

D I G G I N G
D E E P E R

**DIGGING DEEPER:
LEARNING FROM THE
LOCAL LABOUR MARKET
IN SIMCOE
AND MUSKOKA**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides the results of a survey undertaken of employers in Simcoe County and the District of Muskoka. The survey was undertaken by a collection of Employment Ontario employment services providers for the purpose of better understanding the labour market expectations of employers, particularly related to their workforce needs and hiring decisions. The survey was administered between April 10 and May 4, 2012, resulting in 307 responses, representing a good cross-section of employers by geography, size and industry.

One message comes out loud and clear: employers seek job-ready employees, individuals who have work experience and/or a work ethic, supported by the appropriate interpersonal skills and the right fit with the organization. Poor attitude and a lack of relevant work experience were the most common reasons why employers turned down a job applicant.

The educational attainment and experience qualifications for a job increase as one moves up the skill spectrum. There are, however, significant differences among the industries highlighted in the report. Essentially, two clusters were apparent: Accommodation & Food, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, and Retail Trade tended to have somewhat lower expectations compared to the cluster of Manufacturing, Health Care & Social Assistance and the Knowledge Sector. For the latter cluster, for Intermediate and Senior level positions, Manufacturing tended to place more emphasis on experience while Health Care & Social Assistance and the Knowledge Sector gave a higher premium to educational credentials.

It is noteworthy that among all employers, almost a third indicated that they expected as much as 2-4 years of work experience from a candidate seeking an Entry-level job, what typically has been considered a common first job.

Employers ranked four factors as most important when making a hiring decision for an Entry-level job: work ethic, interpersonal skills, fit with the organization, and personality. Knowing the candidate personally or knowing the candidate's references personally ranked lowest among the 18 factors offered (employers indicated that personal connections will get an individual an interview but will not be a decisive factor when making the hiring decision).

The same three factors ranked at the top when it came to making hiring decisions for an Intermediate or Senior level position: work ethic, interpersonal skills, and fit with the organization. However, for these higher-level positions, two other factors vaulted forward: problem-solving skills and work experience, surpassing personality, which now fell to sixth place.

Employers were also asked to identify the most common reasons why job applicants are turned down. By far the two most common reasons were poor attitude or presentation and lack of relevant work experience. Four other reasons ranked fairly high as well: lack of technical skills; salary expectations were too high; inflexibility with regards to hours or shifts; and their references raised concerns.

A concern with poor attitude or presentation is a far greater consideration among the Accommodation & Food and Retail Trade sectors than among the other sectors. It is a slightly greater concern in the Health Care & Social Assistance, but in the other sectors (Arts, Entertainment & Recreation; Manufacturing; Knowledge Sector), employers are more likely to turn down a job applicant because of a lack of relevant work experience.

As one moves up the occupation skill ladder, employers are more hard-pressed to find qualified applicants. Around 15% of employers found it very difficult to find qualified Entry-level workers, 34% found it very difficult to find qualified Intermediate level workers, while 56% found it very difficult to find qualified Senior Level employees. On the other hand, almost half of employers (48%) said it was not at all difficult to find qualified Entry-level workers.

Employers pointed out a number of skill shortages, with skilled trades being the most prominent and the one deemed by many to be very serious. Other broad occupational categories for which shortages were claimed were among customer service, business/accounting and office skills. The two most common specific occupations that employers named as being difficult to fill were cooks and retail clerks.

Regarding soft skills, employers were more likely to cite gaps among job recruits in such areas as taking the initiative and problem-solving. When examined by industry, industries which have greater skill requirements, such as Health Care & Social Assistance or the Knowledge Sector, report lower incidences of lack of soft skills, while industries which have lower expectations regarding educational attainment or prior work experience, such as Accommodation & Food, report higher gaps in soft skills among job recruits.

Industries vary in terms of the distribution of workers by skill level in their workforces. Accommodation & Food Services and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation had very high proportions of Entry Level workers, each at 57%, while the Knowledge Sector had the highest proportion of Senior Level employees (42%), with Health Care & Social Assistance following closely at 38%.

In terms of part-time and casual/temporary employees, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and Accommodation & Food Services both had high proportions of workers in these categories, Health Care & Social Assistance and Retail Trade had an average or medium proportions, while employers in the Knowledge Sector and Manufacturing had low proportions of workers in these categories. When it came to seasonal workers, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation had very high proportions of seasonal workers (around 60%) and Accommodation & Food Services had high proportions (almost 40%). The figures fall

off to under 20% for Retail Trade, around 10% for the Knowledge Sector, and in the single digits for Manufacturing and Health Care & Social Assistance.

When it comes to orienting a recruit to his or her new job, employers most often use the following onboarding strategies: requiring an employment probationary period; providing a formal job description; providing an orientation session; organizing a tour of the facilities; and providing company handbooks and/or policy manuals. Not surprisingly, organizations with 1-4 employees engage in far fewer of these activities than other employers.

Employers use a variety of strategies to seek out applicants for their job openings. The four most frequently used strategies are also the four which receive the highest satisfaction ratings: word of mouth; electronic postings; employee recommendations; and internal postings. The three least likely used strategies were social media, private temp agencies and job fairs. The strategies that had the lowest satisfaction rankings were newspaper advertisements, social media, walk-ins and job fairs. Non-profit community agencies ranked 7th in terms of frequency of use, out of 10 possibilities, and 5th in terms of satisfaction. Smaller firms are less likely than larger firms to use a variety of recruitment strategies, in particular Internal Postings and Job Fairs, and to some extent Newspaper Advertisements.

Employers who participated in this survey were aware of Employment Ontario employment services providers, however they were often only somewhat familiar with what these services offered. The larger the firm size, the more likely they were aware of and were knowledgeable of the services. Respondents suggested several ways in which these employment services could better serve the needs of employers: providing more information about what services they provided, communicating regularly with employers, learning more about what employers need, and doing a better job of screening referral job candidates.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is entirely dependent on the input of employers and the first big thanks has to go to all those employers who made the effort to complete the on-line survey. In setting aside time from their busy schedules, these employers provided us with the raw data which gives us the insights to enhance the ability of Employment Ontario employment services providers to better match job seekers to job openings, thus improving the labour market dynamics of the County of Simcoe and the District of Muskoka.

That so many employers did respond is in large part a consequence of the outreach work undertaken by the various Employment Ontario employment services providers, local chambers of commerce and local municipal economic development offices, who made their e-mail lists available to us and/or posted a link to our survey on their websites.

These connections, and all the logistical work involved in convening workshops to review and help interpret the results, were made possible by the cheerful and energetic work of the project's marketing and event coordinator, Shari Simpson-Campbell. That over 300 employers made their way to the survey, and that seven workshops were held across the region over the course of three weeks, was largely due to her indefatigable efforts.

This project was directed by a steering group who greatly helped develop the content of the survey and thus ensure the relevance of this work for the needs of job seekers and employers in the region. This steering committee was made up of:

- Kathy Low, Northern Lights Canada
- Holly Hie, Georgian College
- Louise Woodrow, Barrie Career Centre
- Anne Myles, Focus Alliston
- Donna Newell, Northern Nights Canada
- Karen Ferguson, YMCA

This project would not have been possible without funding provided by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. The project proposal was a unique partnership comprised of ten local Employment Ontario employment services providers.

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Background to the survey

This survey of employers was undertaken at the instigation of the Employment Ontario employment service providers operating in Simcoe County and the District of Muskoka. Together they conceived this project and secured funding from the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to design and administer the survey, as well as hold sessions afterwards with employment counsellors and local employers, where the results of the survey were presented and tested with the participants.

The objective of the survey was to understand better the labour market expectations of employers, particularly in terms of recruiting new employees. The survey was carried out between April 10 and May 4, 2012.

The following sections profile the employers who responded to the survey, followed by the results to the specific labour force questions which made up the bulk of the survey.

Industry sectors

All respondents answered the first question, identifying their industry sector.

Table 1: Industry distribution of employers

Industry sector	
Accommodation and Food Services	39
Administrative & Support, Waste Management	13
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	5
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	24
Construction	16
Educational Services	8
Finance and Insurance	16
Health Care and Social Assistance	35
Information and Cultural Industries	7
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0
Manufacturing	40
Mining and Oil & Gas Extraction	0
Other Services (except Public Administration)	18
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	16
Public Administration	16
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	4
Retail Trade	40
Transportation and Warehousing	4
Utilities	2
Wholesale Trade	4
TOTAL	307

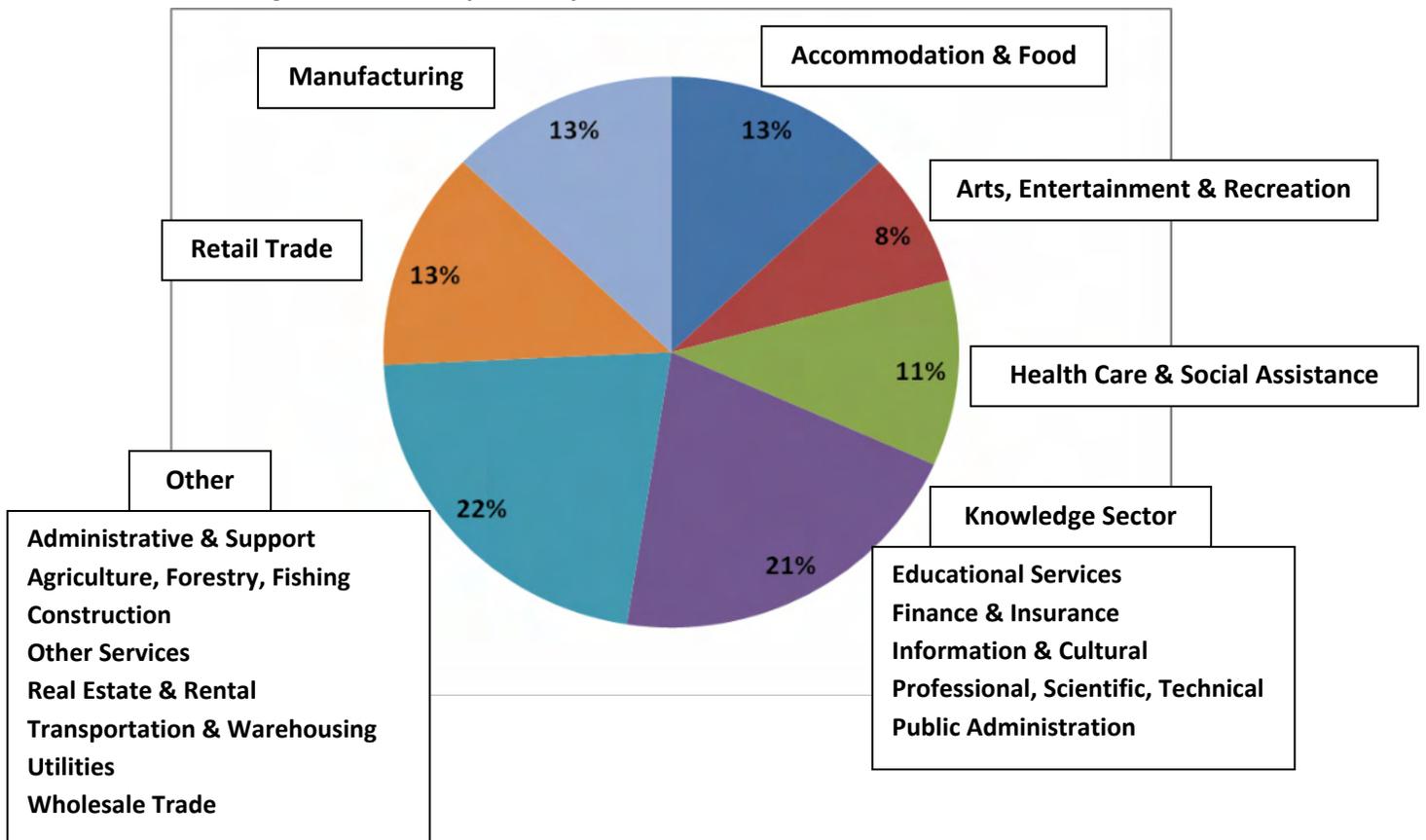
In percentage terms, several of the industries have enough responses to warrant isolating and comparing responses to some of the questions by industry sectors. These sectors will be made up of:

- Accommodation and Food Services
- Arts, Entertainment and Recreation
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Manufacturing
- Retail Trade

In addition, a further sector, called the Knowledge Sector, will incorporate the following industries: Educational Services; Finance and Insurance; Information and Cultural Industries; Professional, Scientific & Technical Services; and Public Administration.

