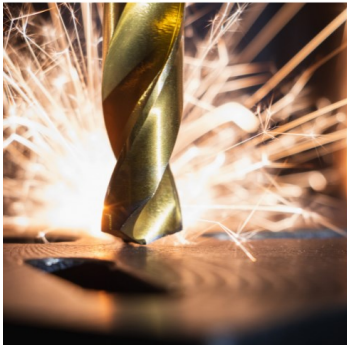
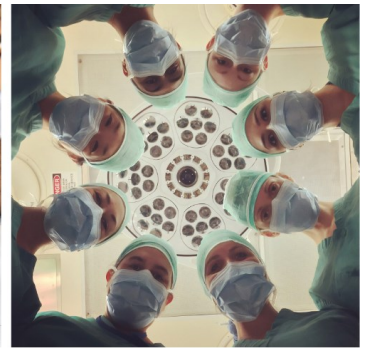
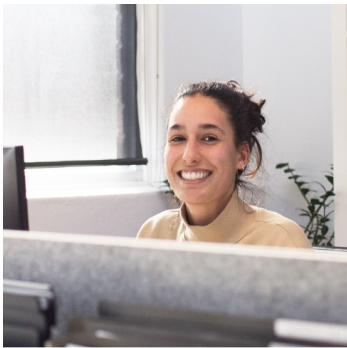




EMPLOYER ONE survey

Your Workforce. Our Future.

Waterloo Wellington Dufferin 2024



Workforce Planning Board
of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin

Released March 2024

Our Vision: We envision the continuous development of a leading-edge workforce

Our Mission: Engage partners to find solutions to local workforce development needs

The material contained in this report has been prepared by the Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin (WPBWWD) and is drawn from the EmployerOne survey conducted January 2024. In providing this material, WPBWWD does not assume any responsibility of liability.



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The views expressed in this document do not reflect those of the Government of Canada or the Government of Ontario

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Methodology

Information on the Survey

EmployerOne is an employer survey that is promoted to industries across the Waterloo Region and the Counties of Dufferin and Wellington. Moving to a bi-annual survey after the 2022 survey concluded, the Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin (WPBWWD) continues to survey local employers to discuss their skills needs, practices around recruitment and hiring and separation activity for the past year. The survey also asked employers about their proposed future hiring trends over the next 12 months. This report summarizes those findings. Further reports will be released in 2024 that focus on specific industries, including technical skills that industry seeks in applicants.

Methodology

The EmployerOne survey is used across the Western Ontario region to collect employer data around hiring and skills needs. The 9 planning boards across the region meet and develop the questions each year. Each individual board adds 1-2 questions that are relevant to their individual communities. In Waterloo Wellington Dufferin, the survey was shared at a meeting with representatives from some of the 40 partners who support the survey. During this meeting, the questions were shared and the partners identified two additional topics to gather information on: the equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) efforts of employers, engagement on AI/work environment trends and how industry feels it is perceived by the public.

The electronic survey opened on December 1st for all employers who had taken the survey in prior years followed by a launch on January 1st and a closing date of January 31st. After January 31st, WPBWWD did follow-up with employers who were almost done to complete their surveys until February 9th. Staff at the planning board then analyzed data to create this report

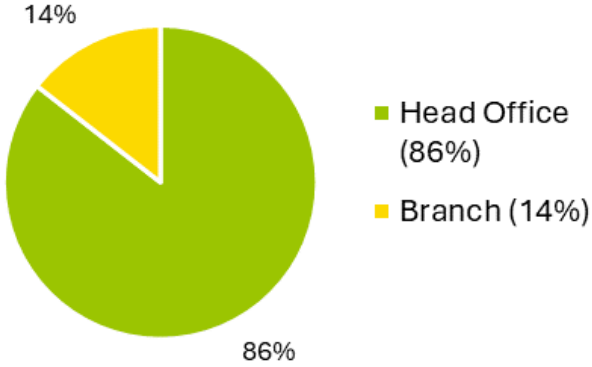
This data is shared with partners who would like the raw data, minus any identifiers, and is shared with an academic team who collates the data into a regional report.

Key Highlights

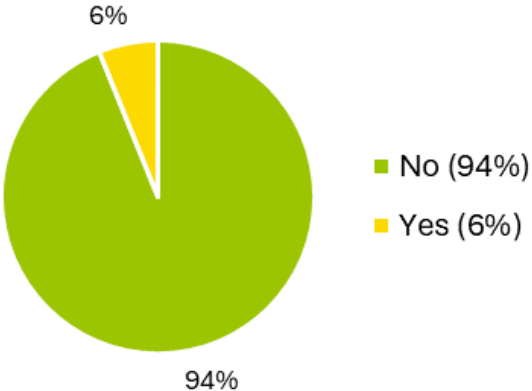
- 245 employers completed the survey (538 in 2022).
- 83% of responding companies have less than 100 employees.
- The top 3 industries that responded were Manufacturing, Other services (except public administration) and Retail trade.
- The amount of employers who hired remained at 86%, the same as recorded during EmployerOne 2022
- The number of people hired drastically decreased: 4,968 in 2023 vs. 11, 604 in 2021
- 66% of employers reported they had hard-to-fill positions. (78% in 2021)
- 60% of employers rated the availability of workers as poor or fair. (67% in 2021)
- 76% of employers reported separations in 2023. (74% in 2021)
- 52% of employers said that retention was an issue in their company. (58% in 2021)
- Only 41% of employers had a strategy in place for their recruitment and retention needs over the next 3 to 5 years. (44% in 2021)
- The number one reason why employers felt that they were having problems retaining people was “not enough positions that people can move into”. (48% identified this reason vs 29% in 2021)
- 79% of employers plan to hire in 2022 (85% planned in 2022)
- Employers plan to hire for 858 roles (a conservative estimate based upon ranges)
- 93% of employers said that they would hire someone who was a fit for their organization, even if they needed some technical training. (92% in 2022)
- Employers were asked to rate their agreement with the following idea that hiring with a lens to diversity was an important part of their organization’s strategy. That statement scored a 60.8 out of 100. (Increase from 58.9 in 2022)
- 84% of employers agree or strongly agree that their organization is competitive with its compensation package
- 84% of employers agree or strongly agree that the public views their industry in a positive light

