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A REPORT TO ALBERTA CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

AB PERSPECTIVES SURVEY:

Skills, Training, Labour Market Policy

April, 2023

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ABOUT THE RESEARCH

OBJECTIVES

- This report continues research initiated in March 2020 dealing with labour market issues. However, given the increasing focus on skills shortages, the focus of this survey was on this specific issue. New questions addressing this issue were developed.
- The overall purpose of the research is to understand the experiences of Alberta employers (private sector, public sector and not-for-profit organizations) regarding:
 - The kinds of occupations they employ (8 broad ones were identified and over 50 sub-occupations within the broad categories were explored);
 - The single most difficult to hire for Identification of the skills (personal and technical) most lacking when hiring;
 - Identification of whether people or technical skills were more important in the hiring process; and
 - Importance of skills upgrading/acquisition and the barriers
- An additional set of questions were asked to those willing to complete a series of follow-up questions. This included:
 - Identification of the level of difficulty of hiring within broad occupational categories;
 - Preferred options for meeting skills shortages;
 - Extent undertaken, and willingness to undertake, various skills training options; and
 - Budget issues related to skills training.

METHODOLOGY

- In all, n=482 employers completed the primary survey which was administered on the Alida platform by the Alberta Chambers of Commerce to members and other affiliated organizations.
- While n=482, answered Q1 and Q2 (the number of employees) those with no employees and were a staff of 1, were skipped to the demographics at the end of the survey. Those answering the skills related questions is n=445.
- In addition, n=322 employers agreed to answer a secondary set of follow up questions.
- Surveying for the current survey was undertaken between March 21st to April 8th, 2023.

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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Long-Term Future

Alberta employers continue to view the long-term future of the province in highly positive terms. In all, over two-thirds (69%) say they have a positive view of the future. And, in fact, those saying they are 'very' positive has increased by 5% to 18% since November 2022. Organizations in all regions of the province have a highly positive view as do organizations of all sizes.

The Occupational Landscape and Shortages

In order to provide more details on which specific occupations were challenging for employers to recruit, a number of questions probed this issue. Employers were asked which of eight broad occupational categories they employed (on average each employer cited 2.4 of the eight occupations shown). The largest occupational groups employed were managers (46%), clerical support roles (43%), service and sales roles (42%), and professionals (41%).

Based on their responses, employers were then shown sub-occupations making up each broad occupation. In all, over 50 sub-occupations were used (with employers only shown the sub-occupations related to the broad occupational categories they had said they employ). In this way, employers identified the specific occupations they employed. On average, each employer cited five sub-occupations. The most frequently cited roles were hospitality (10%), business and administration managers (6%) construction (6%) labourers (6%) and retail (5%).

In order to establish which of those occupations were the most difficult to hire, employers were shown the occupations they had identified as employing and then asked to identify among those, the single most difficult to hire. These were: hospitality (56% of those citing employing this occupational area reported that it was the single most difficult to hire), health related (48%) and construction (42%). While other occupations were also cited with some frequency, the sample sizes are too small to be considered reliable and are marked with a c (caution) in the tables. Later in the survey, when asked how difficult it is to hire within each broad occupational grouping, all but clerical support roles are a challenge and, in particular, craft/trades where 6-in-10 employers said hiring was the most difficult.

Hiring Issues Related to People and Technical Skills

From a list of 15 people skills, employers were asked to select the five that were most lacking in the staff they hired. There was a good deal of agreement in the skills selected ranging from 54% citing problem solving ability to 6% citing negotiation and much in between. The other skills identified frequently as missing included a commitment to quality (42%), decision making (35%) and leadership (34%). Irrespective of the size of the organization or occupations hired, employers generally cite the same types of people skills that are lacking. This suggests that the same basic people skills are important to most employers.

In the case of technical skills, employers were shown 16 skills with much the same levels of agreement about what is lacking was found. The most cited skills lacking were analytical thinking (49%), industry-specific technical skills (46%) and basic business acumen (33%). In the case of technical skills, once again size did not feature strongly in determining skills lacking, with a couple of exceptions. Employers with more than 50 staff placed a stronger emphasis on industry-specific skills (55%) being lacking, compared with those under 50 staff (42%) and organizations of 200 or more staff placed a much stronger emphasis on analyzing data and information (45% compared to smaller organizations 22%). There are also some understandable variations on skills lacking among craft related trades and plant/machine assemblers/operators where the lack is industry-specific technical skills. And among craft related trades, 62% cite skills in trades as lacking.

Both types of skills (people and technical) are essential and, when asked which is the biggest hiring challenge, employers are divided with almost equal numbers choosing people (53%) relative to technical (47%) skills. As might be expected, specific broad occupations place an emphasis on one compared to the other. Among those employing service/sales occupations, the majority place an emphasis on people skills being more difficult to hire, while among those employing craft/trade occupations technical skills are more difficult to hire. This suggests that for specific types of occupations the focus on which type of skill is more important will vary.

Barriers to Skills Upgrading/Acquisition

Almost all (91%) employers say skills upgrading/acquisition is important and half (53%) saying it is 'very' important. The level of importance appears to hinge, in part, on whether employers believe people or technical skills are more challenging to hire. Among those saying technical skills are more challenging, 61% say upgrading/acquisition is 'very' important compared to 45% among those saying people skills. This suggests that technical skills may be a more urgent or challenging need.

While there are a variety of barriers to skills upgrading/acquisition, the most frequently identified is the difficulty retaining trained employees (22%) and a limited budget for skills upgrading/acquisition (21%). In terms of why employers don't do more training of hires where they have a skills shortage, the difficulty appears to be finding people with either the basic skills to be able to train them (33%) or even finding those willing to be trained (23%).

Approaches to Skills Training

Most employers (81%) report having undertaken skills training where the skills are in short supply and another 14% say they are considering this. The type of skills training undertaken is most frequently on the job (88%), having staff take training programs on company time (67%, with another 20% saying they would consider this), and sending staff on in-person programs (56% have done this and 31% would consider it). Fewer (38%) have had staff take programs at post-secondary institutions, although another 34% would consider it. The implication here is that many employers are already engaged in trying to meet shortages, but that others are open to various options.

At issue is how best to encourage employers to undertake more skills training where there are skills shortages. On this issue, when asked to identify their top two options for meeting skills shortages, the most cited is for more support for employers on job training (39%). Also cited were more industry certification (26%), more WIL/co-op type programs (24%), more short-cycle training (23%), and more post-secondary programs (22%).

Budget Related Issues

One of the barriers noted above is that of budget constraints, with only half of employers report having a skills training/upgrading budget. This, though, is very much an issue of the size of the organization. Among those with 2 – 9 staff, only 28% report a training budget compared with 89% saying this for organizations of 200 or more staff.

There are also some differences in terms of the annual amount spent per employee. While the median amount across all employers is \$785, among those organizations with a training budget and under 50 staff the median is \$640 and among those larger it is well over \$1,000.

Among those organization with no training budget, the most frequent response is that they can't afford it (42%).

Conclusions

The high level of positive feelings about the long term future of the province and the obvious province's economic success which is driving these feelings is also straining the labour market. This is evident in employers indicating that for many occupations it is hard to find the skills required in a wide variety of occupations. In particular, in the areas of hospitality, health related and construction and more broadly in craft and related trades.