Chart 1 illustrates the percentage distribution by industry sector, with all the remaining industries falling under Other. The Other category will not be included in cross-tabulated comparisons because of the great heterogeneity of the industries thrown together into this group.

Chart 1: Percentage distribution by industry sector



Establishment location

Respondents were broadly spread across Simcoe and Muskoka, with the three highest concentrations in Barrie, Orillia and Bracebridge. Some establishments listed more than one location and, as a result, the total number of responses is slightly higher than the total number of employers who undertook the survey.

Table 2: Geographic distribution of employers

Location	#	%
Barrie	69	22%
Orillia	43	14%
Bracebridge	33	10%
Midland/Penetanguishene	28	9%
Huntsville	24	8%
Bradford West Gwillimbury	14	4%
Collingwood	13	4%
New Tecumseth	12	4%
Gravenhurst	10	3%
Innisfil	10	3%
Essa	8	3%
Other location in Simcoe County or District of Muskoka	53	17%
TOTAL	317	100%

Establishments by employee size

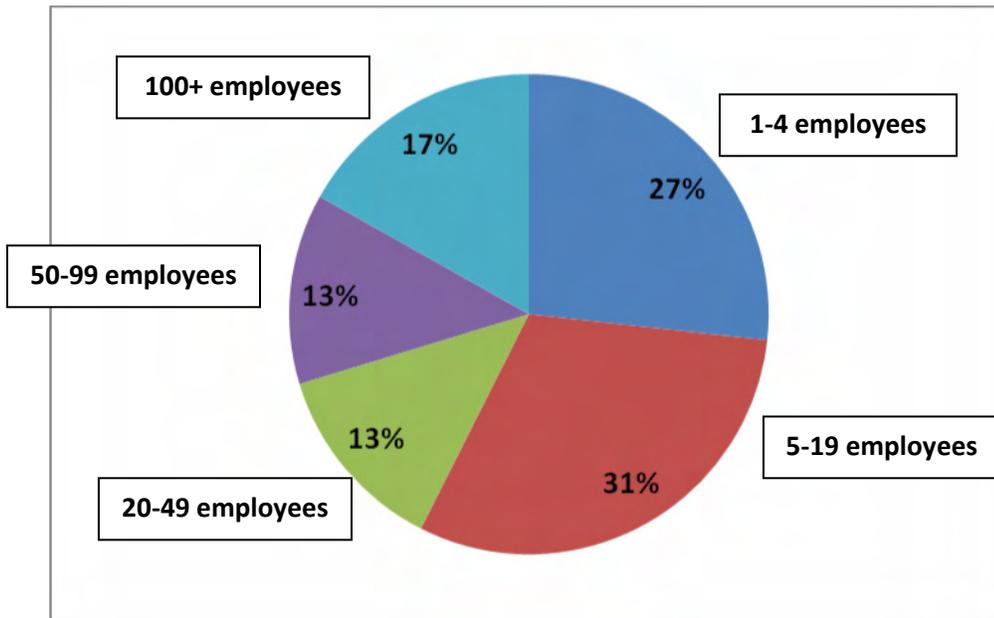
Respondents were also well distributed across all employee size ranges. Not surprisingly, many employers fell in the small size category, but a good percentage (17%) employed 100 or more employees. Table 3 compares the distribution of survey respondents by employee size to the distribution of businesses by size found across Simcoe and Muskoka as a whole.¹

¹ The data for the distribution of businesses by size is 2011 data from Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Development Board, *2012 Local Labour Market Plan*, pp. 15 and 17.

Table 3: Employers by employee size

Number of employees	Survey		Simcoe	Muskoka
	#	%		
No employees	0	0%	56%	53%
1-4 employees	82	27%	24%	25%
5-19 employees	94	31%	15%	17%
20-49 employees	40	13%	3%	3%
50-99 employees	38	13%	1%	1%
100 or more employees	51	17%	1%	1%
TOTAL	305	101%	100%	100%

Chart 2: Percentage distribution by employee size



There are notable variations across the industries in the distribution of establishments by employee size among the respondents. Manufacturing had a much higher proportion of firms with more than 100 employees. Accommodation & Food had the next highest proportion of establishments with more than 100 employees, and a healthy distribution across all categories. Retail trade had a much lower proportion of establishments with more than 100 employees, but it exhibited higher proportions in the middle categories. The Knowledge Sector has larger proportions of establishments at both ends of the employee size range, with municipal governments and large educational institutions accounting for the bigger establishments, and small professional firms for the smaller. A similar pattern can be found in the

Health Care & Social Assistance sector, with hospitals and nursing homes at the large establishment end and health professionals’ offices at the small end.

Table 4: Percentage distribution of establishments by employee size and by industry

	ALL	Accommodation & food	Arts/recreation	Health care/social assist	Manufacturing	Retail trade	Knowledge sector	Other
1-4 employees	27%	15%	38%	29%	8%	26%	32%	36%
5-19 employees	31%	26%	42%	29%	23%	36%	30%	33%
20-49 employees	13%	26%	8%	6%	13%	21%	11%	9%
50-99 employees	12%	13%	8%	18%	18%	15%	8%	11%
100 or more employees	17%	21%	4%	18%	40%	3%	19%	11%

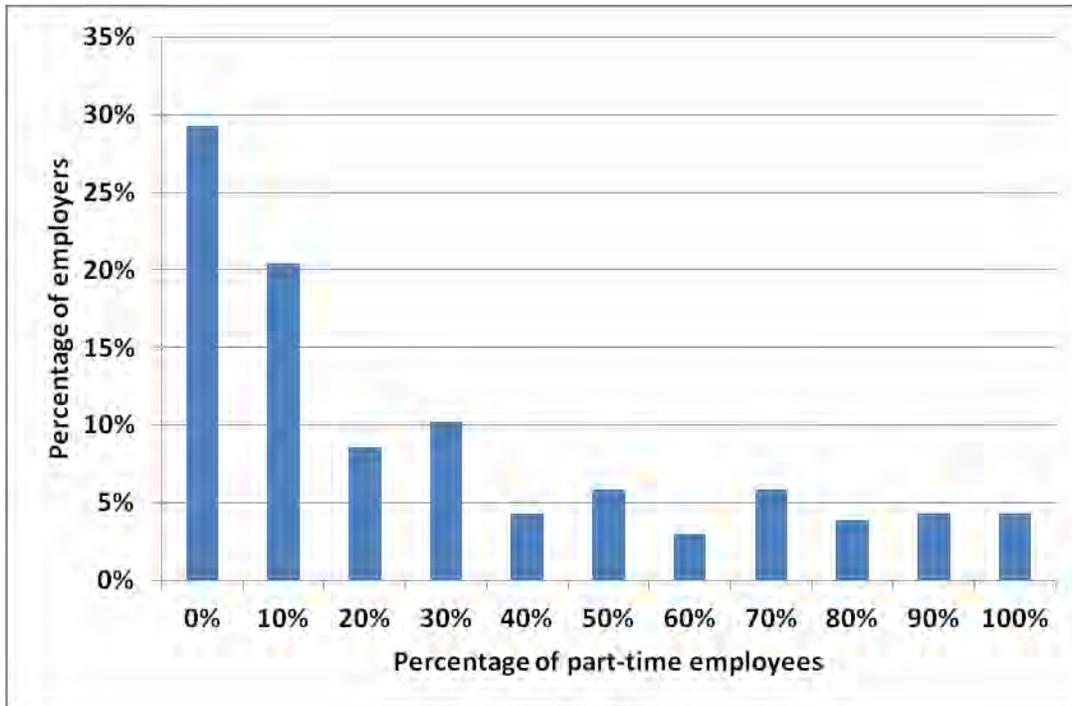
Cells shaded green highlight those percentages that are much higher than the average for that row, while cells shaded red indicate percentages that are much lower than the average.

The establishments with more than 100 employees came from Orillia (10 responses), Barrie (9) and Midland/Penetanguishene (9).

Proportion of part-time employees

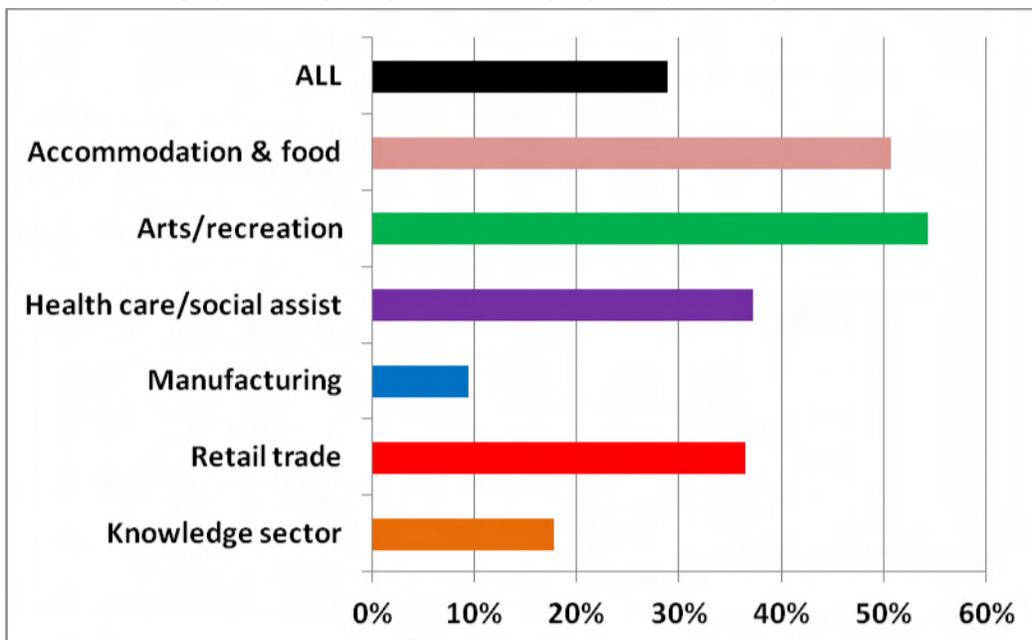
Respondents were asked what proportion of their workforce was made up of part-time workers (i.e. working less than 30 hours per week). Half of the respondents (49.7%) had 10% or less of the workforce employed part-time, while a fifth of employers (21.4%) had 60% or more of their employees working part-time.

Chart 3: Percentage distribution of employees by part-time status



There are substantial differences by industry in the proportion of part-time employees. Chart 4 shows the average response by industry for the proportion of part-time employees in the workforce.