Section A: Organization and Workforce Characteristics

Head Office Or Branch

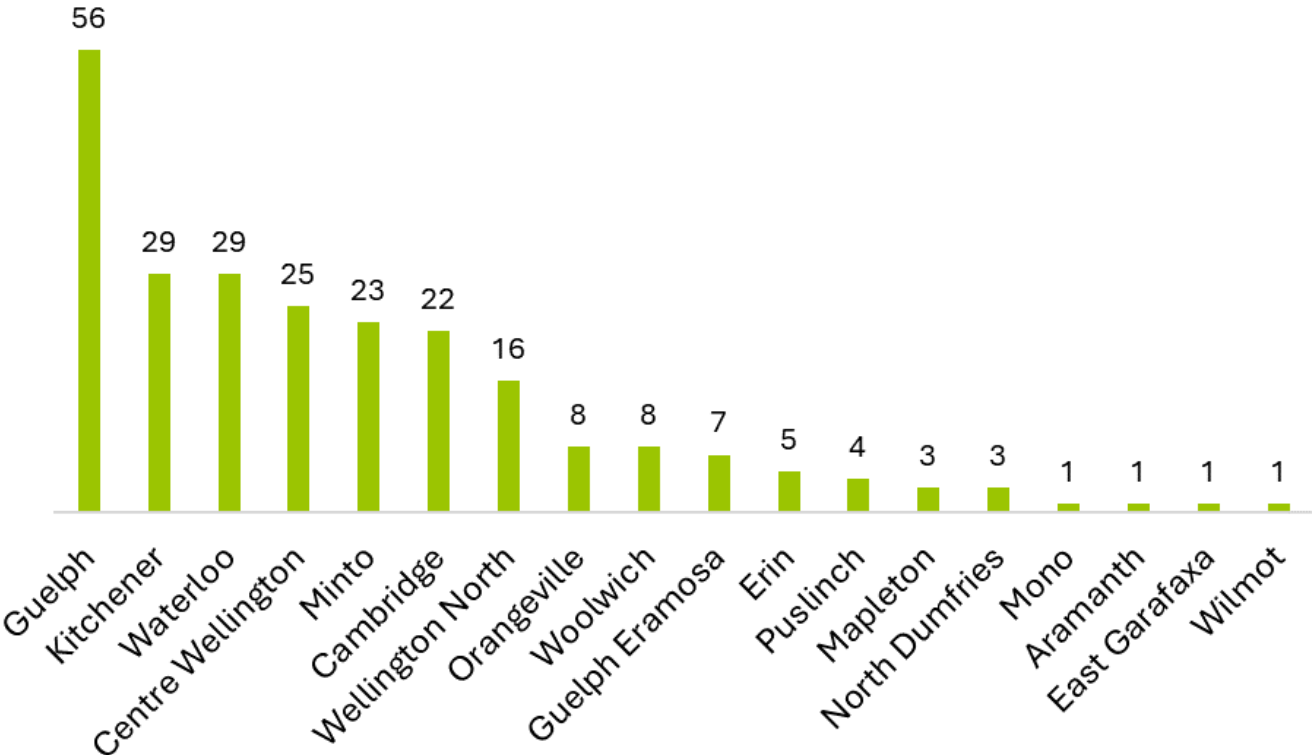


In Operation Under 5 Years

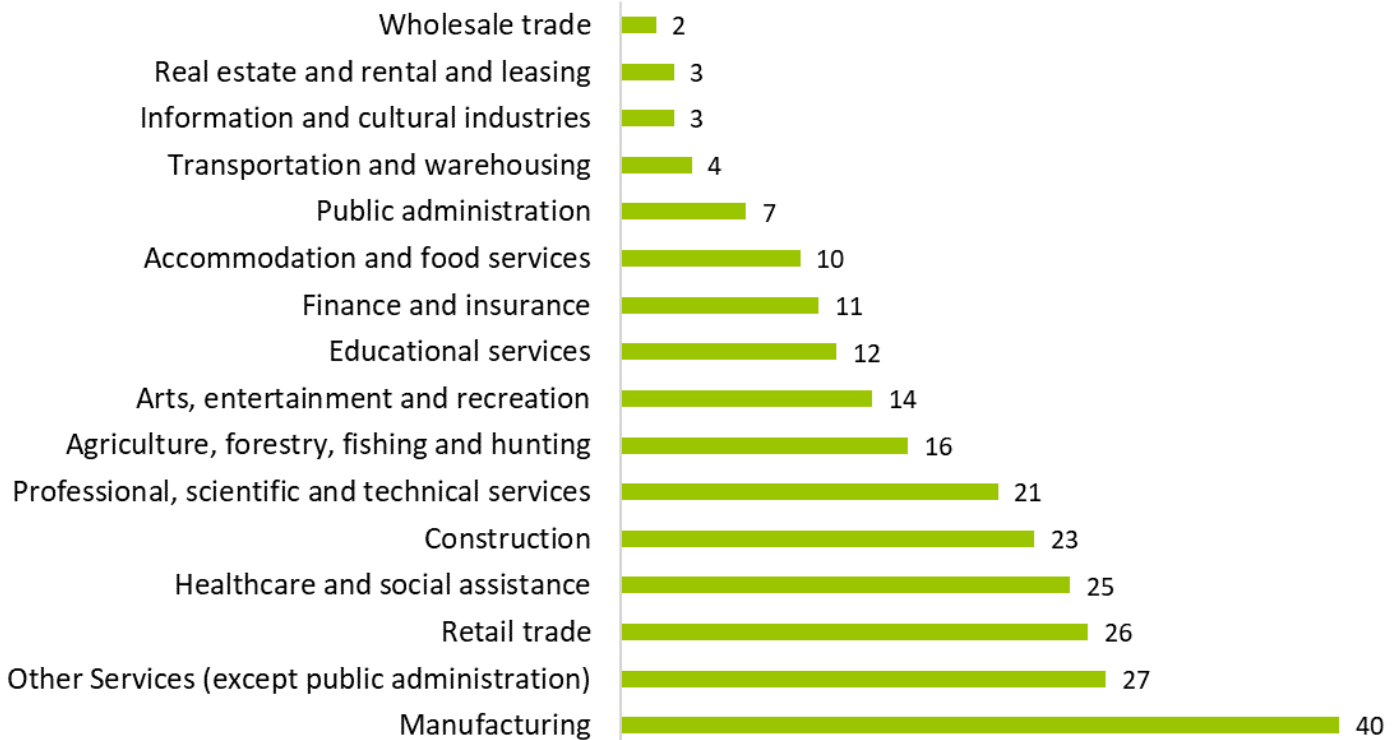


Business Locations

- 56.7% of surveyed employers are from Wellington County, 37.6% from Waterloo Region, 4.5% from Dufferin County.
- 94% of all businesses have been in operation for over 5 years.
- Top 3 industries with start-ups in 2023 : Professional, scientific and technical services, Arts, entertainment and recreation and Accommodation and food services