But the skills of importance to employers are both technical and people skills and there is a good deal of agreement about which of these skills are lacking. One important conclusion is that while the post secondary sector in the province has focused on technical skills, employers are also saying that, in many instances, it is the people skills that are just as difficult to find. One implication here is the importance of developing approaches that can also nurture the people skills that are important on the job.

While most employers report doing skills training of staff and appear willing to do more, one of the key challenges to doing more appears to be budget restraints. Only half of employers report a training budget and so many, particularly among smaller organizations, do not appear to have the budget to likely do anything other than very basic skills training. In relation to this issue, one of the things many employers would like, is more support for employer based on the job training and especially among those with between 5 – 49 staff. This suggests that there are opportunities to revisit the kinds of supports employers have for skills training.

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DETAILED FINDINGS








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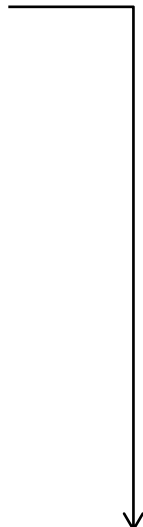
PRIMARY QUESTIONS

Overall, positive feelings about Alberta’s long-term future remain high and unchanged from last November, but the proportion of ‘very’ positive has increased by 5%.

- Men (75%) are more likely to have a positive view of the long-term future of the province than women (63%).

Perceptions of the Long-Term Future of Province

	Jul 2019	July 2020	July 2021	Nov 2021	July 2022	Nov 2022	March 2023	NET Change July 2022 – March 2023
TOTAL POSITIVE	62%	36%	44%	43%	59%	68%	 69%	+10
Very positive	10%	3%	5%	7%	10%	13%	 18%	+8
Somewhat positive	52%	33%	40%	36%	49%	55%	 51%	+2
Somewhat negative	27%	43%	38%	32%	29%	22%	 20%	-9
Very negative	6%	17%	14%	23%	9%	7%	 5%	-4
TOTAL NEGATIVE	33%	60%	52%	55%	39%	29%	 25%	-14
Don't know/not sure	5%	3%	4%	2%	3%	4%	 6%	+3



Regionally, businesses in North and Central Alberta (74%) areas are the most positive. The reverse is true for the South (64%), excluding Calgary. Edmonton businesses are close to the norm for the province overall (66% and 69%, respectively).

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; March 2023 n=482)

OCCUPATIONS EMPLOYED

Four broad occupations are cited by four-in-ten employers as areas they employ: managers, clerical support, service/sales and professionals. What seems surprising, given the structure of most organizations, is that only half (46%) of employers cite using managers. (This may, of course, be a nomenclature issue.)

- As shown in the table, public sector organizations are much more likely to employ most of the skills and this may, in part, be a factor of the somewhat larger size of many public sector organizations relative to businesses and not for profits.
- In all, organizations cited, on average, 2.4 broad occupations hired.

Occupations Businesses Employ	Total	Public Sector
Managers	46%	58%
Clerical support workers (e. g. customer services, secretaries, clerical and keyboard support, general clerical support)	43%	51%
Service and sales workers (e.g., hospitality, retail, personal service, sales related, personal care, protective services)	42%	54%
Professional (e.g., scientific, engineering, health related, teaching, business and administrative, information and communications, legal, social, cultural)	41%	53%
Technicians and associate professionals (e.g., as above but semi professional and have skills to provide support, in training for professional role)	27%	37%
Craft related trades workers (e.g., construction, machining, handicraft, electronics, food processing, wood working)	27%	27%
Relatively unskilled non office occupations (e.g., cleaners, recycling, refuse, labourers, etc.)	27%	46%
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers (e.g., stationary machinery, transportation, heavy mobile machinery, etc.)	11%	14%
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	6%	9%
Other	14%	9%
Don't know/not sure	<1%	-
Average number of occupations cited	2.4	-

Q3. From the list below, can you identify the occupations that your business employs? (Please check all that apply)

Base: n=445

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OCCUPATIONS EMPLOYED

Across almost all occupations, the larger the organization the more likely they are to employ that occupation.

- Larger organizations are easily the most likely to employ managers (70%), clerical support (60%) and professionals (57%).
- Among those with under 10 staff, service/sales occupations are the most frequently cited (36%).

Occupations Businesses Employ by Size of Organization

	Number of Employees			
	Total	2 -9	10 - 49	50+
Managers	46%	25%	49%	70%
Clerical support workers (e. g. customer services, secretaries, clerical and keyboard support, general clerical support)	43%	29%	44%	60%
Service and sales workers (e.g., hospitality, retail, personal service, sales related, personal care, protective services)	42%	36%	45%	47%
Professional (e.g., scientific, engineering, health related, teaching, business and administrative, information and communications, legal, social, cultural)	41%	31%	38%	57%
Technicians and associate professionals (e.g., as above but semi professional and have skills to provide support, in training for professional role)	27%	18%	28%	39%
Craft related trades workers (e.g., construction, machining, handcraft, electronics, food processing, wood working)	27%	25%	42%	39%
Relatively unskilled non office occupations (e.g., cleaners, recycling, refuge, labourers, etc.)	27%	23%	23%	43%
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers (e.g., stationary machinery, transportation, heavy mobile machinery, etc.)	11%	4%	8%	22%
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	6%	5%	5%	9%
Other	14%	15%	14%	12%
Don't know/not sure	<1%	<1%	-	-

Q3. From the list below, can you identify the occupations that your business employs? (Please check all that apply)

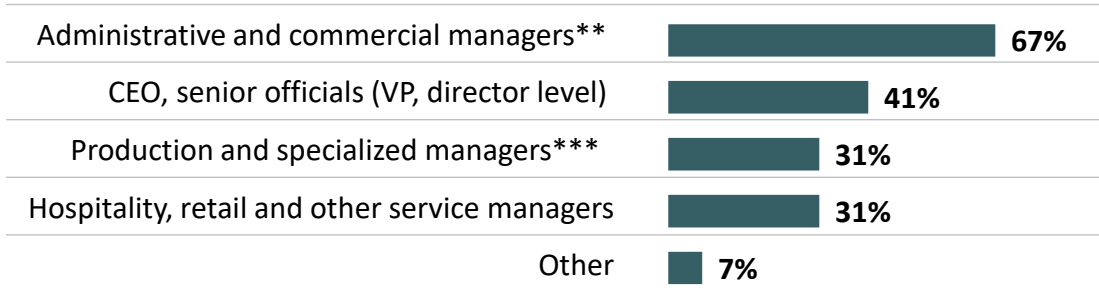
Base: n=445

In terms of specific occupations employed, within both managerial and professional occupations, the common theme is that of administration of some form. At the same time, among professional occupations, many of the traditional professions are cited.

- Among managerial occupations, public sector organizations are much more likely than others to cite employing hospitality, retail or other service managers (43%).
- Aside from business/administrative and engineering professionals, most of the professions cited work for public sector organizations and, to a lesser extent, not-for-profits.

