mid-level skills (2020 n=233; 2021 n=356)

## AVAILABILITY OF EQUIPMENT/TECHNOLOGY TO REPLACE SKILLED WORKERS

A major challenge in dealing with skills shortages is that most (74%) businesses report that there is no equipment or technology available to replace the skilled workers they require.

- Among the 16% that say it is available, the top cited barrier is the upfront investment cost, although this has declined compared to a year ago.

### IS EQUIPMENT/TECHNOLOGY AVAILABLE TO REPLACE SKILLED WORKERS?

	March 2020	March 2021
Yes	18%	16%
No	72%	74%
Don't know/not sure	10%	11%

While a small base size (n=21), businesses in **Mountain Parks** (95%) are the most likely to report that equipment/technology is not available to replace the skilled workers they require.

### BARRIERS

Among those who say equipment/technology is available

	March 2020	March 2021
High upfront investment costs	65%	47% ↓
Access to capital	30%	39% ↑
Economic uncertainty	42%	30%
Loyalty to current employees	19%	22%
Company culture	21%	20%
Maintaining quality of service	28%	19%
Risk of disrupting our current business model	12%	19%
Training investments to implement new technology	26%	18%
Return on investment is too long	23%	18%
Don't have capacity to implement new technology	12%	15%
Regulatory barriers to acquiring and/or implementing the technology	5%	4%
Other, specify	2%	4%
Don't know/not sure	4%	11%

Q24. (previously Q23) Is equipment/technology available to replace the skilled workers your business requires?

Base: Hire staff (2020 n=317; 2021 n=505)

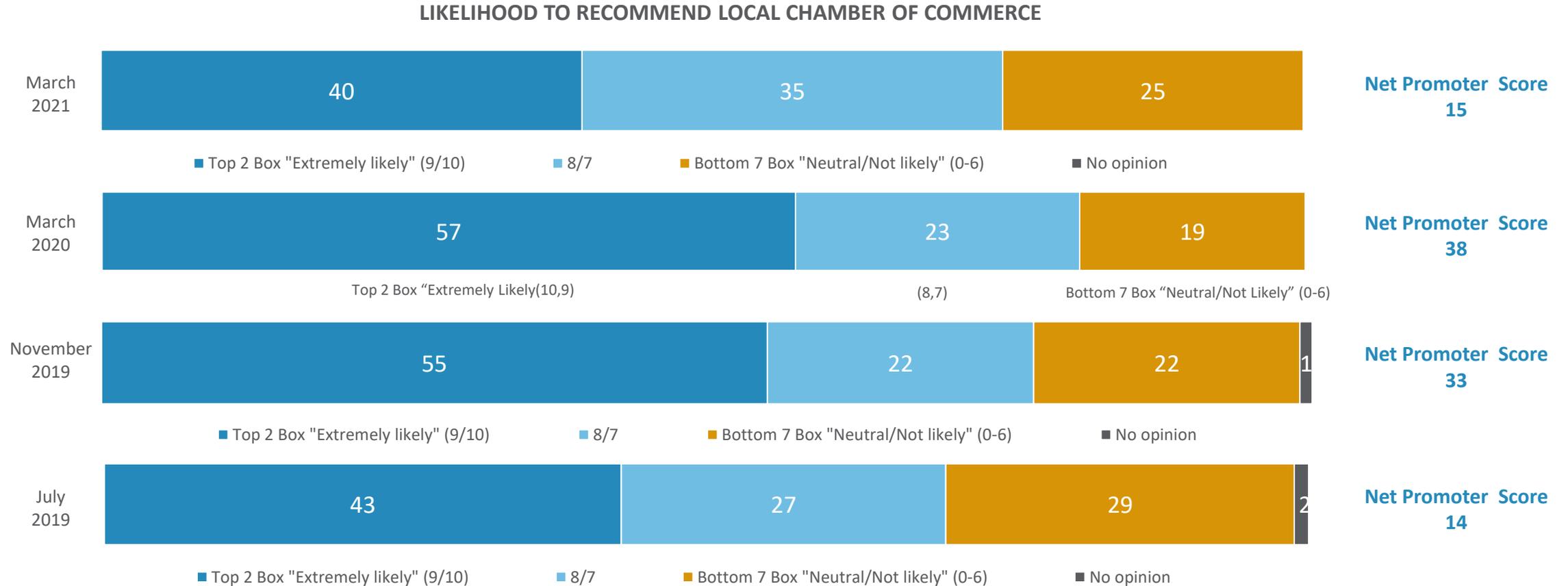
Q27. (previously Q24) What are the barriers to investing in this technology?