Employers by Industry



Number of Employees

Sole proprietor and work alone: 9

1 - 4 Employees: 39

5 - 9 Employees: 46

10 - 19 Employees: 34

20 - 49 Employees: 46

50 - 99 Employees: 30

100 - 199 Employees: 14

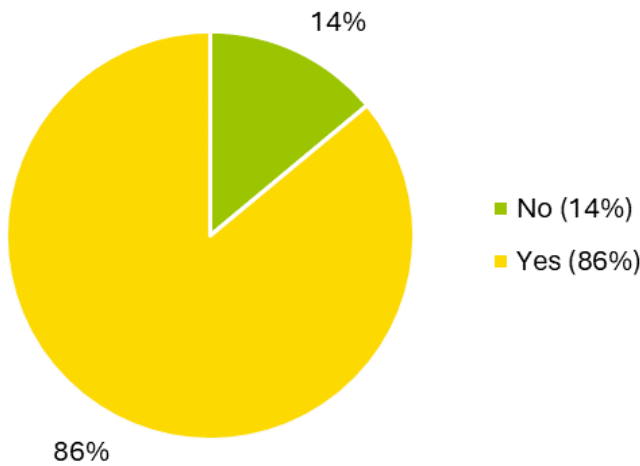
200 - 499 Employees: 9

500+ Employees: 17



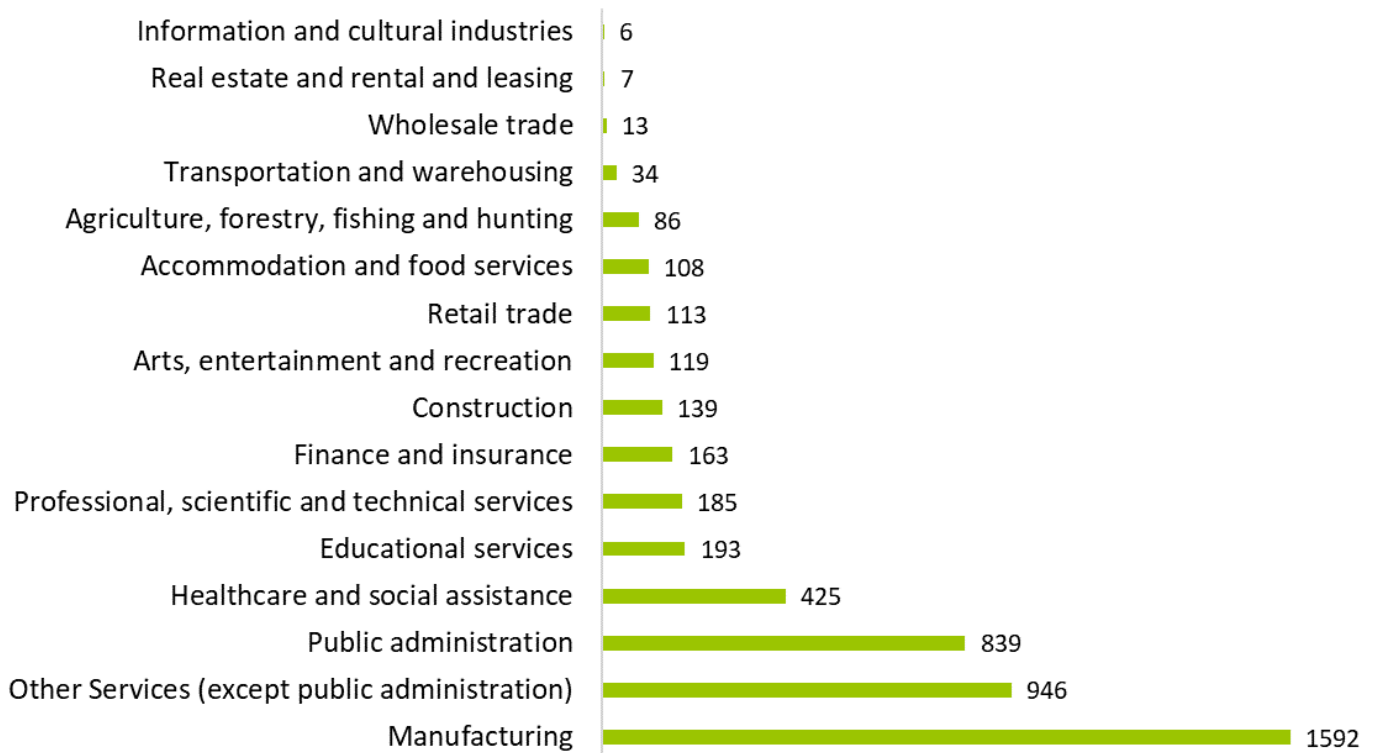
Section B: Hiring in 2023

Hired in The Last 12 Months



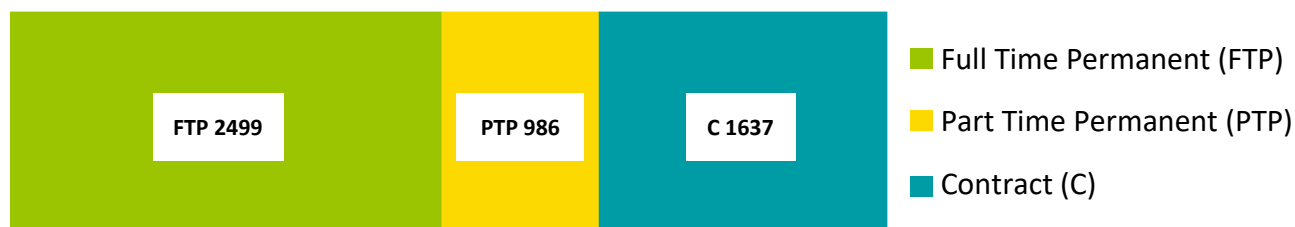
- 86% (203) employers hired 4968 people in 2023.
- 49% of the roles were permanent full-time (8% drop since 2021).
- Top hiring industries in 2023 were Manufacturing, Other services (except public administration), and Public administration.

Hiring by Industry



All industries were hiring during 2023. As in previous years, Manufacturing hired the most workers with over 1.5 times the amount of hires of Other services. Looking back at 2021 hires, Healthcare and social assistance is still in the top 5 industries hiring. Professional, scientific and technical services has fallen to number 6. Other Services raised drastically in the number of hires compared to 2021 though this is largely in part to one organization hiring over 80% of the roles within that industry.

Types of Hires



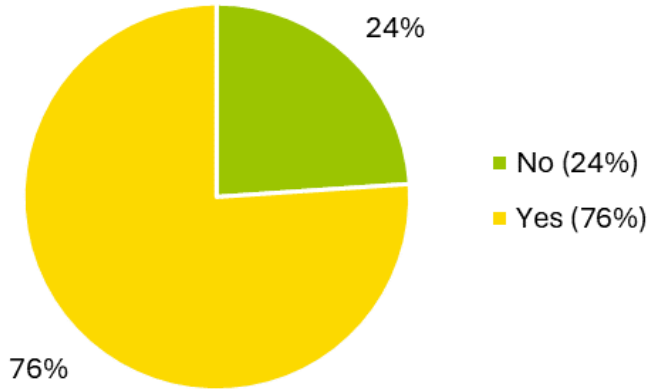
Employers were most likely to hire permanent full-time followed by contract (FT or PT) then permanent part-time.

Hiring Breakdown by Industry

Industry	Permanent Full-time	Permanent Part-time	Contract/Seasonal/Casual
Manufacturing	1206	55	339
Other services (except public administration)	239	376	330
Public administration	267	14	561
Healthcare and social assistance	155	149	121
Educational services	65	116	12
Professional, scientific and technical services	140	1	53
Finance and insurance	118	0	45
Construction	89	3	47
Arts, entertainment and recreation	29	19	74
Retail Trade	35	47	31
Accommodation and food services	47	57	6
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	13	52	11
Transportation and warehousing	28	3	3
Wholesale trade	9	3	1
Real estate and rental and leasing	6	1	0
Information and cultural industries	3	0	3
TOTAL	2449	896	1637

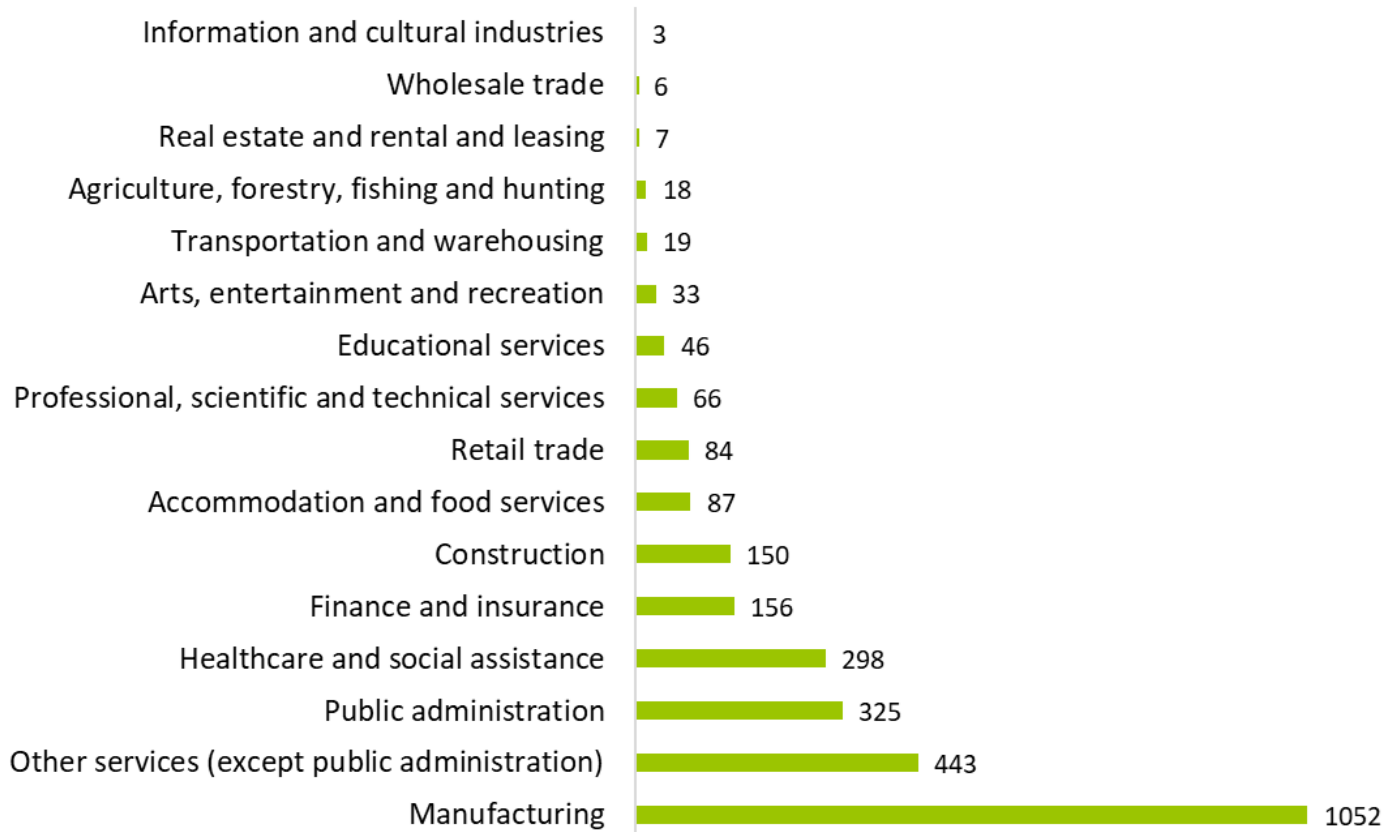
Section C: Separations in 2023

Separations in The Last 12 Months



- 76% of employers (178) had employees leave the company.
- Those 178 employers reported 2793 separations in 2021.
- Manufacturing, Other services (except public administration), and Public administration reported the most separations.