Specific Managers Occupations Employed (46%)*

Managers

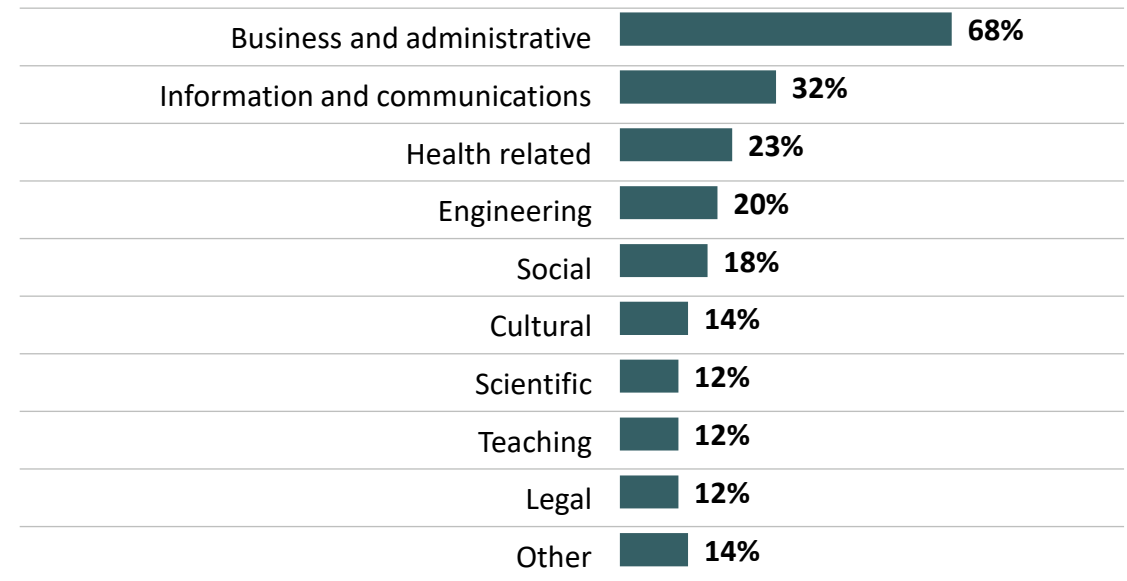


IMPORTANT NOTE: Depending upon the specific broad occupational groups cited, more detailed occupations were shown and employers were again asked to identify the ones they use. Overall, employers cited, on average, five specific occupations.

* Percent in brackets is the percent employing that occupation

Specific Professional Occupations Employed (41%)*

Professional



Q4. For each of the broad occupations you selected, please indicate the more specific occupations you employ? (Please check all that apply)

Base: Managers (n=205) Professional (n=182)

** (e.g., business services, sales, marketing, etc.)

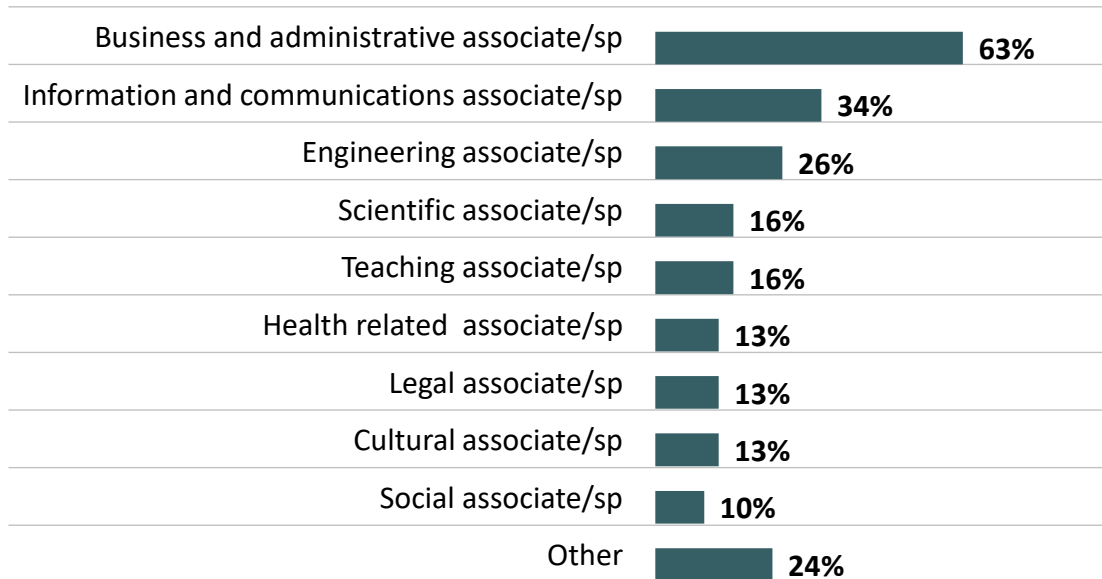
*** (e.g., production, manufacturing, mining, information and communications technology, professional service managers)

Among occupations made up of technicians and associate professionals, business and administration is easily the most frequently cited. In addition, a support role for the traditional professions are also cited.

- Not unexpectedly, public sector organizations have a high proportion of support professions relative to the private sector (e.g., health, teaching, legal, social and cultural).
- Public sector organizations are also more likely than the public sector to cite having customer service, secretaries and keyboard work occupations.

Specific Technician/Associate Professional Occupations Employed (27%)*

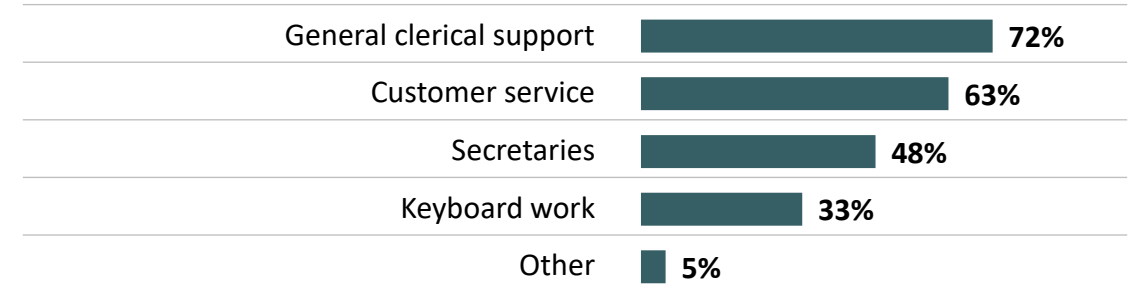
Technicians and Associate Professionals**



* Percent in brackets is the percent employing that occupation

Specific Clerical Support Occupations Employed (43%)*

Clerical Support Workers



Q4. For each of the broad occupations you selected, please indicate the more specific occupations you employ? (Please check all that apply)

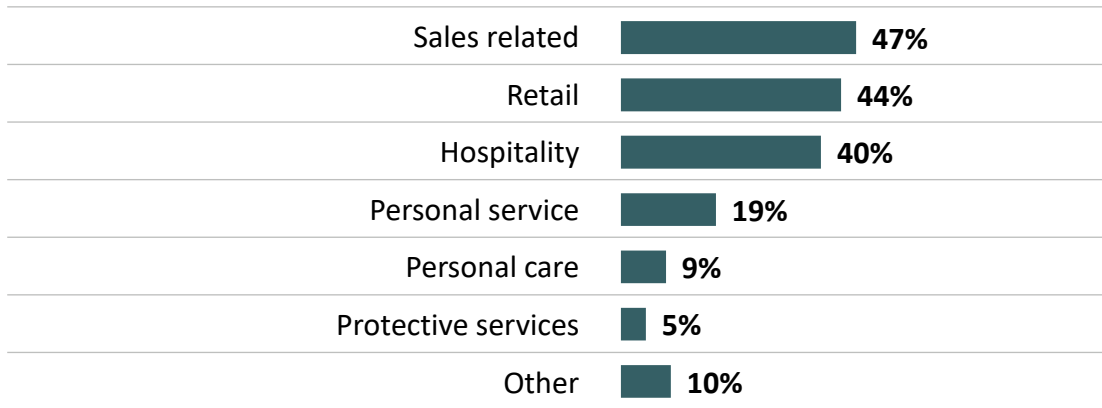
Base: Technicians and Associate Professionals (n=121) Clerical and Support Workers (n=193)

** Note: Each mention in the list has "/sp" at the end which means 'support professional'

Sales, retail and hospitality are the most cited service/sales occupations, with sales and retail occupations being widely spread across organizations of all sizes.