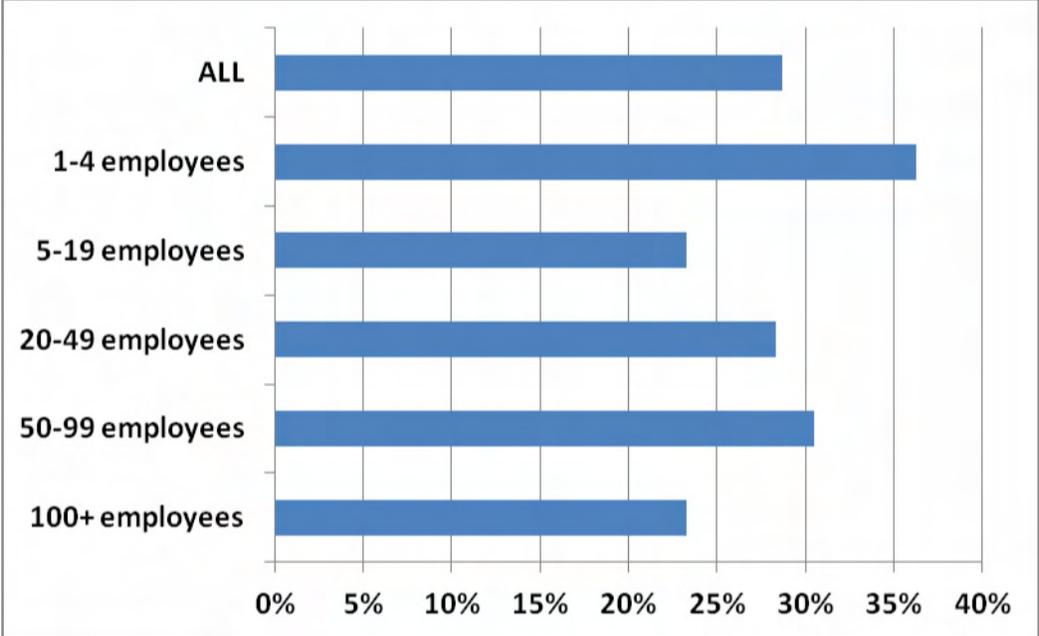
Chart 4: Average percentage of part-time employees by industry



Not surprisingly, Accommodation & Food Services and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation report high proportions of part-time workers, each with an average figure of 50% or more. In the case of Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, responses were clustered at the two ends of the distribution spectrum: 58% of employers in this sector reported having 70% or more of their staff working part-time, while 33% reported having 20% or fewer working part-time. For employers in Accommodation & Food Services, the distribution of responses was much more dispersed: for example, 38% reported having 70% or more of their staff working part-time.

Meanwhile, Manufacturing had the lowest average figure for part-time workers (9%), with 90% of employers indicating that they had 10% or fewer part-time workers. The Knowledge Sector had the second lowest average figure, at 18%. Health Care & Social Assistance had a moderately high proportion of part-time workers (average of 37%), with 43% falling in the 30-50% range. Finally, Retail Trade had an average result of 36%, although the sector had the highest proportion of establishments that indicated that all their employees worked part-time (10% of employers).

Chart 5: Average percentage of part-time employees by employee size

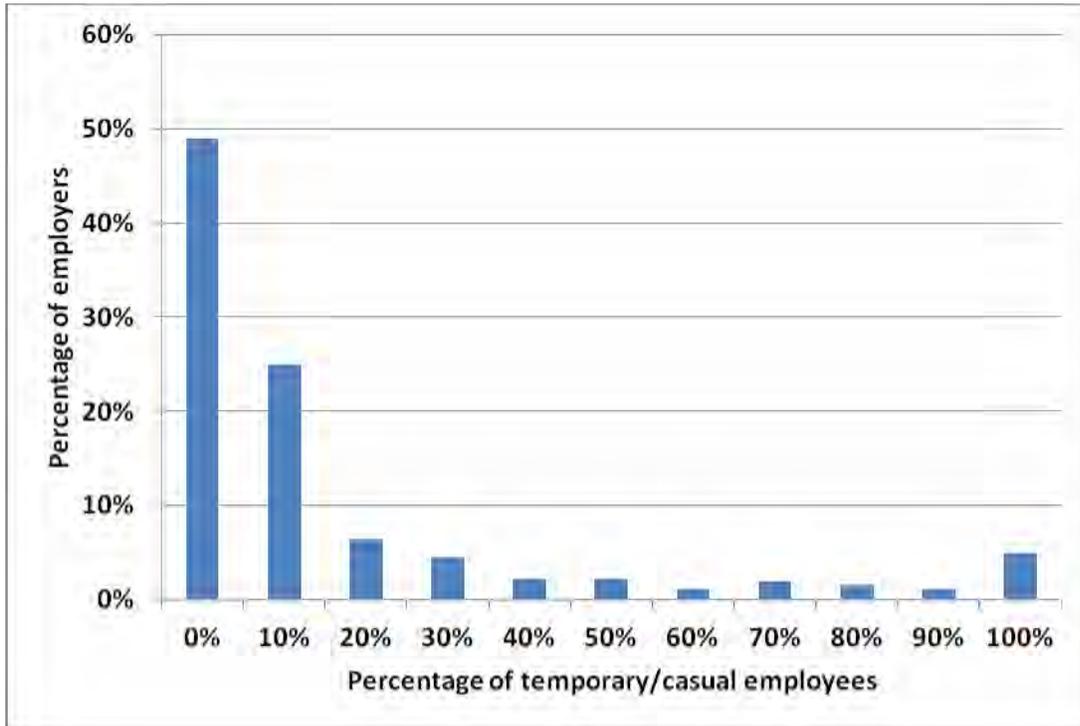


There is far less variation in the average proportion of part-time employees when comparing respondents by the size of their establishments. The lower average figure for firms with 100 employees or more can partly be explained by the higher number of employers in this category from the Manufacturing and Knowledge Sector industries, which have fewer part-time employees. The same cannot be said of establishments with 5-19 employees, which has a healthy mix of all industries, which would suggest that firms of this size simply have fewer part-time workers.

Proportion of temporary/casual employees

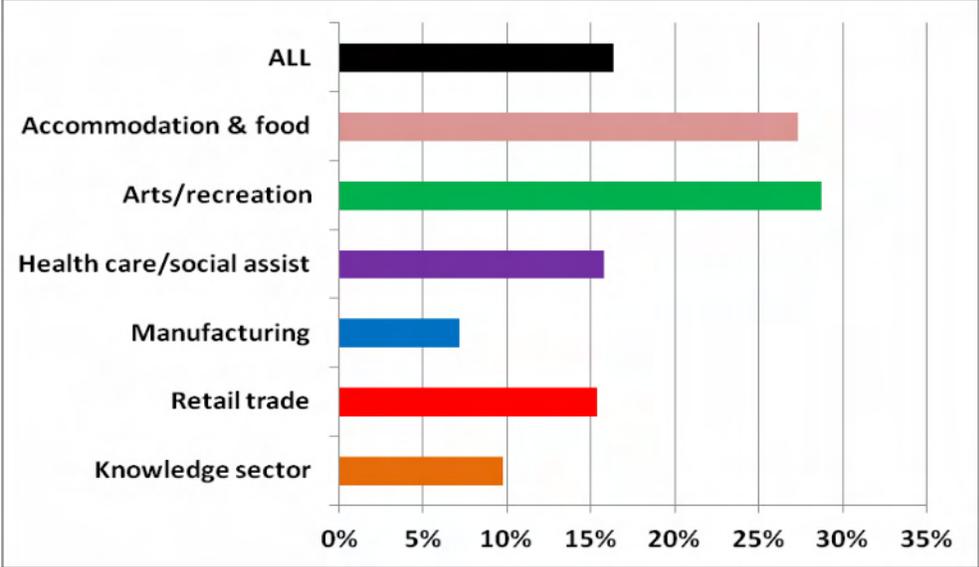
Overall, respondents do not employ a lot of temporary or casual employees. Almost half (49%) reported no such employees and another quarter (25%) had 10% such employees.

Chart 6: Percentage distribution of employees by temporary/casual status



As with part-time employees, there are substantial differences among establishments by industry on the average proportion of temporary/casual employees.

Chart 7: Average percentage of temporary/casual employees by industry

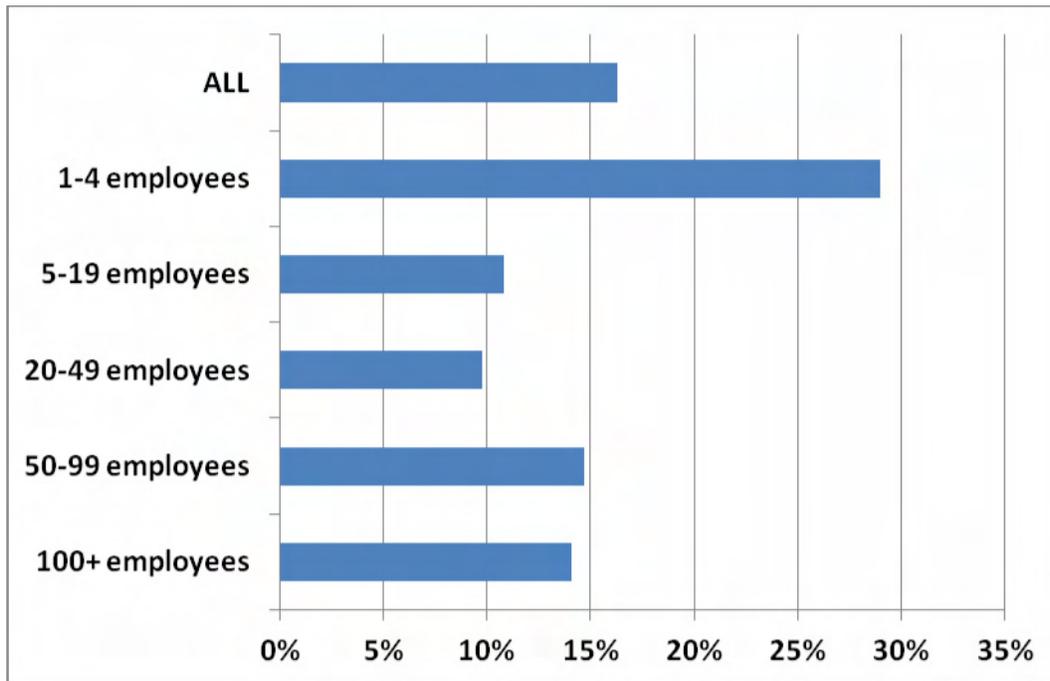


Essentially, the industries fall into three categories:

- Those with a high proportion of temporary/casual employees: Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (29%) and Accommodation & Food Services (27%);
- Those with a medium proportion of temporary/casual employees: Health Care & Social Assistance (16%) and Retail Trade (15%);
- Those with a low proportion of temporary/casual employees: The Knowledge Sector (10%) and Manufacturing (7%).

When the incidence of temporary/casual work is examined in terms of the size of establishments, employers with 1-4 employees have a much higher proportion of such workers. While all the other categories of firm sizes have an average percentage of temporary/casual employees between 10% and 15%, employers with 1-4 employees have an average of 29%.

Chart 8: Average percentage of temporary/casual employees by employee size



Proportion of seasonal employees

Somewhat like the case of temporary/casual employees, respondents also do not employ a lot of seasonal employees, except for two big exceptions: Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and Accommodation & Food Services.

Thus, 49% of respondents reported having no seasonal employees and another 16% had 10%. 13% of establishments claimed that 70% or more of their workforce was seasonable. Of the 23 respondents in that category, 18 were from Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and Accommodation & Food Services. In terms of the average figure for the percentage of seasonal workers, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and Accommodation & Food Services scored very high (60% and 39% respectively), with Retail Trade a distant third (at 19%), with the other three industries at 10% and under.