Separations by Industry



Manufacturing has historically had the most separations since EmployerOne started. This trend continued through 2023 where it was over double the next highest industry.

Type of Separations by Industry

Industry	Quits	Retirements	Layoffs	Dismissals	Other
Manufacturing	582	52	49	335	19
Other services (except public administration)	379	17	7	36	2
Public administration	164	57	0	29	75
Healthcare and social assistance	211	21	3	40	23
Finance and insurance	81	9	1	64	1
Construction	40	9	65	34	2
Accommodation and food services	60	1	0	20	7
Retail trade	57	3	4	16	21
Professional, scientific and technical services	40	4	2	19	1
Educational services	19	14	0	10	3
Arts, entertainment and recreation	11	1	19	2	0
Transportation and warehousing	11	3	0	4	1
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	7	1	5	3	0
Real estate and rental and leasing	5	1	0	0	1
Wholesale trade	2	2	0	2	0
Information and cultural industries	1	0	2	0	0
TOTAL	1670	195	157	614	156

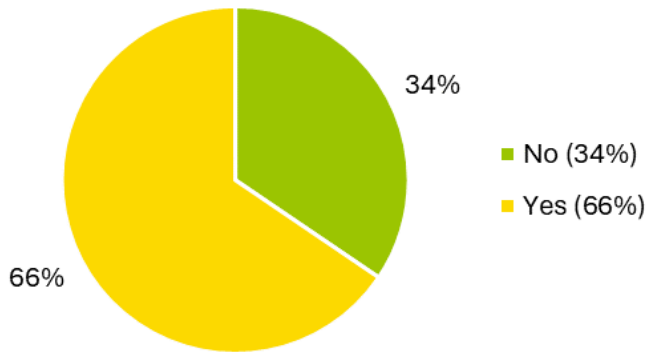
Most industry separations were dominated by employees quitting their jobs. 35% of all quits were in manufacturing as were 55% of dismissals.

The top 3 industries with separations accounted for 65% of all separations reported.

Other major reasons given for separations included relocation due to cost of living (6%) or returning to school (6%).

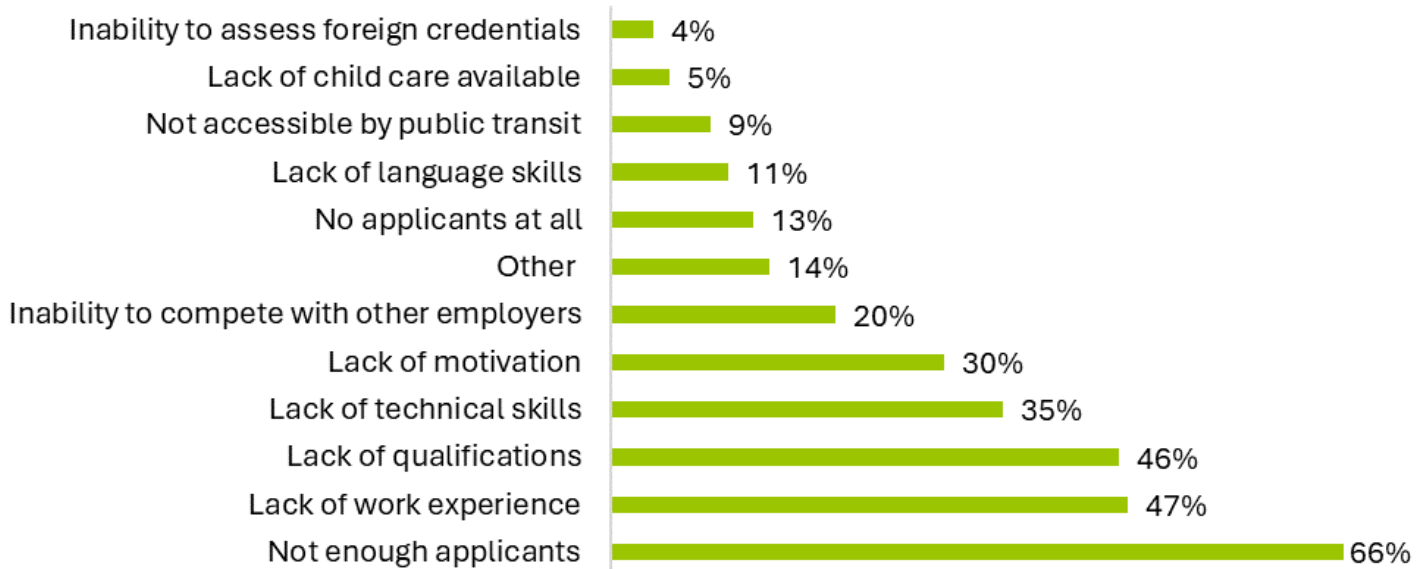
Section D: Hard-to-fill Positions in 2023

Were There Hard To Fill Positions



- 66% of surveyed employers had positions they found hard to fill a decrease of 12% from 2021 when 78% of employers answered the same.
- Shifts in the labour market, and workforce needs, are most likely driving this increase.
- A hard-to-fill position is one which takes longer than the usual amount of time to fill.

Reasons employers said positions were hard-to-fill



- Not enough applicants remains the number 1 reason for hard-to-fill positions, but 66% of employers chose it as a reason in 2023 vs 70% of employers in 2021.
- The rest of the top 5 from 2022 remain in place. However, lack of qualifications and lack of work experience have switched places.
- Many employers listed wage as a reason that they were unable to fill positions due to inability to keep up with rising salary requests. Additionally, many said that interviews were set with applicants and then employers were ghosted.

Top 3 hard-to-fill positions by industry

The answers provided by employers to this question were grouped into similar roles to provide some insight into where employers are struggling. Some have a National Occupational Classification (NOC) equivalency and some groupings may represent a number of NOCs.

Industry (NAICS Categories)	Top 3 Hard-To-Fill Positions
Wholesale trade	No Responses given
Information and cultural industries	Senior Developers
Real estate and rental and leasing	No Response
Transportation and warehousing	Technician AZ Driver Administrative
Public administration	Water/Wastewater Operators Urban Planner General Labourer
Accommodation and food services	Chefs/Cooks Counter and Kitchen Helpers Servers and Bartenders
Finance and insurance	Insurance Broker Financial Advisors and Planners Bookkeepers
Educational services	Early Childhood Educators Educators Teachers Assistants
Arts, entertainment and recreation	Instructors - Fitness and Art Based Office Operators and Attendants Management

Top 3 hard-to-fill positions by industry

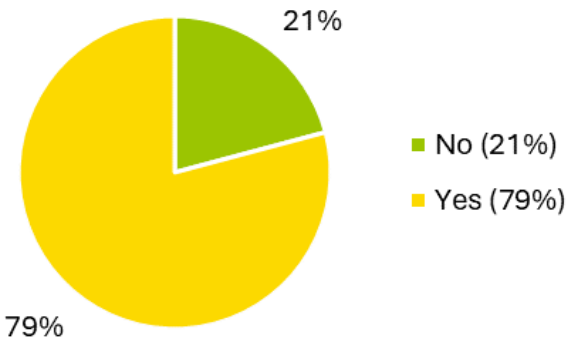
Industry (NAICS Categories)	Top 3 Hard-to-Fill Positions
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	Store Operation and Management Technician Farm Labourers
Professional, scientific and technical services	Legal Clerks Public Relations and Marketing Administrators and Assistants
Construction	General Labourer Building Inspectors Skilled Trades
Healthcare and social assistance	Registered Practical Nurse Support Roles Employment Counsellor/Job Developers
Retail trade	Retail Salesperson Service Technicians Administrative and Management
Other services (except public administration)	Technician Administration + Office Fitness Instructors
Manufacturing	Skilled Trades - Millwrights, Electricians, Welders Machine Operators/General Labourers Management

Many industries were finding it difficult to find staff who could fulfill administrative duties as well as management or senior roles. Many of these roles are not industry specific and therefore employers are not only competing with their own industry for talent but rather all employers across sectors.