Specific Service/Sales' Occupations Employed (42%)*

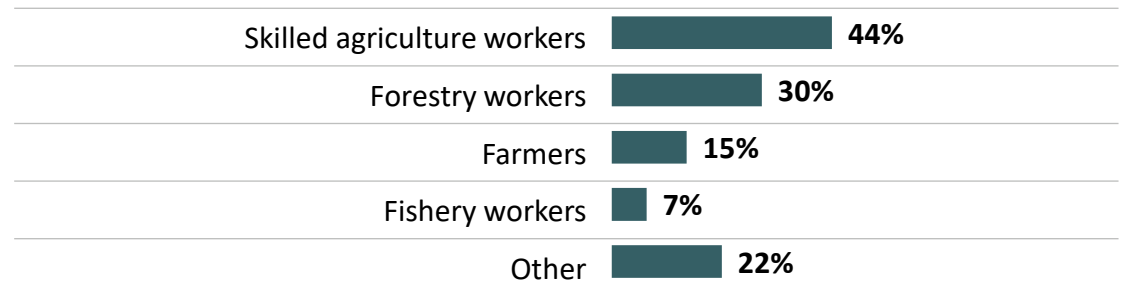
Service and Sales Workers



* Percent in brackets is the percent employing that occupation

Specific Agriculture/Forestry/Fishery' Occupations Employed (6%)*

Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers



Q4. For each of the broad occupations you selected, please indicate the more specific occupations you employ? (Please check all that apply)

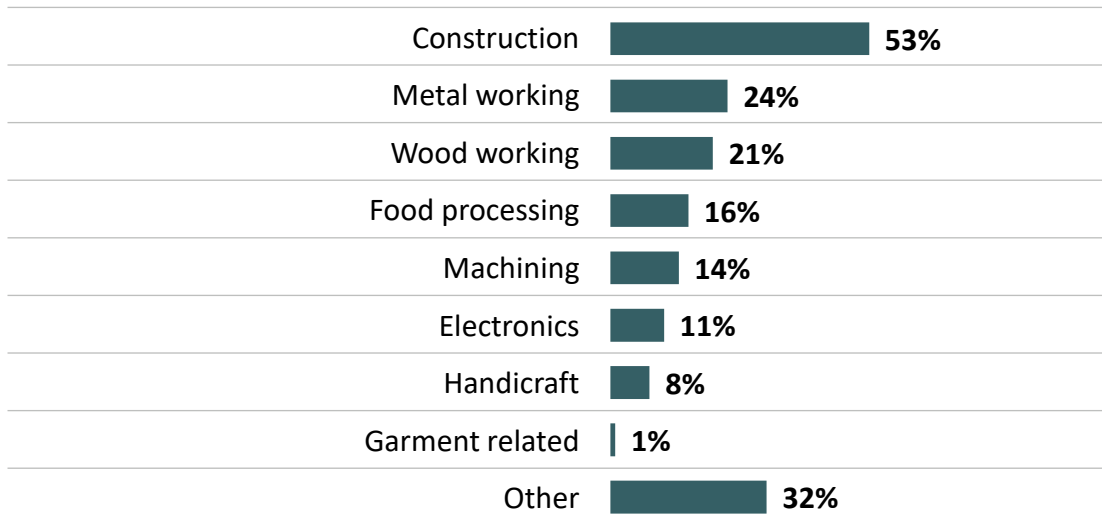
Base: Service and Sales Workers (n=188) Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers (n=27c)

c Caution: Low base size

Construction occupations are easily the most cited craft/trade related occupations, while heavy mobile machinery and transportation related occupations are the most cited plant/machine operators/assembler occupations.

Specific Craft/Trades' Occupations Employed (27%)*

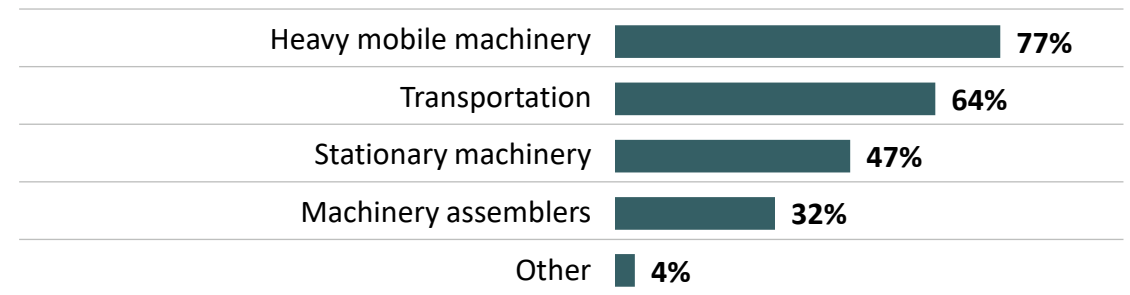
Craft-related Trades Workers



* Percent in brackets is the percent employing that occupation

Specific Plant/Machine Operators/Assemblers' Occupations Employed (11%)*

Plant and Machine Operators, and Assemblers



Q4. For each of the broad occupations you selected, please indicate the more specific occupations you employ? (Please check all that apply)

Base: Craft-related Trades Workers (n=121) Plant and Machine Operators, and Assemblers (n=47c)

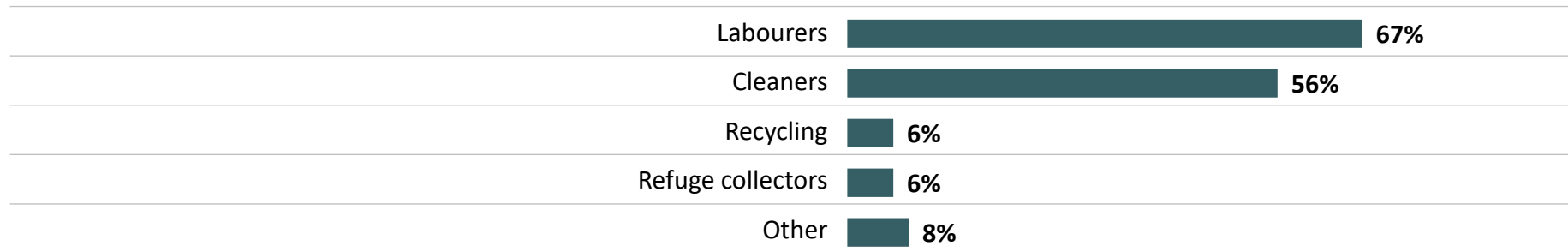
c Caution: Low base size

Labourers and cleaners are the major occupations cited as unskilled or non-office.