Chart 9: Percentage distribution of employees by seasonal status

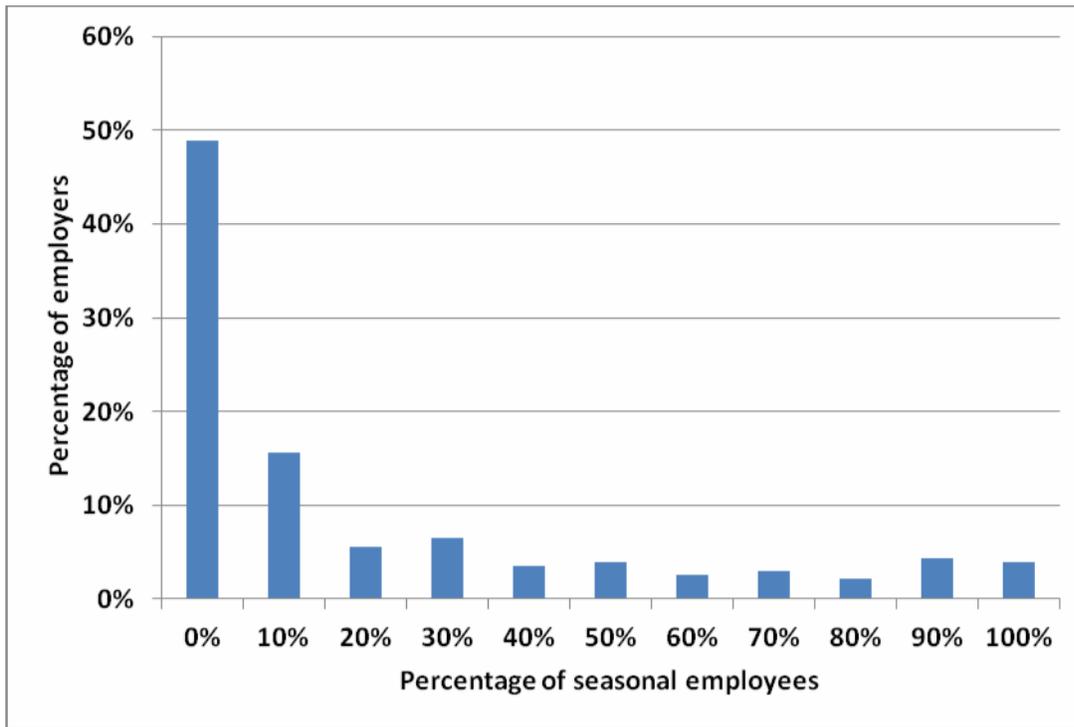
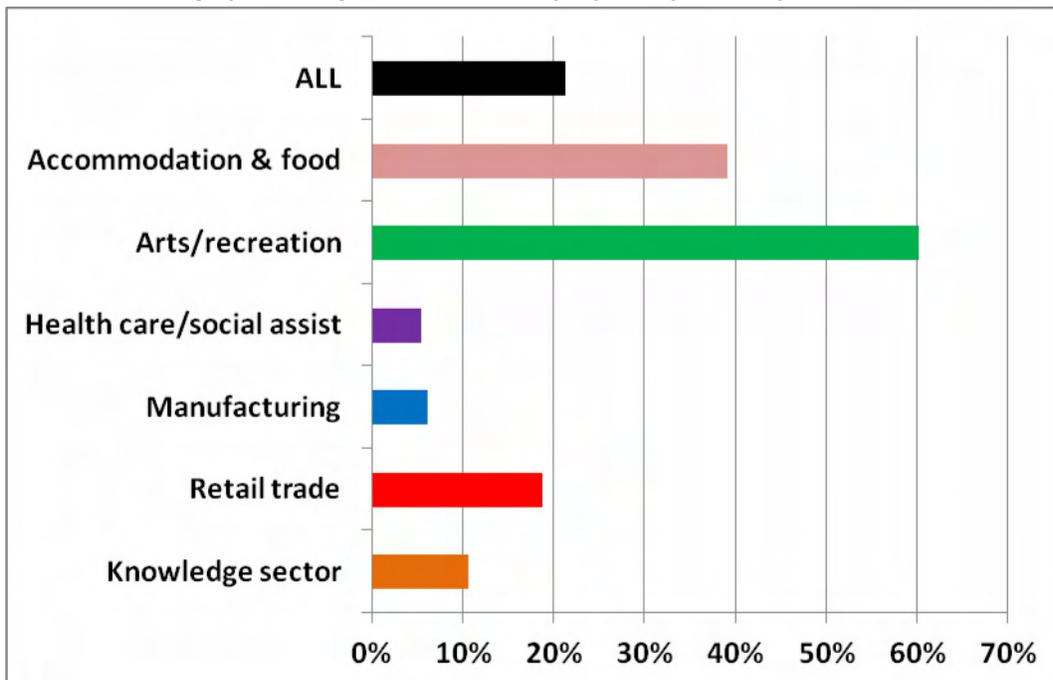
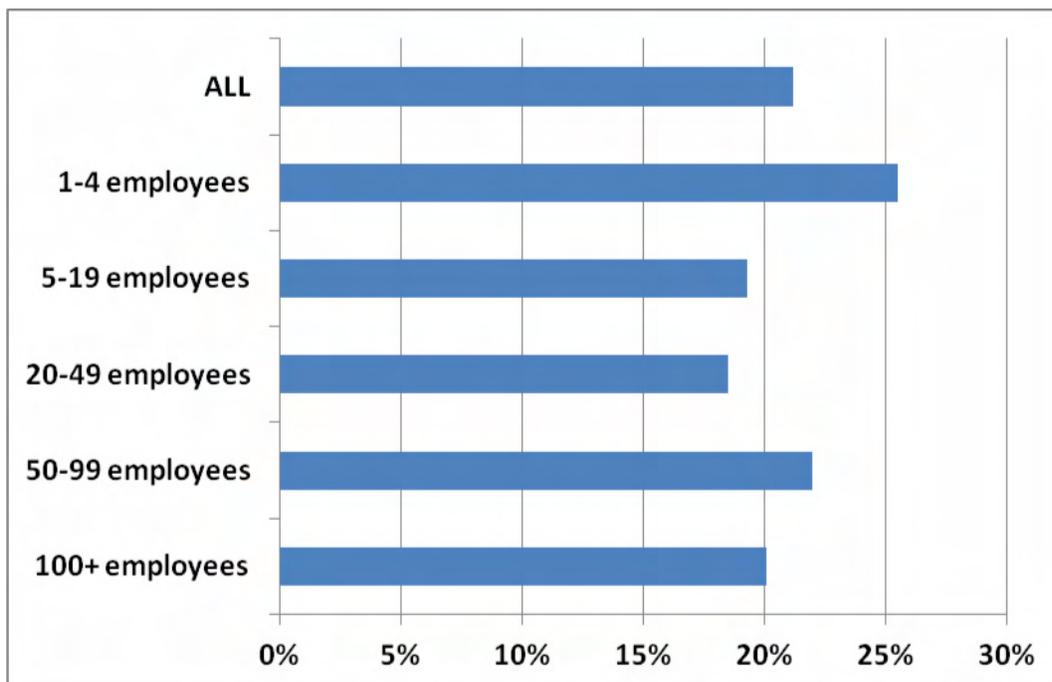


Chart 10: Average percentage of seasonal employees by industry



There was much less variation in the proportion of seasonal employees when examined in terms of employee size, with establishments of 1-4 employees showing a slightly higher average figure.

Chart 11: Average percentage of seasonal employees by employee size



Employees by skill level

Respondents were asked to estimate the proportion of their workforce by three skill categories, as follows:

- Entry level: requires a high school education or less, low skill level or no experience required, like clerical, sales and customer service, or manual labour;
- Intermediate level: semi-skilled or skilled, requiring two or more years of work experience, some training; or an entry-level manager;
- Senior level: experienced management, professionals, highly-specialized skilled worker.

Overall, the profile of occupations followed a typical pyramid structure, with 38% of employees classified as Entry Level, 33% as Intermediate, and 29% considered Senior Level. These proportions are not too far off the profile of jobs that existed in Simcoe and Muskoka at the time of the 2006 Census (see Table 5).

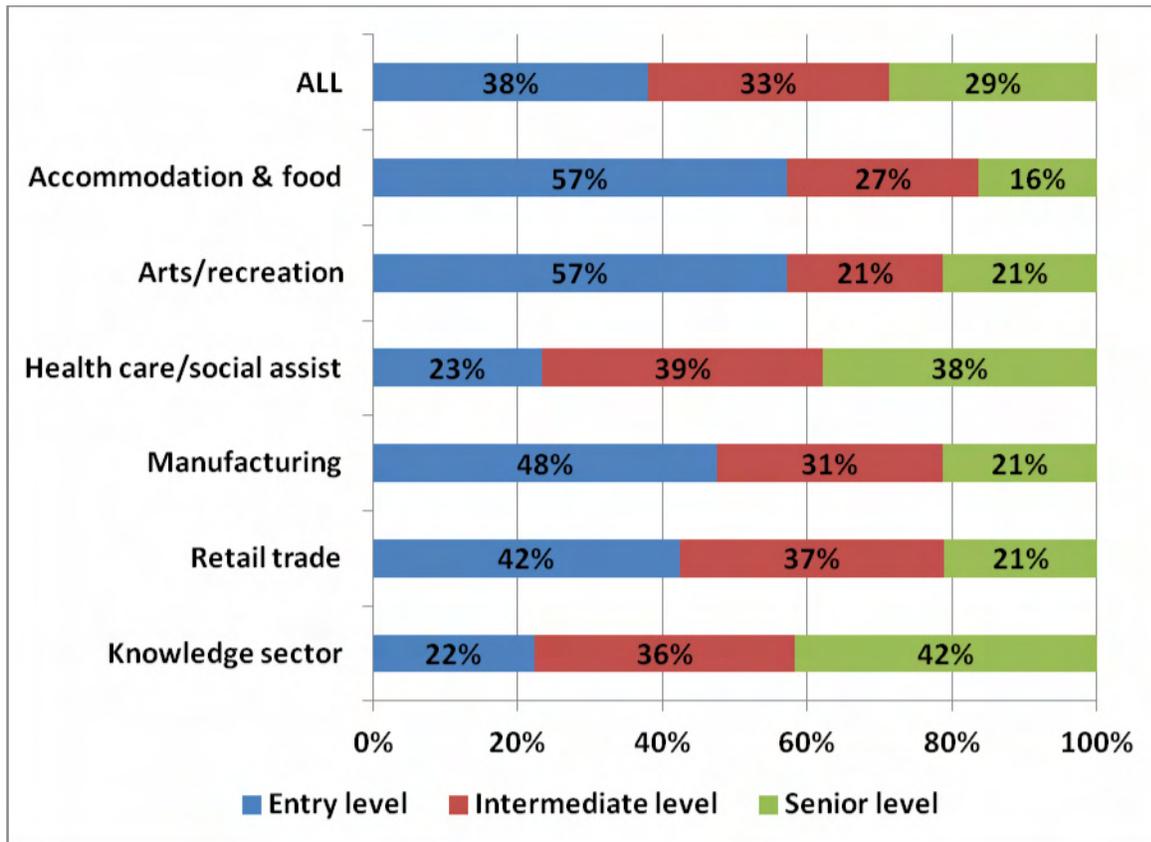
Table 5: Distribution of employees by skill level, survey results and 2006 Census

		SURVEY	CENSUS
Entry-level	Requires a high school education or less, low skill level or no experience required, like clerical, sales and customer service, or manual labour	38%	45%
Intermediate	Semi-skilled or skilled, requiring two or more years of work experience, some training; or an entry-level manager	33%	29%
Senior Level	Experienced management, professionals, highly-specialized skilled worker	29%	26%

Not surprisingly, there were considerable variations by industry. The Knowledge Sector had the highest proportion of Senior Level employees (42%), with Health Care & Social Assistance following closely at 38%. At the other end, Accommodation & Food Services and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation had very high proportions of Entry Level workers, each at 57%.

Manufacturing, Retail Trade and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation all had the same proportion of Senior Level employees; where they differed was in the mix of Entry-level and Intermediate. Among the three, Retail Trade had the highest proportion of Intermediate positions (37%), followed by Manufacturing (31%), while Arts, Entertainment & Recreation lagged considerably (21%).