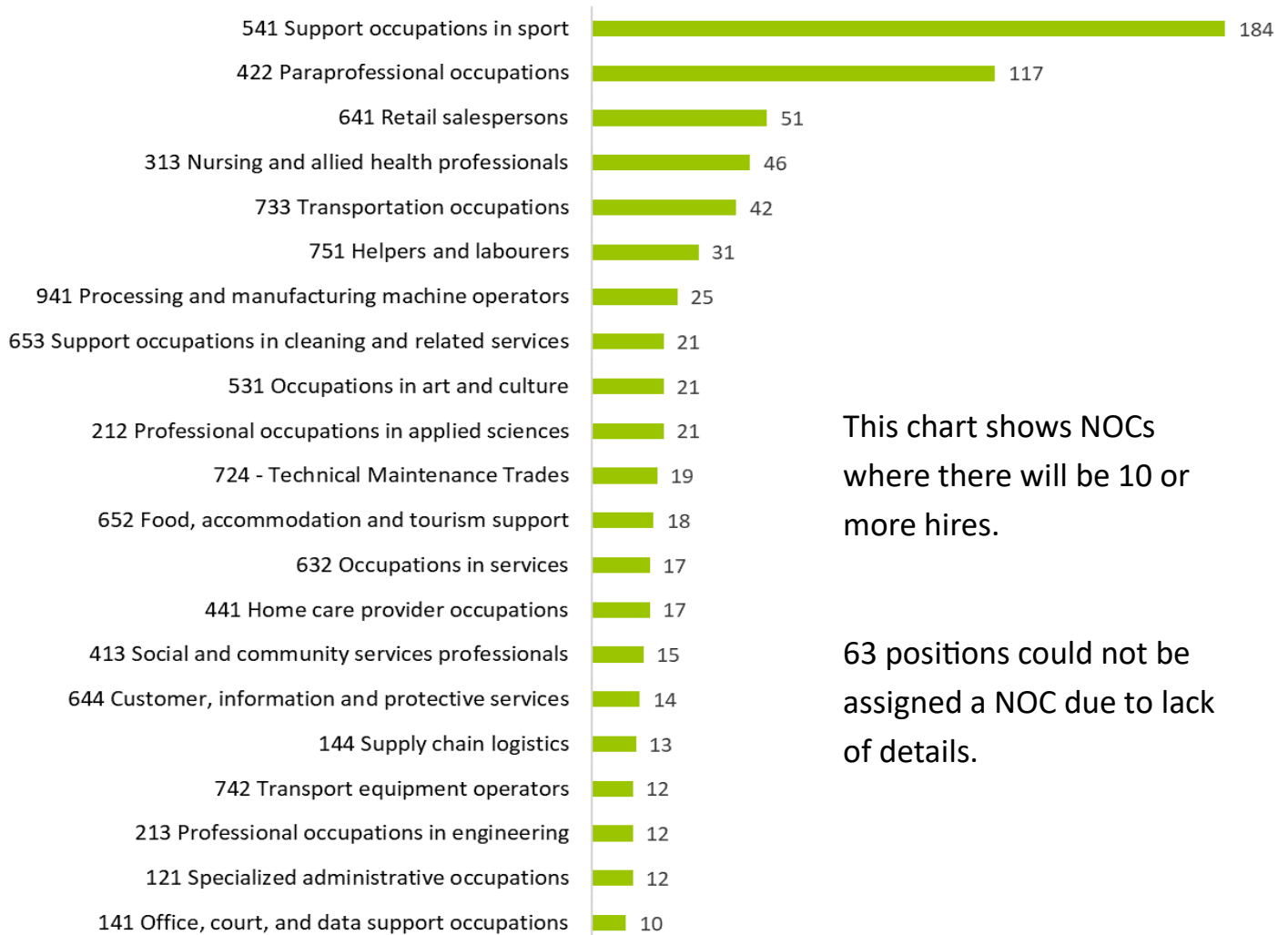
Section E: Planned Hires for 2024

Employers Planning to Hire in 2024



- 79% of employers (148) were planning to hire in 2024, a 6% decrease from 2022 estimates.
- While we do ask for a range, conservative estimates are that those 148 employers will hire for at least 858 positions in 2024.
- This decrease in hiring may reflect the current slowdown that seems to be happening. It also reflects that companies were re-opening in 2022.

Anticipated Hiring by Occupations

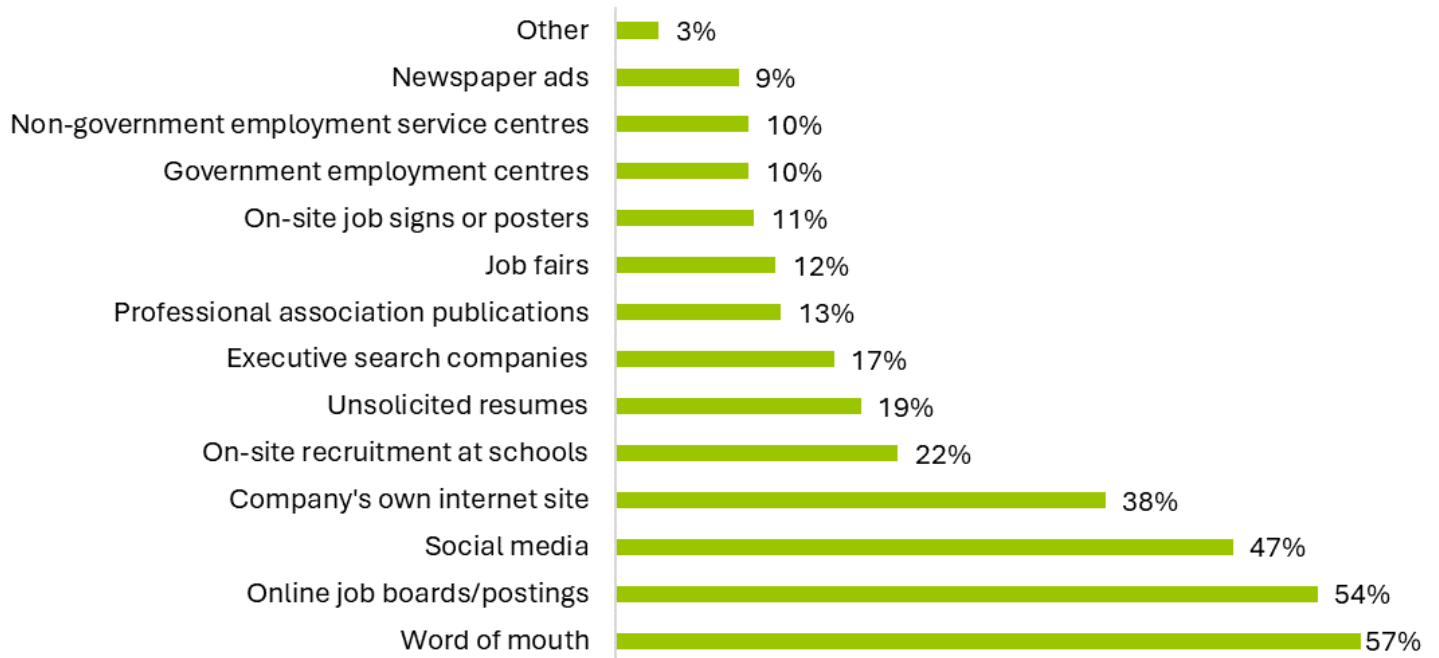


This chart shows NOCs where there will be 10 or more hires.

63 positions could not be assigned a NOC due to lack of details.