- Cleaners are cited more frequently in public sector than private sector organizations.

Specific Unskilled/Non-Office Occupations Employed (27%)*

Relatively Unskilled, Non-office Occupations



* Percent in brackets is the percent employing that occupation

MOST DIFFICULT OCCUPATION TO HIRE

Among those that employ the occupation, when asked to identify the single most difficult occupation to hire, craft related trades (60%), service and sales (53%), and professional (48%) are cited most frequently. This translates into 16%, 22% and 20%, respectively, of all employers surveyed citing each as the most difficult.

- Based on the difficulty in hiring, in terms of the number of workers for each skill, the implication is that more service workers are required than craft/trade related workers. This is a result of fewer employers using this occupation, despite those employing this skill being the most likely to say it is the most difficult to hire.

Single Most Difficult Occupation to Hire	Employ the Occupation	Most Difficult	Total
Service and sales workers (e.g., hospitality, retail, personal service, sales related, personal care, protective services)	42%	53%	22%
Professional (e.g., scientific, engineering, health related, teaching, business and administrative, information and communications, legal, social, cultural)	41%	48%	20%
Craft related trades workers (e.g., construction, machining, handicraft, electronics, food processing, wood working)	27%	60%	16%
Managers	46%	20%	9%
Technicians and associate professionals (e.g., as above but semi professional and have skills to provide support, in training for professional role)	27%	34%	9%
Relatively unskilled non office occupations (e.g., cleaners, recycling, refuse, labourers, etc.)	27%	29%	8%
Clerical support workers (e. g. customer services, secretaries, clerical and keyboard support, general clerical support)	43%	10%	4%
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers (e.g., stationary machinery, transportation, heavy mobile machinery, etc.)	11%	34%	4%
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	6%	26%	2%

Q3. From the list below, can you identify the occupations that your business employs? (Please check all that apply)

Base: n=445

Q4. For each of the broad occupations you selected, please indicate the more specific occupations you employ? (Please check all that apply)

Base: n= various

Q5. Of the occupations you cited as employing, which, if any, is the most difficult to hire for? (please check one only)

Base: Occupations cited at Q4 (n=421)

DETAILED OCCUPATIONS MOST DIFFICULT TO HIRE

The first column shows the percent among all employers hiring that occupation. The second column shows, among the specific occupations they employ, the percent saying it is the single most difficult to hire. For example, among the 10% of employers citing hospitality as an occupation they hire, 56% selected it as the single most difficult to hire.

Single Most Difficult Occupation to Hire

	Total	Most Difficult
NET SERVICE & SALES	24%	53%
Hospitality	10%	56%
Retail	5%	25%
Sales related	5%	21%
Personal service	2%	23%
Personal care	1%	19% c
Protective services	<1%	10% c
Other Service & Sales	1%	32% c
NET PROFESSIONALS	21%	48%
Business and administrative	6%	20%
Health related	5%	48%
Engineering	2%	22%
Information and communications	2%	14%
Teaching	2%	32% c
Social	1%	16%
Legal	1%	14% c
Scientific	<1%	9% c
Cultural	<1%	8% c
Other Professional	2%	36% c

	Total	Most Difficult
NET CRAFT/TRADES	17%	60%
Construction	6%	42%
Food processing	2%	47% c
Metal working	1%	21%
Electronics	<1%	15% c
Wood working	<1%	8% c
Machining	<1%	6% c
Handicraft	<1%	10% c
Other Craft/Trades	6%	60%
NET TECHNICIANS/ASSOCIATE PROFESSIONALS	10%	34%
Business and administrative associate/support professional	2%	12%
Engineering associate/support professional	1%	16%
Scientific associate/support professional	1%	21% c
Information and communications associate/support professional	1%	7%
Teaching associate/support professional	<1%	11% c
Health related associate/support professional	<1%	6% c
Social associate/support professional	<1%	6% c
Other Technicians/Associate Professionals	4%	26%

Q5. Of the occupations you cited as employing, which, if any, is the most difficult to hire for? (please check one only)

Base: Occupation cited at Q4 (n=421)

c Caution: Low base size

DETAILED OCCUPATIONS MOST DIFFICULT TO HIRE (CONT'D)

Across all detailed occupations, the most difficult to hire for among those citing they hire that occupation are hospitality (56%) health related (48%) and construction (42%). Among all employers, this represents 10%, 5% and 6%, respectively, saying each is the most difficult to hire.

Single Most Difficult Occupation to Hire

	Total	Most Difficult
NET MANAGERS	10%	20%
Administrative and commercial managers (e.g. business services, sales, marketing, etc.)	4%	12%
Hospitality, retail and other service managers	2%	12%
Production and specialized managers (e.g. production, manufacturing, mining, information and communications technology)	2%	11%
CEO, senior officials (VP, director level)	1%	6%
Other Managers	1%	36% c
NET UNSKILLED	8%	29%
Labourers	6%	34%
Cleaners	1%	9%
Refuge collectors	<1%	14% c
Other Unskilled	<1%	10%

	Total	Most Difficult
NET CLERICAL	5%	10%
Customer service	4%	12%
Secretaries	<1%	2%
General clerical support	<1%	2%
Other Clerical	<1%	22% c
NET PLANT/MACHINE OPERATORS	4%	34%
Transportation	2%	23%
Heavy mobile machinery	2%	22%
Machinery assemblers	<1%	7% c
NET AGRICULTURE/FORESTRY/FISHERY c	2%	26%
Skilled agriculture workers	1%	33% c
Fishery workers	<1%	50% c
Other Agri/Forestry/Fishery	<1%	15% c

Q5. Of the occupations you cited as employing, which, if any, is the most difficult to hire for? (please check one only)

Base: Occupation cited at Q4 (n=421)

c Caution: Low base size

TOP FIVE PEOPLE SKILLS/TECHNICAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES LACKING IN PEOPLE HIRED

There is a good deal of agreement among employers regarding the people and technical skills most lacking in those they hire. Problem solving (54%) and commitment to quality (42%) are the top people skills lacking, while analytical thinking (49%) and industry-specific skills (46%) are the top technical skills cited.

- Irrespective of the size of the organization or occupations hired, employers generally cite the same types of people and technical skills that are lacking.
- Two technical skills show significant variations. One is Industry-specific technical skills where craft/trade (60%), plant/machine operators/assemblers (70%) occupations, and technical and associate professionals (58%) are well above the norm (46%). The other is Skilled trades, again craft/trade (61%) and plant/machine/etc. (60%) are well above the norm (27%).