Chart 12: Percentage of employees by skill level, by industry

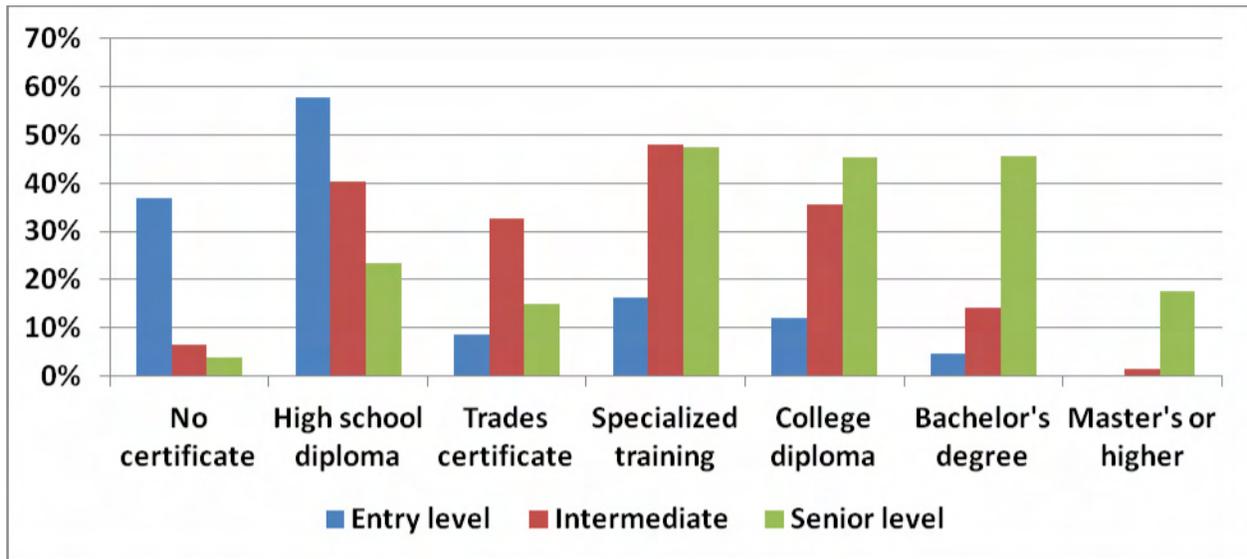


Educational qualifications

Respondents were asked: “What are the usual qualifications you require for a candidate to be considered for a job? Please list all the education criteria that apply.” This question was asked with respect to each of the three skill levels, and respondents could identify more than one educational attainment criteria for each skill level.

Not surprisingly, the educational criteria increases as one moves up the skill levels. As Chart 13 illustrates, the average result for an Entry-level position peaked around “High School Diploma,” the average result for an Intermediate position peaked around Specialized Training, but covered a span of High School Diploma, Trades Certificate and College Diploma, while Senior Level jobs were equally likely to require Specialized Training, a College Diploma or a Bachelor’s Degree.

Chart 13: Educational requirements for a job by skill level



There are noticeable differences between the various industries, in terms of expectations regarding educational qualifications for a job. The charts on the following pages compare the six industries profiled in this report, clustered in three industries per chart, with the industries in each cluster having similarities among themselves.

The following table identifies the industries in each cluster and the number of respondents by industry for this question, to indicate the sample size.

Cluster One		Cluster Two	
Accommodation & Food	39	Manufacturing	40
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	24	Health Care & Social Assistance	35
Retail Trade	40	Knowledge Sector	61

Chart 14a: Educational credentials for a job by skill level: Entry-level (Cluster One)

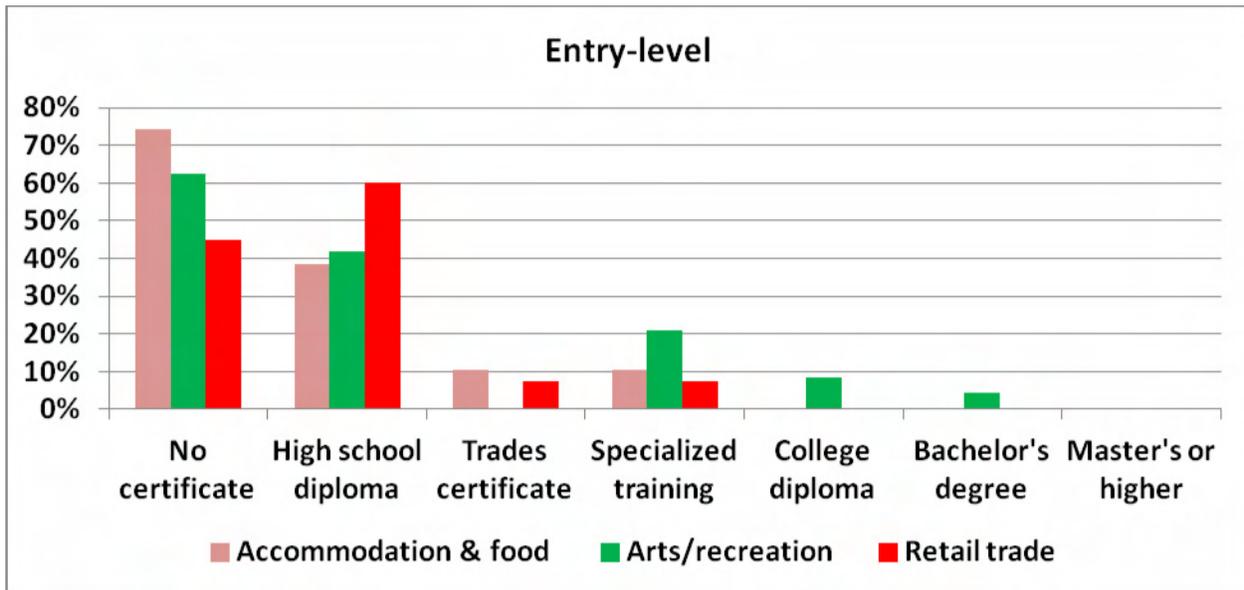
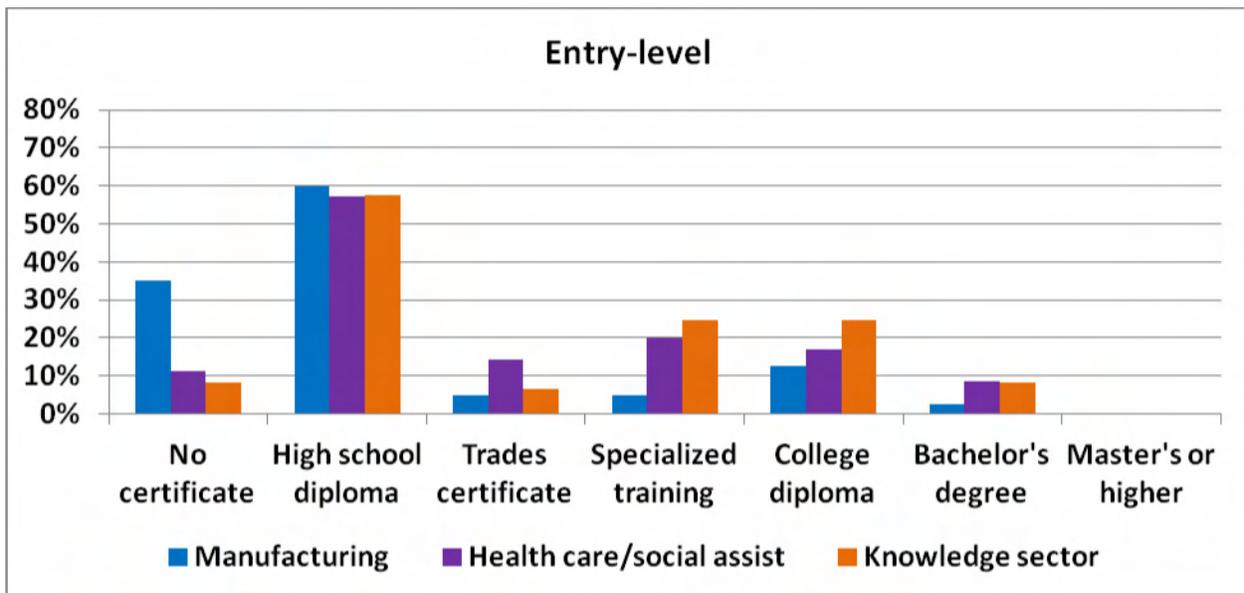


Chart 14b: Educational credentials for a job by skill level: Entry-level (Cluster Two)



For Accommodation & Food, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, and Retail Trade, the educational attainment expectations for an Entry-level job are low, with many employers citing No Certificate (only in Retail Trade do more cite a High School Diploma). For Manufacturing, Health Care & Social Assistance, and the Knowledge Sector, there are far greater expectations for a High School Diploma, and a greater smattering of those seeking higher level educational attainment.

Chart 15a: Educational credentials for a job by skill level: Intermediate (Cluster One)

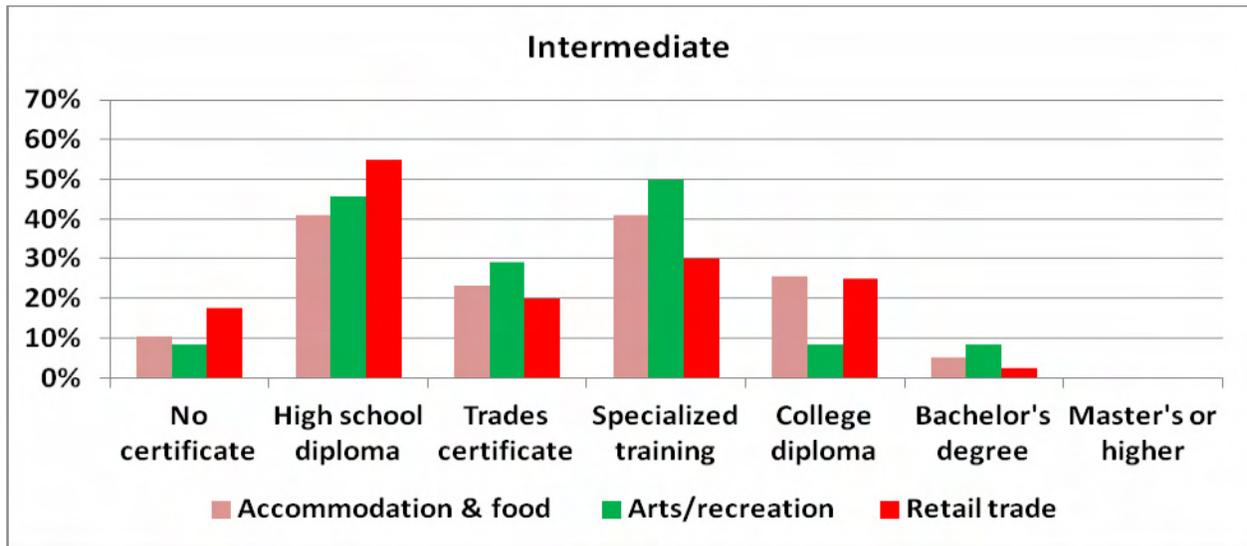
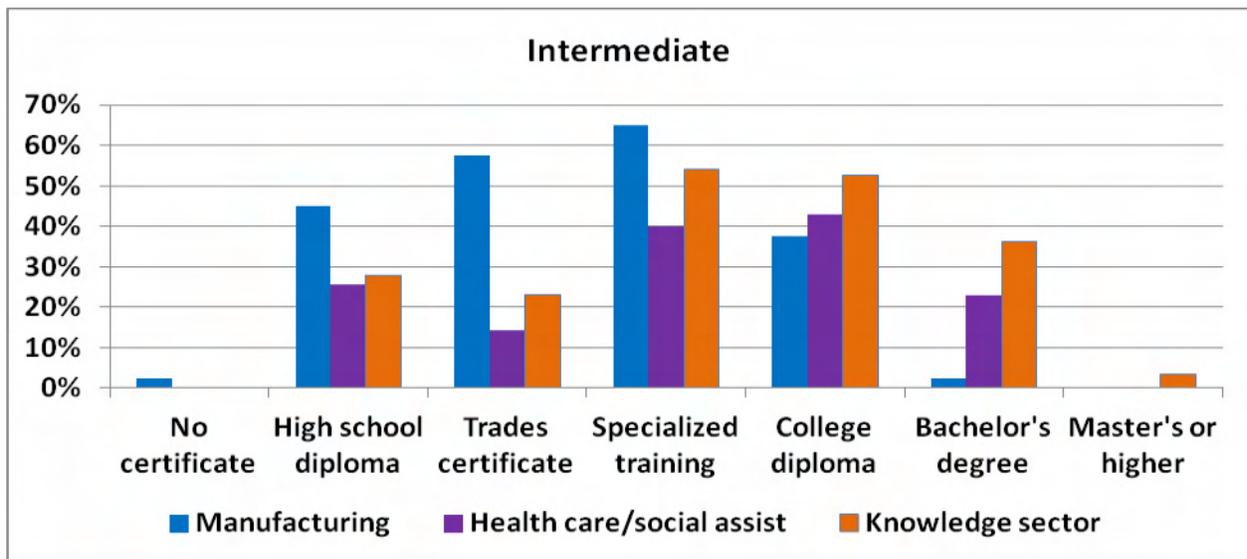


Chart 15b: Educational credentials for a job by skill level: Intermediate (Cluster Two)



For Accommodation & Food, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, and Retail Trade, the educational attainment expectations for an Intermediate job cluster around a High School Diploma and Specialized Training, with somewhat lower expectations for a Trades Certificate or a College Diploma. In the case of Manufacturing, The higher expectations are for Specialized Training or a Trades Certificate; a High School Diploma works for many, while a College Diploma also receives a fair number of responses. For Health Care & Social Assistance and the Knowledge Sector, for Intermediate jobs the expectation is either Specilized Training, a College Diploma or a Bachelor’s Degree.