Section F: Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment Methods

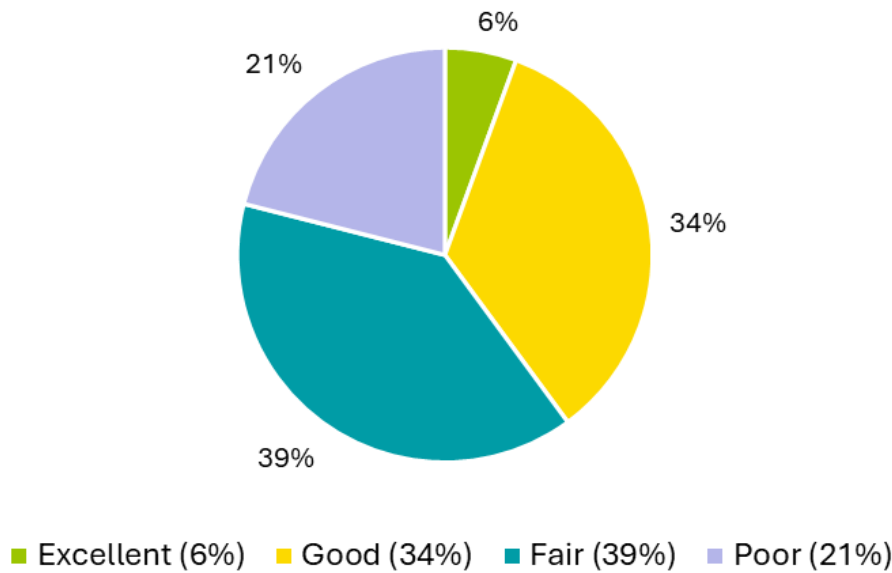


Over half of employers still use word of mouth as their largest recruitment source. Companies rely on those within the organization to help bring in quality people that not only aid the business but also the workplace culture as a whole.

Many employers who changed their recruitment methods spoke about the cost of posting on job boards becoming unaffordable and that they were getting too many applicants that were unqualified due to the ease of “single button applications.” Some employers have also changed to hiring recruiters to find talent for them due to the frustration of the hiring process.



Availability of Workers in Waterloo Wellington Dufferin



- 6% of employers rated the availability of workers in Waterloo Wellington Dufferin as Excellent, a 1% increase from when asked in 2022.
- Additionally, there was an 8% decrease in Poor ratings when compared to 2022 results (28%).

Top Competencies Employers Seek



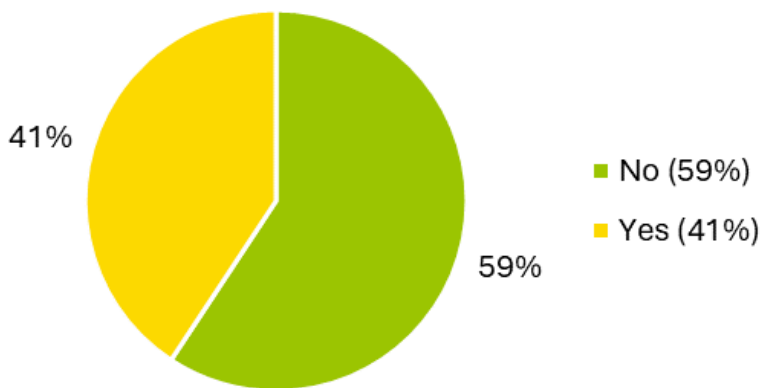
- Dependability is once again in the top 3 competencies that employers are looking for. This has remained at the top since the EmployerOne Survey conducted in 2020.
- Communication is also in the top 3 competencies in both the 2022 and 2024 EmployerOne Surveys.
- Self motivation has moved to the top 3 competencies replacing work ethic which moved to number 5.

Training a Candidate to Join your Organization

- 93% of employers are willing to train a candidate who is a fit for their organization but may lack some technical skills.
- 84% of those employers would do that training in-house.
- For those who would outsource training, employers would use an: industry association (69%), online courses (e.g. LinkedIn Learning) (69%), private trainer or consultant (58%), and postsecondary partnership or corporate training (35%).

Do Companies Have Recruitment and Retention Strategies

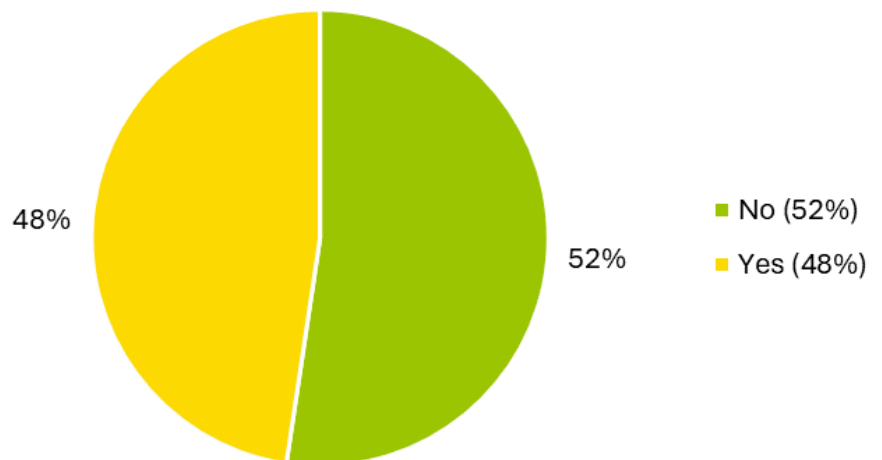
Does Your Organization Have A Recruitment And Retention Strategy?



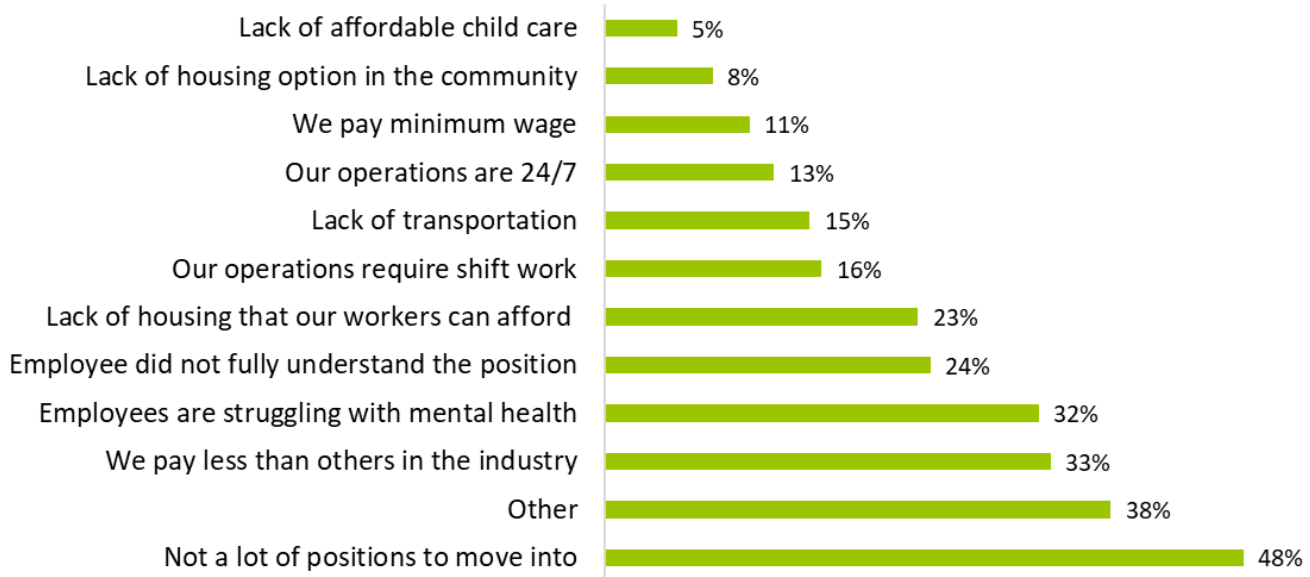
- Over 50% of employers who responded do not have a recruitment and retention strategy in place to help them address company growth over the next 3 to 5 years.

Is Retention a Concern for your Company?

- 48% of employers identified that retention is a concern for their organization, an almost 10% decrease from EmployerOne 2022.