Top 5 People Skills and Competencies Lacking

Problem solving	54%
Commitment to quality	42%
Decision making	35%
Leadership	34%
Personal management	31%
Interpersonal skills	30%
Having judgement	30%
Adaptability	28%
Service orientation	28%
Resilience	21%
Continuous learning	20%
Establishing & maintaining interpersonal relationships	15%
Risk management	13%
Collaboration	9%
Negotiation	6%
We do not hire staff/have not hired in a number of years	2%
Don't know/not sure	5%

Top 5 Technical Skills and Competencies Lacking

Analytical thinking	49%
Industry-specific technical skills	46%
Basic business acumen	33%
Skilled trades (egg: construction, welding, electrical)	27%
Analyzing data or information	24%
Computer, Technology and Information Systems	23%
Reading comprehension	18%
Digital literacy	15%
Finance	11%
Accounting	10%
Numeracy	10%
Experimentation and design thinking	9%
Software/computer programming	7%
Basic science skills	4%
Digital production	4%
Cybersecurity	4%
Don't know/not sure	11%

Q6. Of the following, which are the top 5 people skills and competencies lacking in the people you hire? (Please select up to 5 options)

Base: n=445

Q7. Of the following, which are the top 5 technical skills and competencies lacking in the people you hire? (Please select up to 5 options)

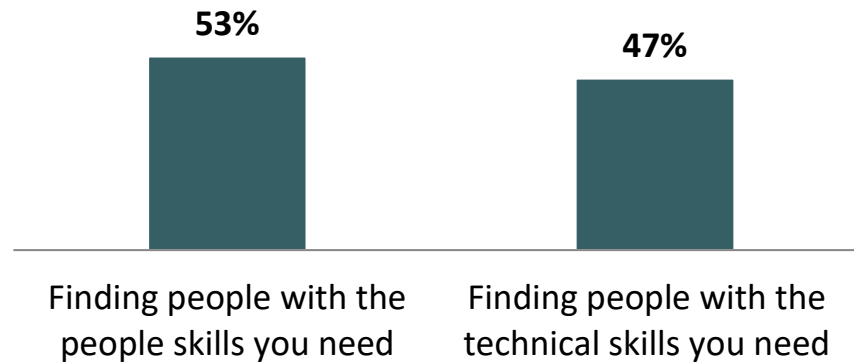
Base: n=445

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN HIRING

Employers are fairly evenly divided regarding whether or not the biggest hiring challenge is finding those with the people or technical skills they need.

- There are some variations across the specific occupation employers hire. Among those citing service/sales occupations (68%) and those citing technical/associate professionals (65%) report finding those with people skills is the bigger challenge, while among those hiring craft related occupations (64%) say it is finding those with technical skills.

Identification of which is the Biggest Challenge in Hiring



Q8. Overall, which is the biggest challenge in hiring? (Please select one only)

Base: n=438 excludes n=7 who have not hired staff in last few years at Q6

IMPORTANCE OF SKILLS UPGRADING OR NEW SKILLS ACQUISITION AND BIGGEST BARRIER

Skills upgrading/acquisition is important to almost all organizations, with half (53%) saying it is ‘very’ important; with difficulty retaining trained staff and limited budget being the two main upgrading/acquisition barriers.

- Organizations saying finding those with technical skills is the bigger challenge are more likely than those citing people skills to say skills upgrading/acquisition is ‘very’ important (61% to 45%, respectively).

Importance of Skills Upgrading or New Skills Acquisition

TOTAL IMPORTANT	91%
Very important	53%
Somewhat important	38%
Not too important	8%
Not at all important	1%
TOTAL NOT IMPORTANT	9%
Don't know/not sure	1%

Biggest Barrier Faced in Skills Upgrading and Acquisition

Difficulty retaining trained employees	22%
Limited budget for this	21%
Limited staff interest in skills upgrading	14%
There are no major barriers	10%
Few places where the skills we use/need can be upgraded	7%
Can't afford to give staff time off	7%
Difficulty identifying skills gaps and determining appropriate training needs	5%
Lack of access to technology or tools necessary for skills upgrading	2%
Limited management support for skills upgrading	1%
Inadequate support from management or leadership	<1%
Don't know/not sure	5%
Other	7%

Q9. How important to the successful running of your organization is skills upgrading or new skills acquisition?

Base: n=445

Q10. What is the biggest barrier your organization faces in the area of skills upgrading/skills acquisition? (Please check one only)

Base: n=445

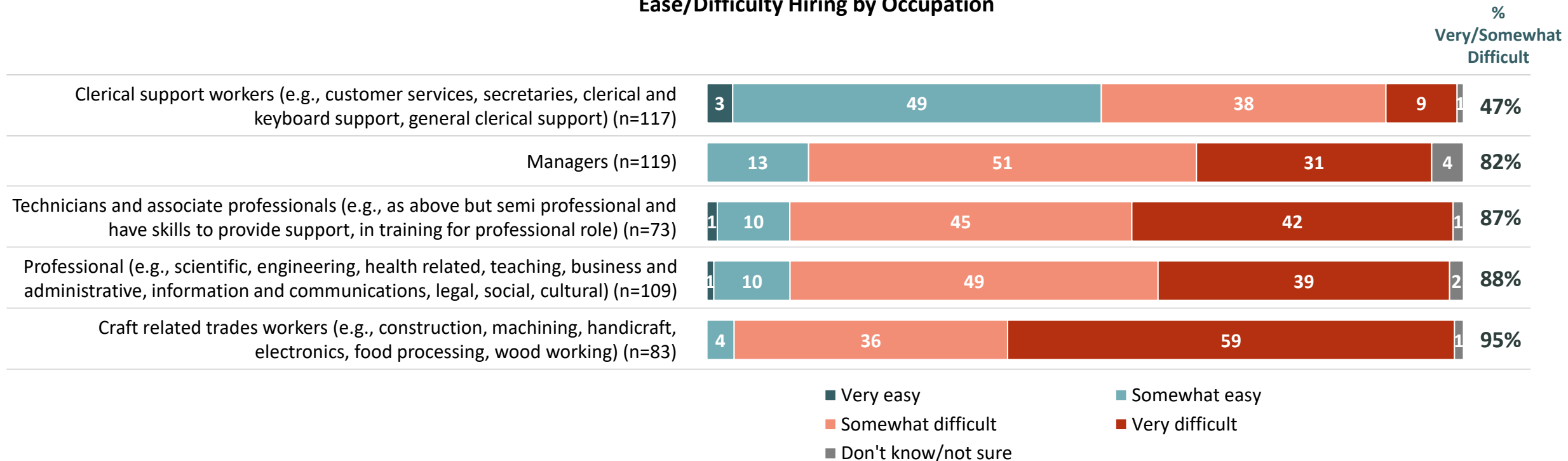
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FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS

LEVEL OF EASE/DIFFICULTY IN HIRING FOR OCCUPATIONS

Among those employing specific occupations, employers report that aside from clerical support, they have a great deal of difficulty in hiring. This is especially the case for those employing craft related trades.