Chart 16a: Educational credentials for a job by skill level: Senior level (Cluster One)

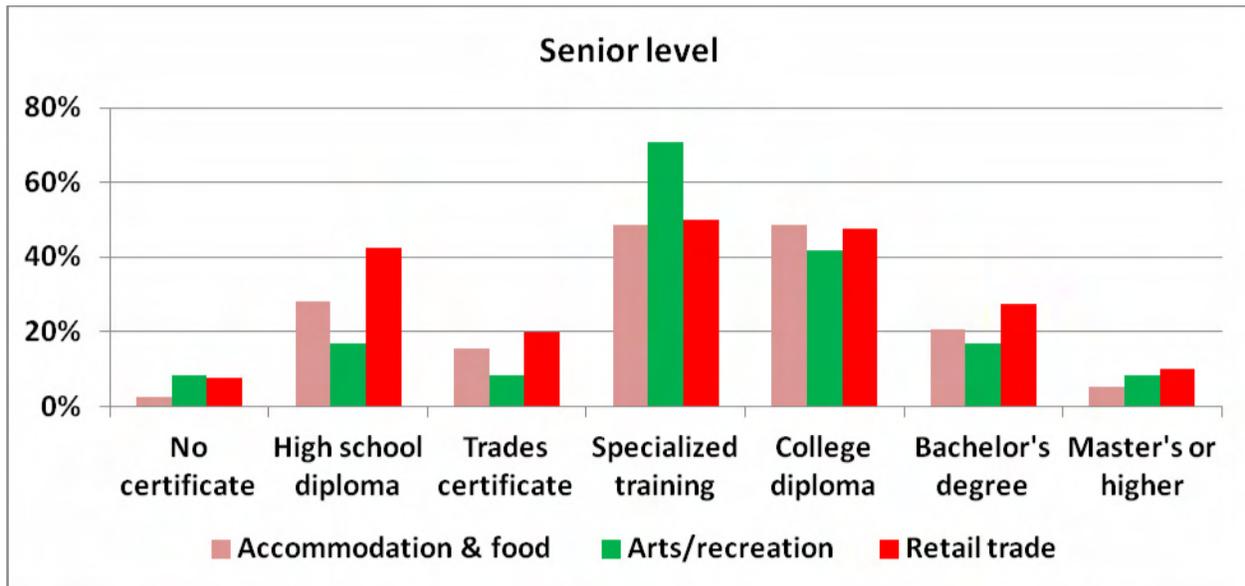
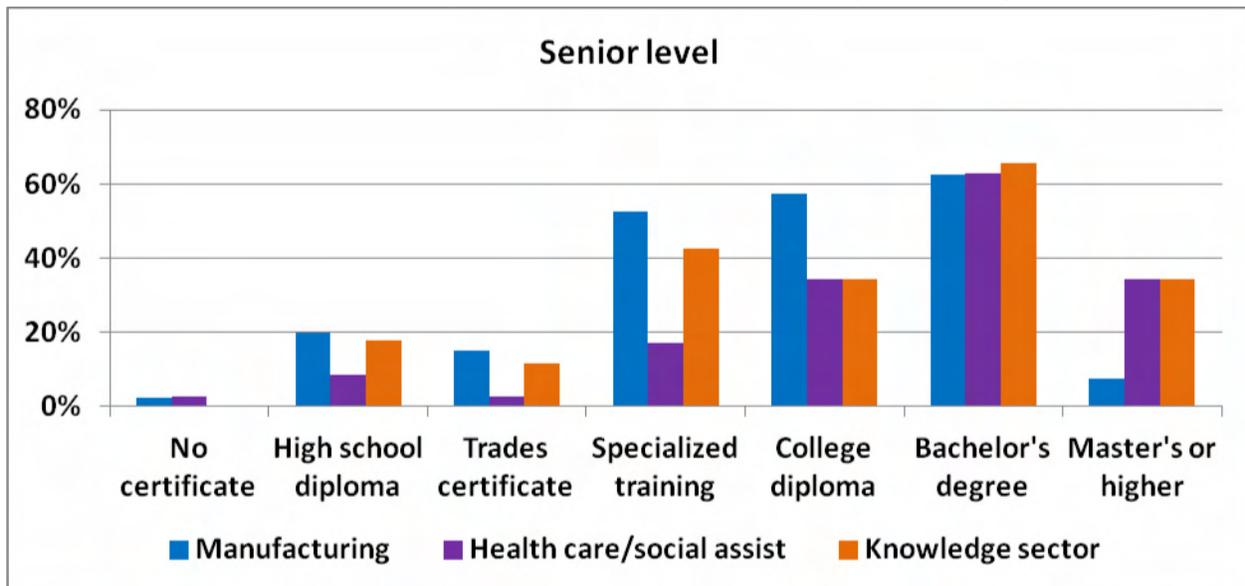


Chart 16b: Educational credentials for a job by skill level: Senior Level (Cluster Two)



For Accommodation & Food, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, and Retail Trade, the expectations for a Senior Level largely centre on Specialized Training or a College Diploma. For Manufacturing, there is a roughly equal expectation for either Specialized Training, a College Diploma or a Bachelor’s Degree, while for Health Care & Social Assistance and the Knowledge Sector, the requirements cluster around a College Diploma, a Bachelor’s Degree or a Master’s Degree or higher (Specialized Training also attracts many responses for Knowledge Sector jobs).

An analysis of educational attainment expectations of employers by employee size was not undertaken because there is not a sufficiently well-distributed sample of establishments by size and by industry. For example, establishments with over 100 employees have a high proportion of Manufacturing and Knowledge Sector firms, which would bias a comparison with establishments of other sizes with a different mix of industries.

Experience qualifications

Respondents were asked: “What are the usual qualifications you require for a candidate to be considered for a job? Please list all the experience criteria that apply.” As with the question regarding educational qualifications, this question was asked with respect to each of the three skill levels, and respondents could identify more than one experience criteria for each skill level.

It should come as no surprise that the expectations regarding experience increased with the skill level of the job.

Table 6: Experience criteria by skill level

	No experience	2-4 years' experience	5 or more years' experience
Entry level	74.0%	31.9%	1.4%
Intermediate	11.3%	80.9%	15.6%
Senior level	4.6%	27.3%	74.1%

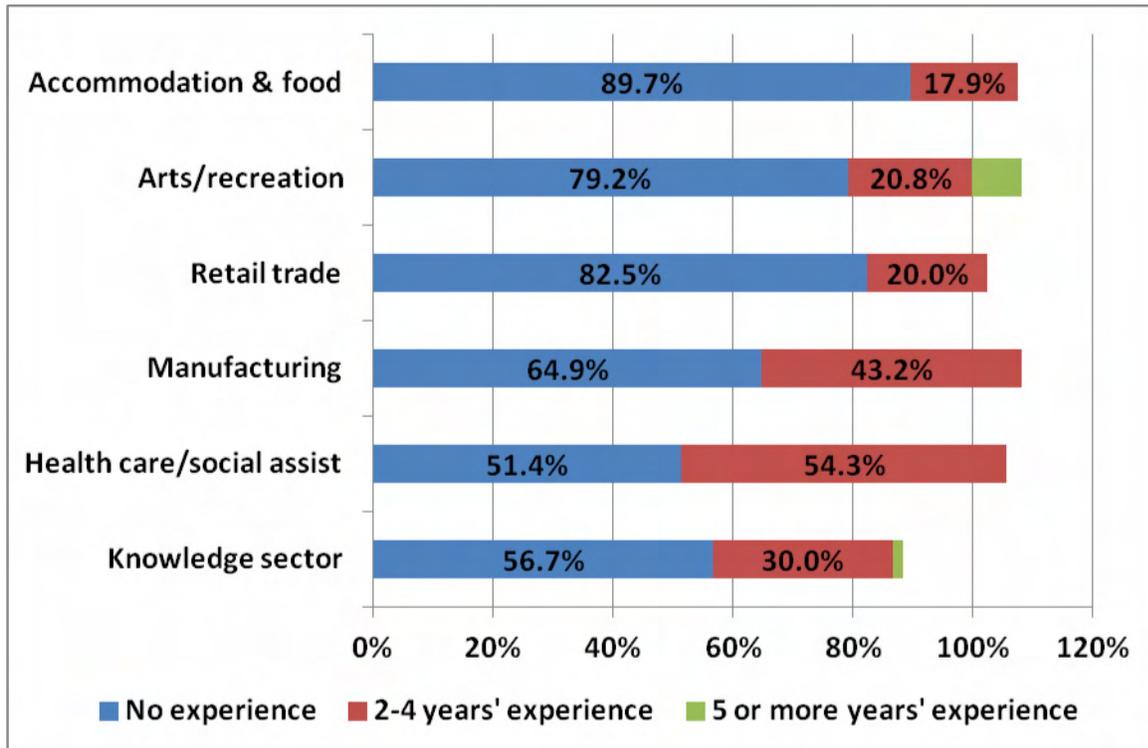
However, it is noteworthy that for Entry-level jobs, what typically have been considered a person’s first job, almost a third of employers (31.9%) expected 2-4 years’ experience. In a similar manner, while three-quarters expected individuals applying for a Senior Level to have five or more years of experience, three out of ten were willing to settle for two to four years of experience. As in the case of educational qualifications, different industries have different expectations regarding prior years of experience.

For Entry-level jobs (Chart 17), very high proportions of employers in Accommodation & Food, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, and Retail Trade accept “No experience” for job candidates.² These

² Employers were allowed to provide more than one answer to the question. The percentages are based on the total number of employers who answered the question. As a result, when totalling the responses, the figure can be more than 100% (because of multiple responses), as well as less than 100%, because some employers may have answers one part of the question (e.g. answering the part relating to Entry-level jobs) but not another part of the question (e.g. Senior Level jobs.)

numbers drop for Manufacturing, Health Care & Social Assistance and the Knowledge Sector, where significant proportions expect “2-4 years; experience.” Indeed, in the Health Care & Social Assistance, the proportion expecting 2-4 year’s experience is greater than those accepting no experience.

Chart 17: Experience criteria: Entry-level job



For Intermediate positions (Chart 18), all industries have high expectations for 2-4 years’ experience. However, Accommodation & Food, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, and Retail Trade still have comparatively higher proportions of employers accepting no experience. That is also the case for Health Care & Social Assistance, which may reflect a willingness to hire individuals recently graduated with the appropriate educational credentials. For Intermediate positions, Manufacturing has not only the highest proportion of employers expecting 2-4 years of experience, but also the lowest proportion accepting no experience and the highest proportion expecting 5 or more years of experience.