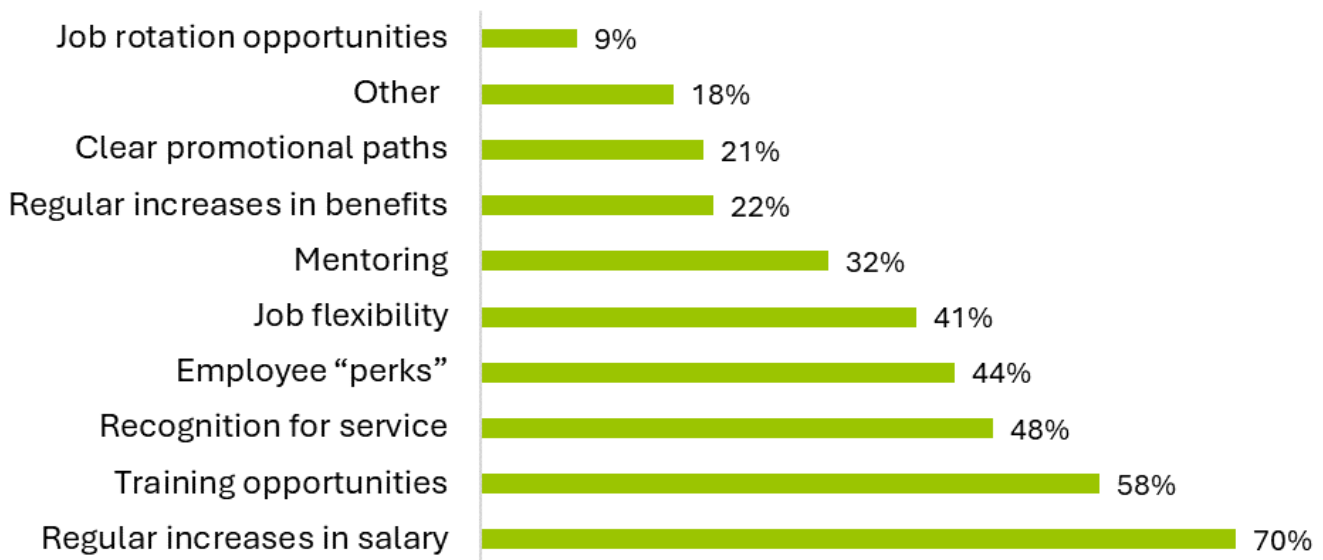


Why Retention is a Concern



Of those who chose Other, a number of respondents stated that the retention issues were due to “a generation that doesn't want to work” or laziness. This does not solve internal retention issues nor does it help create strategy to off-set staffing concerns. If that is an employer’s experience, then “ what can we do to combat that?”

Retention Strategies Employers Use



The top 3 retention strategies have remained the same from the EmployerOne 2022 survey.

Consider: 53 employers stated that retention is an issue due to there not being roles for employees to move into. 28 of them are using training opportunities as one of their retention strategies. These organizations may be training their employees for non-existent internal positions or have people covering the duties for multiple jobs. Workers can leverage these new skill sets to secure new roles where these skills can be better utilized or for more money.

Section G: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

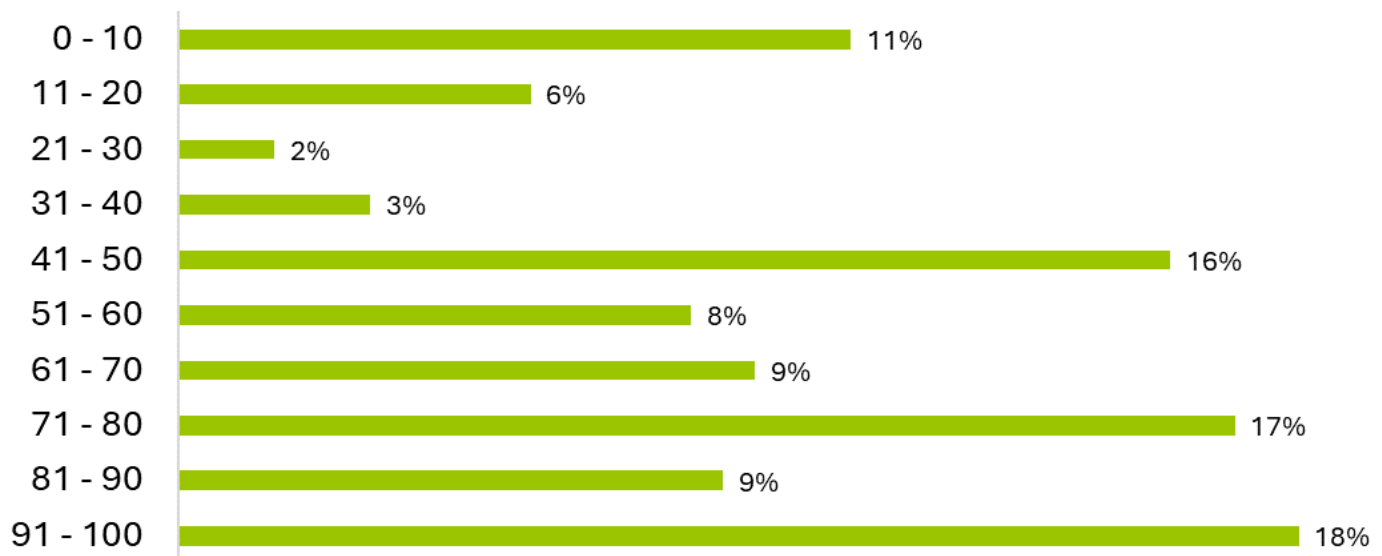
With a world that is consistently shifting and increased awareness about systemic barriers to full participation in society and the workplace, employers were asked some questions around Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives that they may have or be considering.

These questions help to determine if employers are ready to welcome all talented people into their organization or if there may still be work to be done to make workplaces fully accessible.

Hiring with a Lens to Diversity

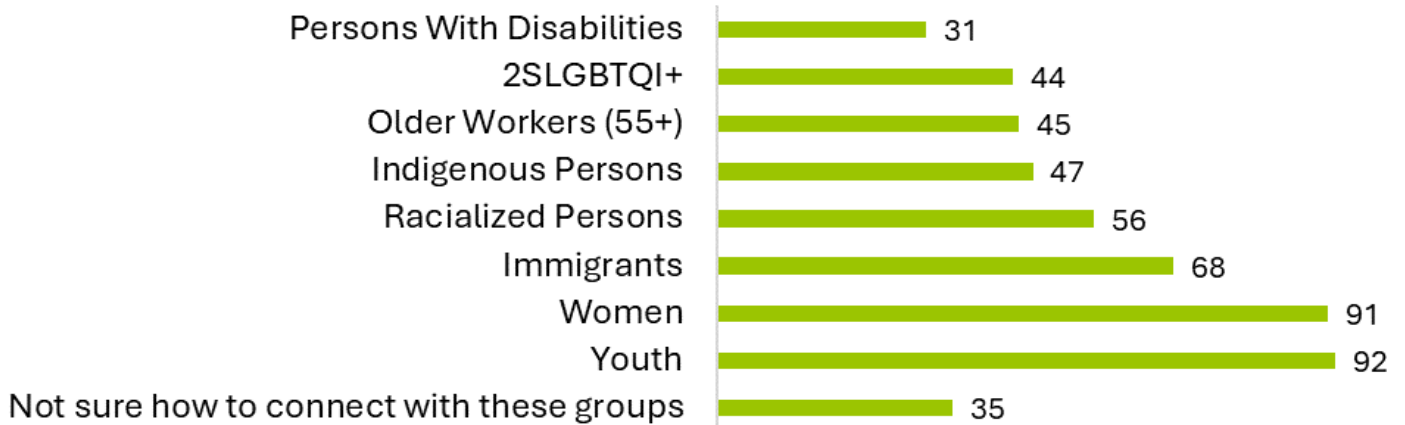
Employers rated their level of agreement around hiring with a lens to diversifying the workforce being an important part of their organization’s strategy. The combined responses indicated that the level of agreement with the statement averaged out to **60.8 out of 100** an increase of 1.9 vs. EmployerOne 2022.