Base: Equipment/technology is available (2020 n=57; 2021 n=79)

## LIKELIHOOD TO RECOMMEND LOCAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

In the most recent wave, there is a decline of 17-points among members of a Chamber of Commerce indicating they are extremely likely to recommend their local chamber of commerce to a business friend or colleague.

- The Net Promoter Score has also declined to levels last seen in July 2019.



Net Promoter Score is a 10 - 0 scale and is calculated by subtracting the top 2 box (10/9) from the bottom (6 - 0)

Q28. (previously Q33) How likely would you be to recommend your local Chamber of Commerce to a business friend or colleague? (Q34 in July)

Base: Chamber of commerce members (March 2021 n=373; March 2020 n=313; December 2019 n= 875; July 2019 n=714)

# 4

## ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

# Respondent Profile

## % GENDER n=668

47	Male
51	Female
-	Other
2	Prefer not to answer

## % REGION n=638

19	All regions of Alberta
7	Calgary area
27	Central
21	Edmonton area
3	Mountain parks
14	Northeast
20	Northwest
3	Southeast
8	Southwest

## % JOB TITLE n=667

63	President, CEO, Owner or Executive Director
3	Vice president or equivalent
1	C-Suite executive (CFO, CMO, CTO, CXO)
7	Partner, advisor or associate
9	Contractor or self-employed
7	Other senior manager
6	Assistant, coordinator or manager (or equivalent)
3	Other

## % OWNER/PARTNER IN ORGANIZATION n=665

66	Yes
34	No
-	Don't know/not sure

## % PUBLIC OR NON-PROFIT SECTOR n=668

19	Public
66	Private
15	Not for profit

## % IN TOURISM INDUSTRY n=668

17	Yes
83	No

## % SOLE PROPRIETOR n=267 (1 -4 employees at Q2)

55	Yes
45	No

## % NUMBER OF STAFF EMPLOYED IN ALBERTA n=674

40	1-4
20	5-9
15	10-19
10	20-49
10	50-199
2	200-499
3	500+
-	Don't know/not sure

## % INDUSTRY BUSINESS OPERATES n=668

14	Other services (except public administration)
13	Retail trade
10	Professional, scientific and technical services
7	Food services
6	Construction
6	Health care
4	Finance
4	Manufacturing
4	Educational services
3	Oil & Gas Extraction
3	Transportation
3	Recreation
3	Accommodation
3	Agriculture
2	Entertainment
2	Arts
1	Administrative and Support
1	Insurance
1	Public administration
1	Commercial real estate
1	Social assistance
1	Rental and leasing
1	Information and cultural industries
1	Utilities
1	Management of companies and enterprises
1	Private real estate
1	Waste management
<1	Forestry
<1	Wholesale trade
<1	Fishing
<1	Quarrying
<1	Warehousing

# Respondent Profile

## **% BUSINESS REQUIRED TO CLOSE/LIMIT OPERATIONS DURING COVID-19 n=674**

20	Required to close
59	Required to limit operations
33	Neither

## **% WAGES DURING COVID-19 n=674**

8	Increased
60	Stayed the same
30	Decreased
2	Don't know/not sure

## **% CHANGE IN WAGES n=181 (increased/decreased at Q4 and answered the question)**

31	Temporary
33	Permanent
36	Don't know/not sure