Chart 18: Experience criteria: Intermediate

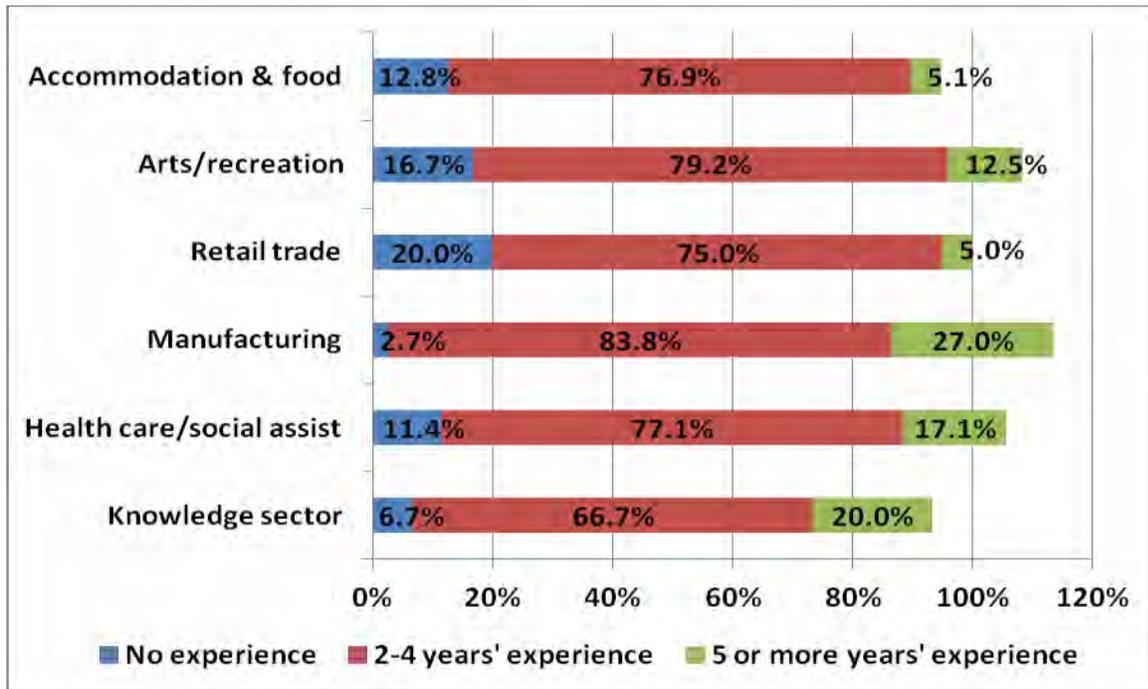
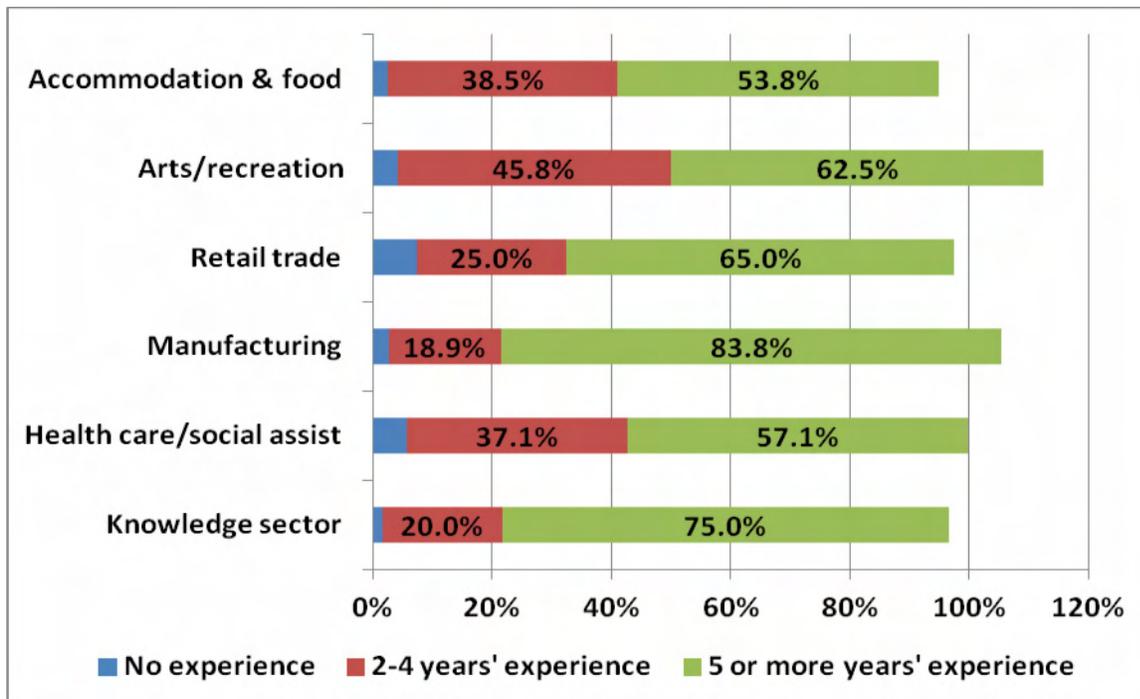


Chart 19: Experience criteria: Senior Level



For Senior Level positions (Chart 19) , Manufacturing and the Knowledge Sector are far more likely to expect 5 or more years of experience. While that is also a predominant expectation among the other sectors, there are also sizeable minorities who are willing to settle for 2-4 years’ experience. Notably, more than a third of employers in the Health Care & Social Assistance field (37.1%) indicated they were willing to accept 2-4 years of experience for a Senior Level position.

Important factors when hiring for Entry-level

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of a series of factors that affected their hiring decisions for Entry-level positions. These factors are listed in the table below, as well as their abbreviated form (shortened for the sake of producing properly-sized charts):

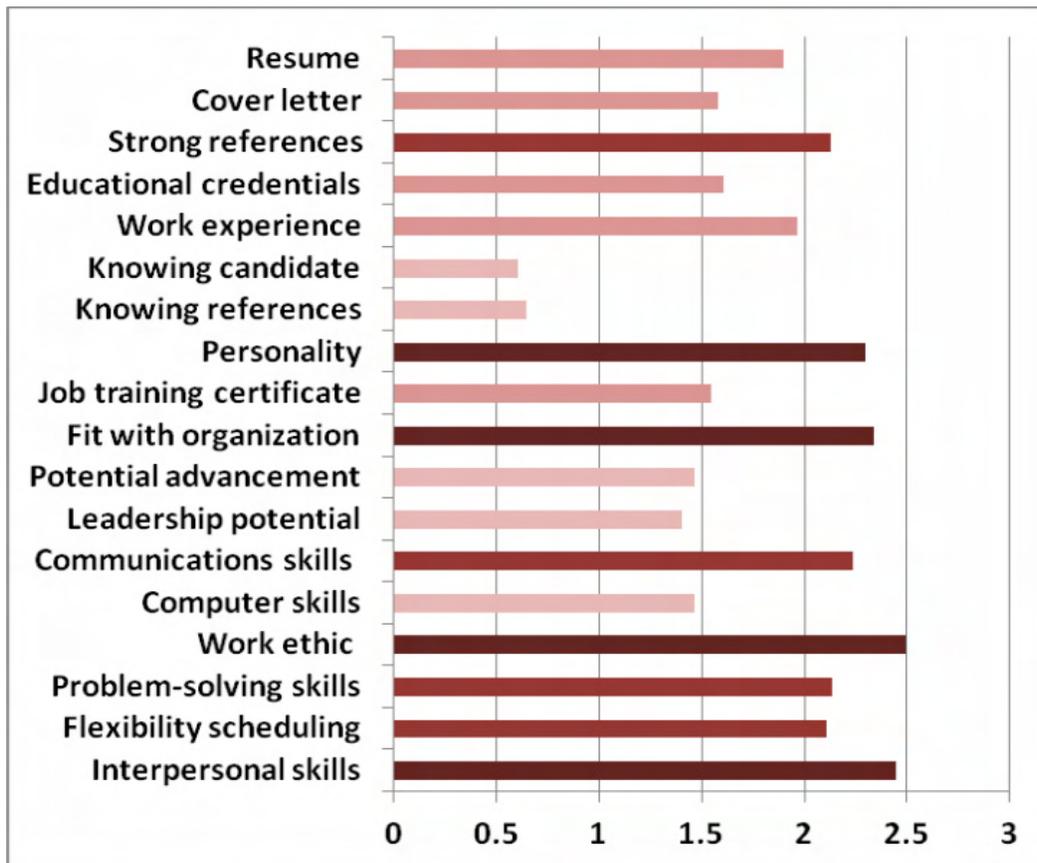
AS DISPLAYED IN SURVEY	AS DISPLAYED IN CHART
A well-written resume	Resume
A well-written cover letter	Cover letter
Strong references	Strong references
Educational credentials	Educational credentials
Previous work experience	Work experience
Knowing the candidate personally	Knowing candidate
Knowing the candidate’s references personally	Knowing references
Personality	Personality
Specific job related training evidenced by a certificate	Job training certificate
Fit with your organization’s culture or style	Fit with organization
Potential for advancement within your company	Potential advancement
Leadership/management potential	Leadership potential
Communications skills (oral and/or written)	Communications skills
Computer skills	Computer skills
Demonstrable work ethic, motivated, take the initiative	Work ethic
Problem-solving skills	Problem-solving skills
Flexibility regarding time and day of work	Flexibility scheduling
Strong interpersonal skills (teamwork or customer service skills)	Interpersonal skills

Respondents were asked to rate each factor on a scale of “Very, very important,” “Important,” “Of some interest or relevance,” and “Not a factor in my decision.” In order to compare the results, the following values were assigned to each answer:

3	Very, very important
2	Important
1	Of some interest or relevance
0	Not a factor in my decision

The results are added up for each factor and divided by the total number of respondents providing an average value for each factor. The responses for all employers is provided in Chart 20.

Chart 20: Important factors when hiring for Entry-level



Overall, four factors mattered a lot: work ethic, interpersonal skills, fit with the organization, and personality. Communications skills came a close 5th. On the other hand, knowing the candidate personally or knowing the candidate’s references personally received the lowest score. (While “who you know” may be important, it does not appear to be a regular consideration when it comes to hiring.)³

³ In the sessions held to discuss the results of the survey, employers in attendance clarified that “who you know” may get you the interview, but the decision to hire is based on other factors.

Leadership skills and one's potential for advancement were also not major considerations when hiring for an entry-level job. And rounding out the bottom five factors which attracted the lowest ratings was, surprisingly, computer skills.

The next table illustrates the ranking of each of these factors by industry. Some caution should be expressed regarding this table: it is not a definitive guide for how to approach each employer in a listed industry. However, it does offer a few interesting comparisons between the industries.