Ease/Difficulty Hiring by Occupation



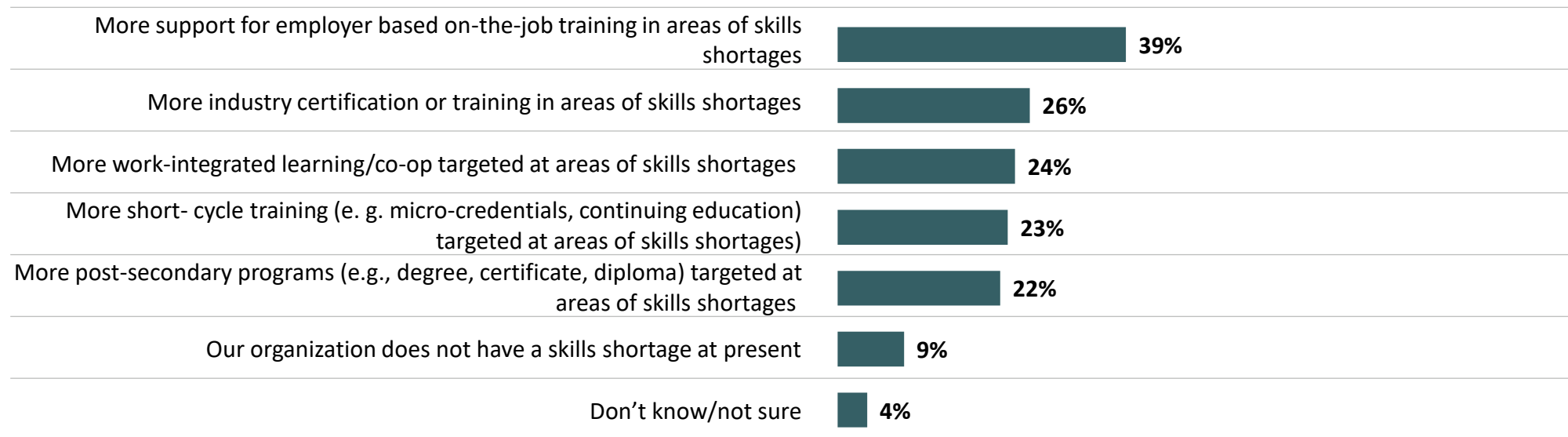
Q11. For each occupation you selected in an earlier question about occupations you employ, how easy or difficult is it to hire this occupation?
 Base: Each occupation selected at Q4A (n=Bases vary) *Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers* not shown: Base size too small to report (n=13)

TOP TWO OPTIONS FOR MEETING SKILLS SHORTAGE

While no one option is clearly preferred by employers for meeting skills shortages, the most cited is for more support for employers on job training.

- Among those employing professional occupations, more post-secondary programs (34%) is cited most frequently, as is more industry certification (38%) among those employing technical and associate professional occupations.
- Smaller organization (5 - 49 staff) are the most likely (50%) to opt for more support for on-the-job employee training.

Preferred Options (top 2) for meeting skills shortage



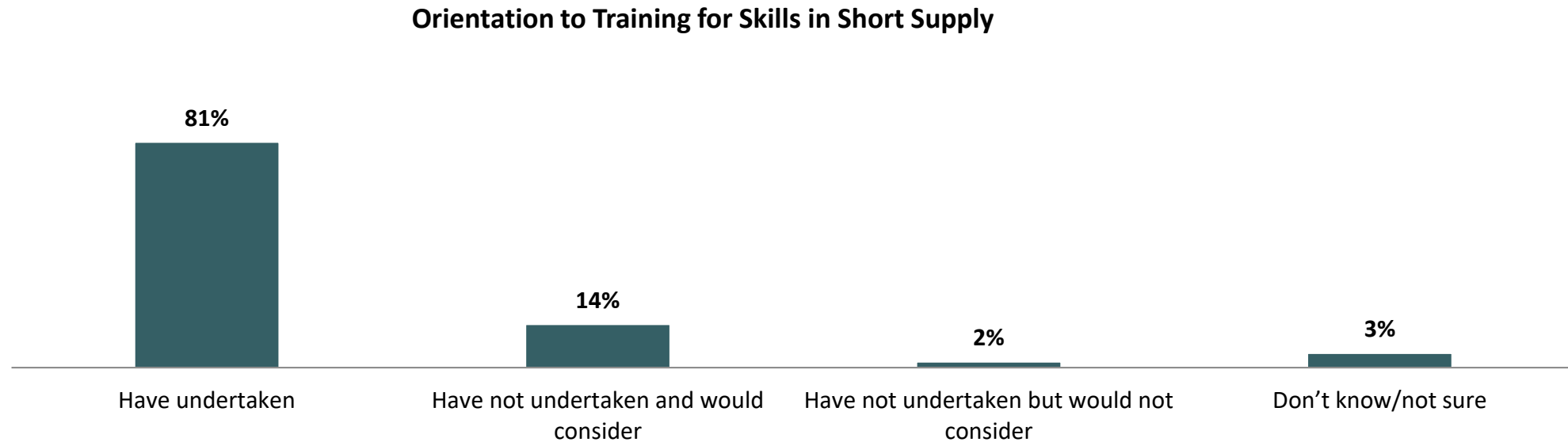
Q12. Which of the following is your preferred option for meeting skills shortage? (Please select up to two responses)

Base: n=283

CONFIDENTIAL

EXTENT BUSINESS IS WILLING TO TRAIN NEW HIRES IF SKILLS IN SHORT SUPPLY

In most cases (81%), employers say they already undertake training of new hires if skills are in short supply. Among those few who have not, most would consider it.



Q13. To what extent is your business willing to train new hires if skills are in short supply?

Base: n=283

CONFIDENTIAL

Employers use a variety of approaches to skills upgrading/acquisition, with on-the-job training being the most common (88%). A minority (38%) have had staff take programs at post-secondary institutions and a further one-third (34%) would consider it.

- Post-secondary programs are more frequently cited as being undertaken by those organizations that employ technical and associate professionals (58%), craft related trades workers (51%), and professionals (49%) and would not be considered by those employing sales and service occupations (40%).

Extent Various Forms of Skills Upgrading/Acquisition is Undertaken and Considered

	Have undertaken	Have not undertaken and would consider	Have not undertaken but would not consider
On-the-job training while staff are working	88%	10%	2%
Having staff take training program on company time	67%	20%	11%
Sending staff on in-person programs	56%	31%	13%
Having staff take training programs in their own time	51%	34%	15%
Having staff take programs at a post-secondary institutions	38%	34%	28%
Other	37%	34%	29%

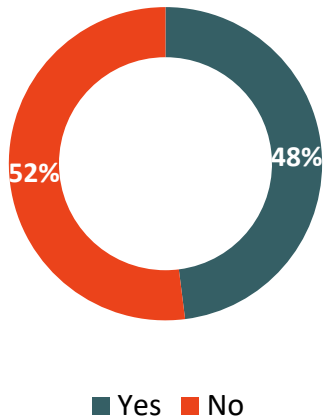
Q14. Which of the following are the main ways you address skills upgrading or skills acquisition in your workplace and would consider in the future? (Please check all that apply)

Base: n=283

Half (52%) of employers report having a training budget, with the median amount budgeted for each employee being \$785.

- The presence of a training budget is strongly linked to staff size: 2- 9 staff (28%), 50 – 49 staff (49%), 50 – 199 staff (66%), 200+ staff (89%).
- Size also has some impact on the amount budgeted: among organizations of under 50 staff, the median amount is \$640, while among those of 50 or more the median is more than \$1,000.

Training and Skills Upgrading Budget



Business’s Spending Plans for Training Over Next Year, Per Employee

No planned spending	4%
Up to \$99	2%
\$100 - \$349	13%
\$350 - \$499	12%
\$500 - \$999	20%
\$1,000+	34%
Don't know / not sure	15%
Median Amount	\$785

Q15. Do you have training/skills upgrading budget?

Base: n=283

Q15B. What are your business’s spending plans for training over the next year, per employee?