Table 7: Important factors when hiring for Entry-level, by industry sector

SCORE	Accommodation	Arts, recreation	Retail trade	Manufacturing	Health/soc asst	Knowledge sector
2.75-2.99		Interpersonal skills				
2.50-2.74	Interpersonal skills Personality Fit with organization	Work ethic Flexibility scheduling	Interpersonal skills Work ethic Personality	Work ethic		Interpersonal skills Work ethic Communications skills
2.25-2.49	Work ethic Flexibility scheduling	Fit with organization	Fit with organization Flexibility scheduling Communications skills Problem-solving skills	Fit with organization	Work ethic Communications skills Strong references Problem-solving skills	Personality Fit with organization Problem-solving skills
2.00-2.24	Communications skills Work experience	Personality Strong references Problem-solving skills	Work experience Strong references	Interpersonal skills Communications skills Strong references Problem-solving skills	Interpersonal skills Personality Fit with organization Flexibility scheduling Work experience Problem-solving skills Resume Job training certificate Educational credentials	Work experience Strong references Resume Computer skills
1.75-1.99	Strong references Problem-solving skills	Communications skills	Resume	Personality Flexibility scheduling Work experience	Cover letter	Cover letter Educational credentials
1.50-1.74	Resume	Work experience Resume	Potential advancement Leadership potential Cover letter Educational credentials Computer skills	Resume Potential advancement	Computer skills	Flexibility scheduling Potential advancement Leadership potential Job training certificate
1.25-1.49	Potential advancement Leadership potential	Leadership potential Cover letter	Job training certificate	Job training certificate Educational credentials		
1.00-1.24	Job training certificate Cover letter Educational credentials	Potential advancement Job training certificate Educational credentials Computer skills	Leadership potential Cover letter Computer skills	Leadership potential Cover letter Computer skills	Potential advancement	
0.75-0.99	Computer skills	Knowing references	Knowing references		Leadership potential	
0.50-0.74	Knowing references	Knowing references	Knowing candidate	Knowing references	Knowing references Knowing candidate	Knowing references Knowing candidate
0.25-0.49	Knowing candidate	Knowing candidate	Knowing candidate	Knowing candidate		

Ranking of factors that are significantly off the average are bolded, in blue for those notably higher than the average, in red for those notably lower than the average. Overall, such outliers are few: thus, educational credentials or job training evidenced by a certificate received higher than average ratings among employers in Health Care & Social Assistance, and lower than average ratings among employers in Accommodation & Food and in Arts, Entertainment & Recreation. A well-written cover letter and computer skills were ranked lower among employers in Accommodation & Food, while interpersonal skills and flexibility regarding scheduling were ranked higher than average among employers in Arts, Entertainment & Recreation. Employers in Manufacturing were more likely to rank personality and a well-written letter lower in their assessment of factors. Employers in Health Care & Social Assistance ranked leadership potential lower. Finally, employers in the Knowledge Sector ranked communications skills and computer skills higher than the average, while ranking flexibility regarding scheduling lower.

Important factors when hiring for Intermediate and Senior Level positions

The same question was asked of respondents with regards to ranking factors important when hiring individuals for Intermediate or Senior Level positions. In every instance except for one, employers rated each factor higher, no doubt because the position implies more consequences, in terms of functions, responsibilities and wages.

Chart 21: Important factors when hiring for Intermediate and Senior Level positions

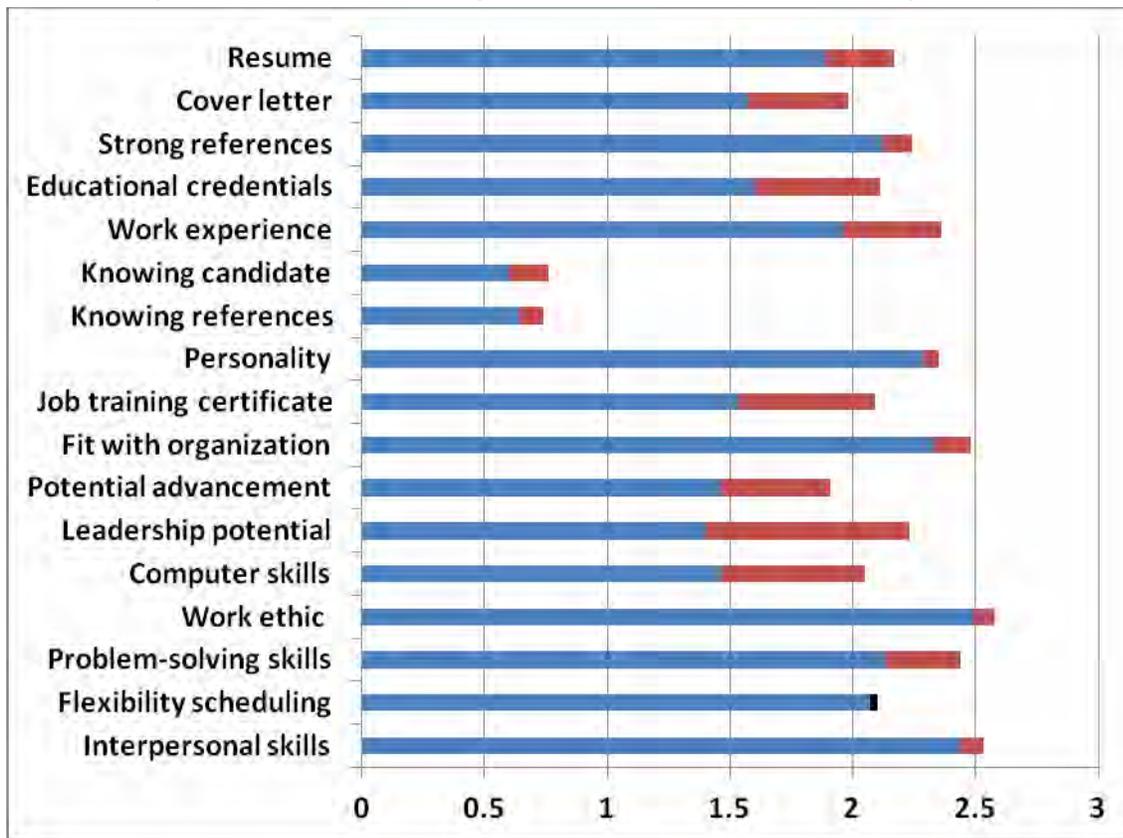


Chart 21 illustrates the results by comparing the responses to those for Entry-level positions. The blue bar indicates the answer when asked about an Entry-level position, and the red bar shows the additional value placed on that factor when it applies to an Intermediate or Senior level job. Only one factor registered a drop in value, that of flexibility relating to scheduling. In that instance, the black bar indicates the drop in importance from what was ascribed to an Entry-level position.

The variations in the values given to these factors did not change the ranking of the top three: work ethic, interpersonal skills, and fit with the organization. These remain the topmost considerations for employers when assessing a job candidate. However, when making decisions regarding Intermediate or Senior level positions, two other factors vaulted forward: problem-solving skills and work experience, surpassing personality, which now fell to sixth place.

What is also noteworthy is which factors most increased their score when comparing the weight given to that factor for an Entry-level job to an Intermediate/Senior level jobs. The most prominent increases were as follows:

- Leadership potential (in this question, called “Proven leadership/management skills”);
- Computer skills;
- Specific job related training evidenced by a certificate;
- Educational credentials;
- Potential for advancement within your company;
- Cover letter;
- Work experience.

In short, skills (evidenced by education, a job certificate or computer skills) count for more when it comes to evaluating an individual for an Intermediate or Senior level job, as does leadership potential and the potential for advancement, factors that would relate to an individual staying longer with a firm.

Job readiness

Employers were asked to rate the overall job readiness⁴ of individuals they had hired over the past year, looking at several specific population groups.

In order to compare the results, the answers were compiled into a single number, using the following formula:

3	Excellent
2	Good
1	Fair
-1	Poor

⁴ The question asked about job readiness for the position they were hired, so one cannot assume that we are talking about job readiness for the same job.

The total score was then divided by the number of respondents who provided a rating for that population category.

Four population groups received higher rankings (Chart 22):

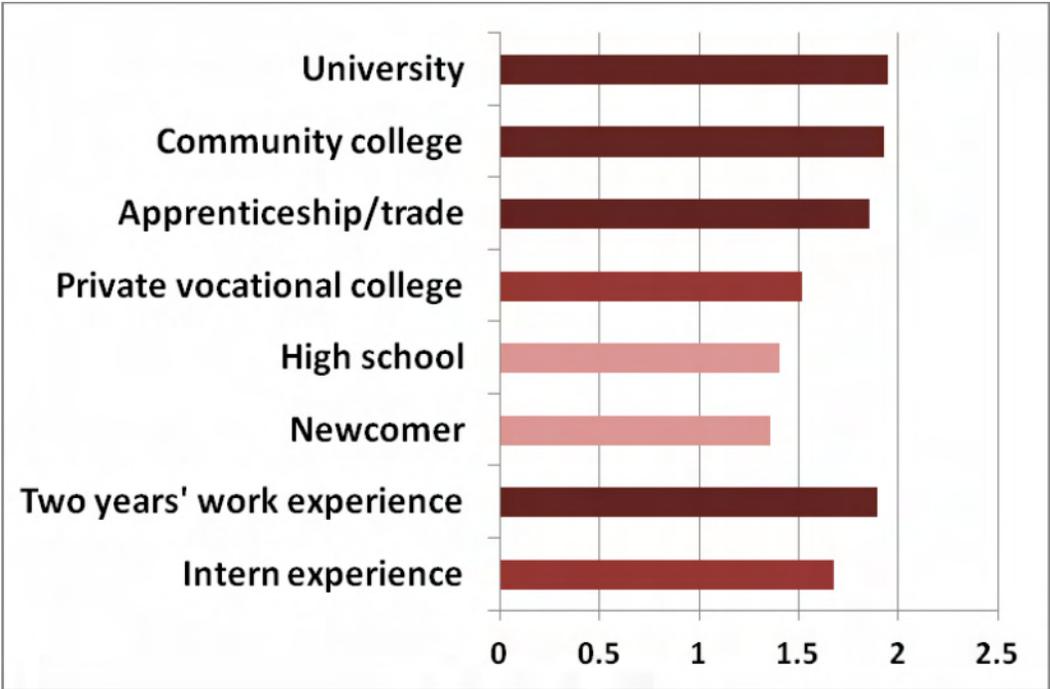
- University graduates
- Community college graduates;
- Individuals with two years of work experience;
- Apprentices/trades certificate holders.

Three population groups received lower rankings:

- Private vocational college graduates;
- High school graduates;
- Newcomers.

Individuals who had intern or volunteer experience fell in the middle.

Chart 22: Job readiness of select population groups



It is worthwhile to examine the results for each population group by industry. However, only significant variations by industry deserve highlighting. The table below has those significant variations highlighted.

Table 8: Job readiness of select population groups by industry

	Accommodation & food	Arts/recreation	Retail trade	Manufacturing	Health care/social assist	Knowledge sector
University	1.90	1.73	1.59	2.11	2.09	2.18
Community college	1.77	1.62	1.64	2.32	2.13	2.14
Apprenticeship/trade	1.95	2.11	1.35	2.13	1.33	2.06
Private vocational college	1.18	1.25	1.50	1.80	1.10	1.67
High school	1.34	1.43	1.39	1.48	1.45	1.32
Newcomer	1.63	-0.33	0.78	1.62	1.86	1.15
Two years' work experience	2.12	2.13	1.78	1.59	1.79	1.95
Intern experience	1.57	1.91	1.42	1.21	1.85	1.81
AVERAGE	1.68	1.48	1.43	1.78	1.70	1.79

The cells shaded green indicate values that are significantly higher than the average rating for that industry, and oftentimes high for that population group. Thus, Manufacturing appears to value community college graduates and private vocational graduates higher. Accommodation & Food and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation give higher ratings for apprentices/trades certificate holders and individuals with two years of work experience, and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation also give a higher rating for those with intern or volunteer experience. Newcomers score well among employers in Health Care & Social Assistance.

The cells shaded red indicate values that are significantly lower than the average rating for that industry and for that population group. Thus, Health Care & Social Assistance ranks apprentices/trades certificate holders and private vocational graduates lower. Accommodation & Food also ranks private vocational graduates lower. Newcomers receive lower rating from Retail Trade and especially from Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (although this latter score needs to be taken with some caution: 16 employers in this industry answered this question, 13 of whom checked off “Don’t Know,” so that the resulting rating is a consequence of only three employees providing an evaluation). Finally, employers in Manufacturing ranked individuals with two years of work experience lower.

Finally, the cells shaded blue deserve a comment. When one looks at the rating given to high school graduates across all industries, the score falls within a relatively narrow range (from 1.32 among Knowledge Sector employers to 1.48 for Manufacturing employers). What is interesting is how the