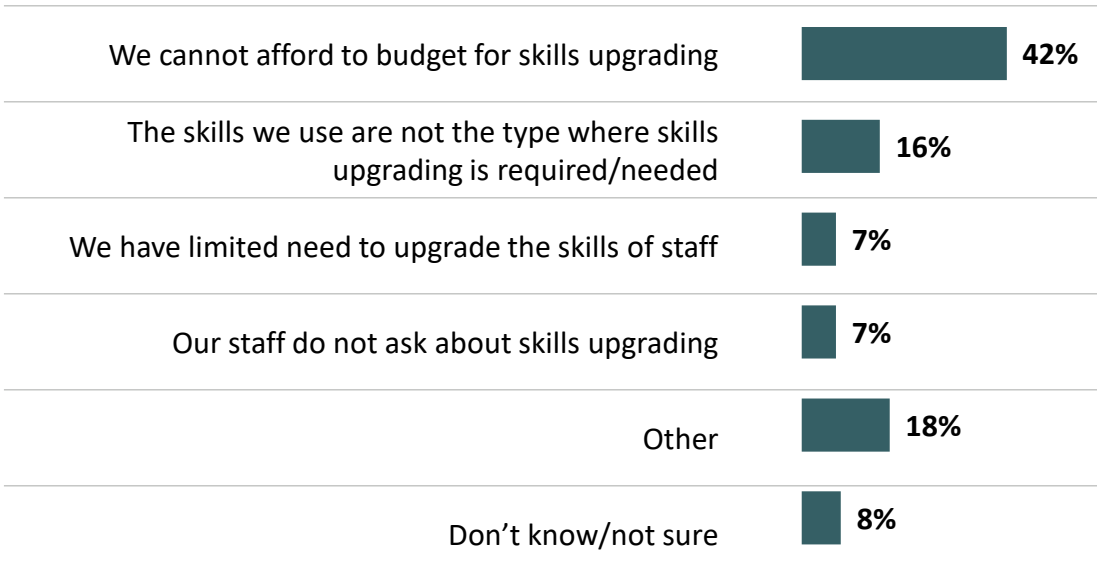
Base: Has training budget at Q15 (n=137)

REASONS FOR NO SKILLS TRAINING BUDGET AND BIGGEST BARRIER TO DOING MORE TRAINING IN AREAS OF SHORTAGE

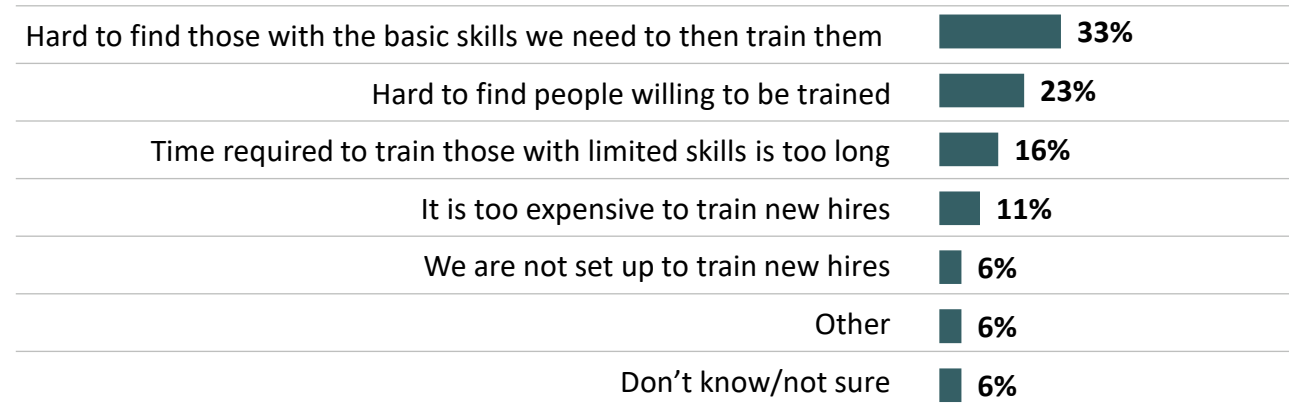
Among those with no training/skills upgrading budget, not being able to afford to budget (42%) is the most frequently cited reason. The biggest barrier to more skills training is the difficulty of both finding those with the basic skills needed (33%) and finding those who are willing to be trained (23%).

- Organizations of under 10 staff are much more likely than those that are larger to say they can't afford a training budget (49% to 35%, respectively).

Reasons for Not Having Skills Training Budget



Biggest Barrier to More Skills Training of Hires in Areas of Shortage



Q16. Which of the following best describes why you do not have a skills training budget?

Base: No training/skills upgrading budget at Q15 (n=146)

Q17. What is the biggest barrier to your organization doing more training of hires in the areas where you have skills shortages?

Base: No training/skills upgrading budget at Q15 (n=146)

6

DEMOGRAPHICS

Sample Demographics

AB YEARS IN OPERATION

	n=	482
Less than 2 years	4%	
2 – 5 years	12%	
6 – 10 years	12%	
11 – 15 years	10%	
16 – 20 years	9%	
21 – 30 years	15%	
31 – 50 years	23%	
More than 50 years	15%	
Don't know/not sure	1%	

PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SECTOR

	n=	482
Public	18%	
Private	68%	
Not for profit	14%	

NUMBER OF STAFF IN ALBERTA

	n=	482
Just me (1)	8%	
2 – 4	17%	
5 – 9	18%	
10 – 19	18%	
20 – 49	12%	
50 – 199	18%	
200 – 499	4%	
500+	5%	

BEST DESCRIPTION OF INDUSTRY

	n=	101
Other Services (except public administration)	16%	
Retail Trade	13%	
Construction	10%	
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	8%	
Food Services	7%	
Agriculture	6%	
Educational Services	5%	
Transportation	5%	
Finance	4%	
Health Care	4%	
Recreation	4%	
Accommodation	3%	
Oil & Gas Extraction	3%	
Information and Cultural Industries	2%	
Manufacturing	2%	
Rental and Leasing	2%	
Arts	1%	
Commercial Real Estate	1%	
Entertainment	1%	
Insurance	1%	
Public Administration	1%	
Social Assistance	1%	
Wholesale Trade	1%	

JOB TITLE

	n=	482
President, CEO, Owner or Executive Director	56%	
Vice president or equivalent	5%	
C-Suite executive (CFO, CMO, CTO, CXO)	2%	
Partner, advisor or associate	5%	
Other senior manager	16%	
Contractor or self-employed	5%	
Assistant, coordinator or manager (or equivalent)	10%	
Unemployed	<1%	
Other	1%	

OWNER OR PARTNER (President, CEO, Owner, Executive Director or C-Suite or Advisor, Associate at description of industry and job title, Q30, Q31)

	n=	367
Yes	75%	
No	25%	

TOURISM INDUSTRY (Answered "Fishing OR Hunting OR Retail trade OR Transportation OR Information and cultural services OR Insurance OR Private real estate OR Other" at Q29)

	n=	320
Yes	24%	
No	76%	

GENDER

	n=	482
Female	49%	
Male	48%	
Transgender	<1%	
None of the above	<1%	
Other	<1%	
Prefer not to answer	3%	

LOCATION MOSTLY WORK FROM

	n=	482
All regions of Alberta	20%	
Calgary area	8%	
Central	20%	
Edmonton area	21%	
Mountain parks	3%	
Northeast	17%	
Northwest	21%	
Southeast	4%	
Southwest	5%	