Hiring With A Lens To Diversifying My Workforce Is An Important Part Of My Companies Business Strategy
(0 = Strongly Disagree, 100 = Strongly Agree)



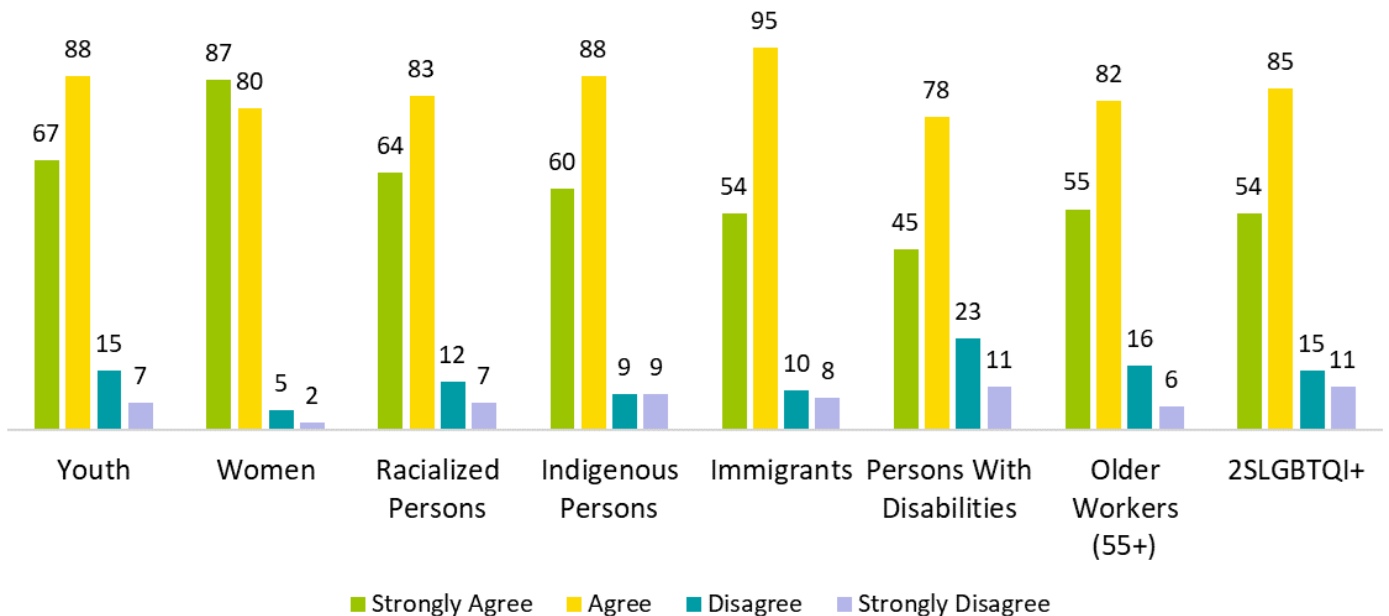
There is a lot of uncertainty and confusion around the EDI and its role in accessing, hiring and retaining talent. Many employers responded that they hire based upon qualifications, and do not discriminate based upon identity or background. Some were going as far as saying they find EDI hiring “discriminatory”. One of the common topics that came up in comments in relation to EDI was related to ageism in relation to both older and younger staff .

Groups Being Targeted in Job Postings



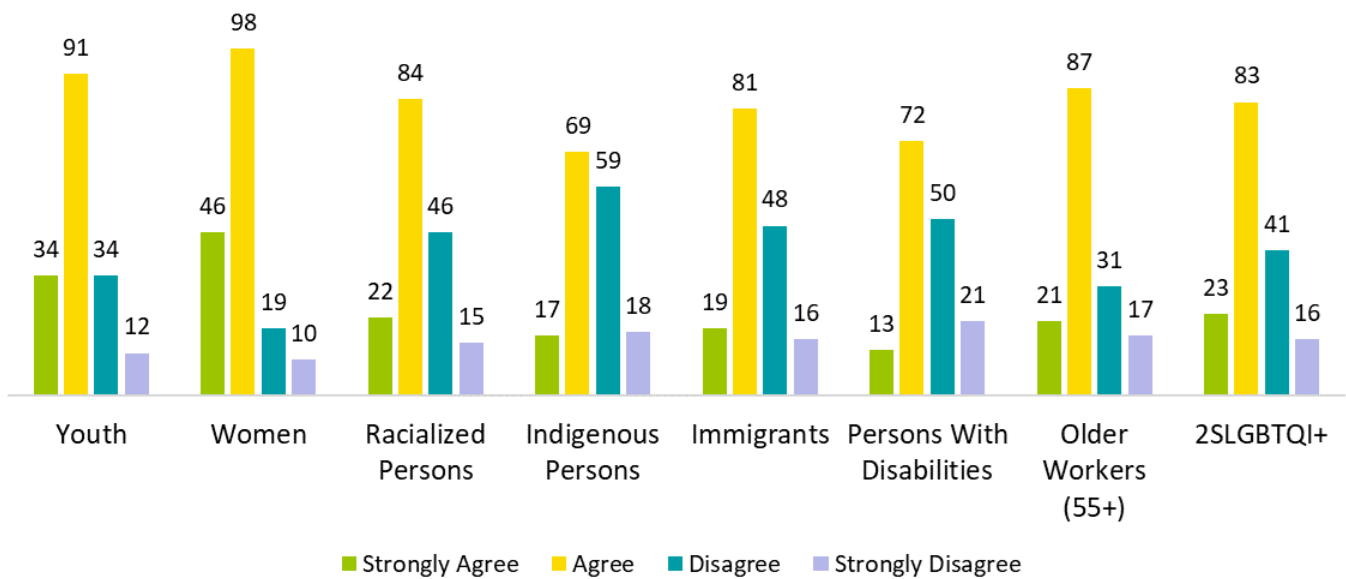
- The top 3 groups being targeted by employers in their job postings are Youth, Women and Immigrants.

I Am Aware of The Benefits That Can Be Brought To My Organization By Hiring The Following Groups



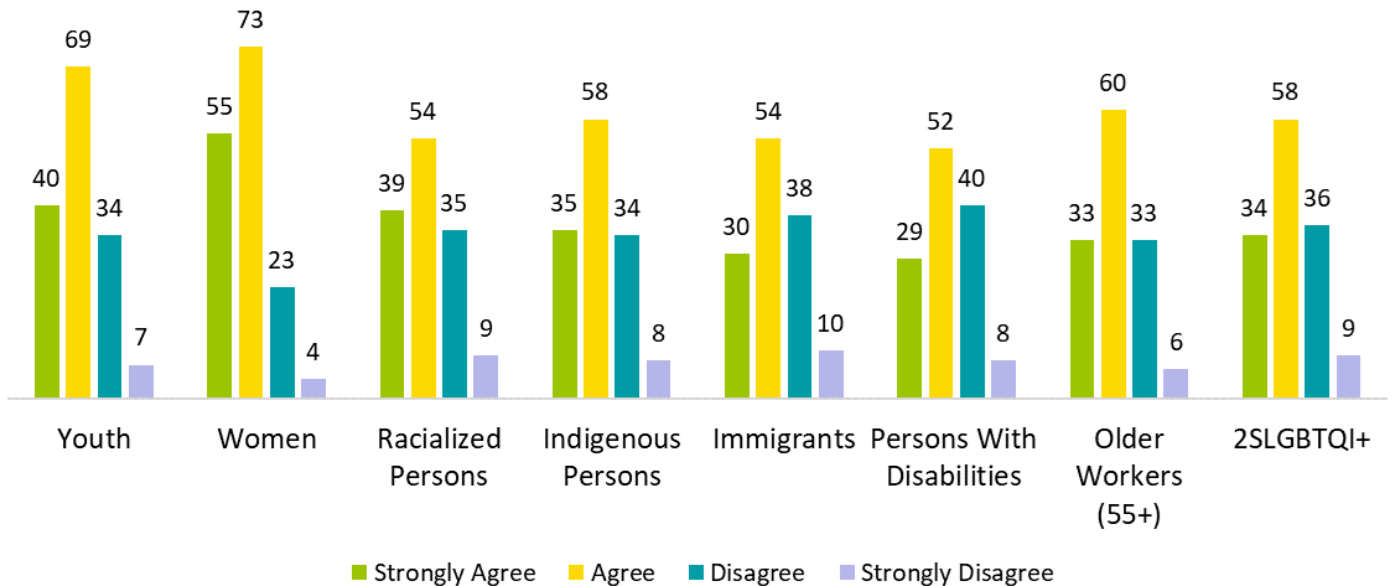
- In all cases, the vast majority of employers either agreed or strongly agreed that they are aware of the benefits that come with hiring specific groups. This is not a unanimous viewpoint, however as all of the groups also have employers that strongly disagree at a rate between 1% (Women) and 7% (2SLGBTQI+).

The Hiring Process For These Groups is Easy and Effective



- The majority of employers either agreed or strongly agreed that hiring processes for each group are easy and effective.
- When looking at Indigenous Persons and Persons with Disabilities, over 45% of employers either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the hiring process is easy and effective.

After Hiring The Following Groups My Organization Has Gained Skills And Tools It Would Not Otherwise Have

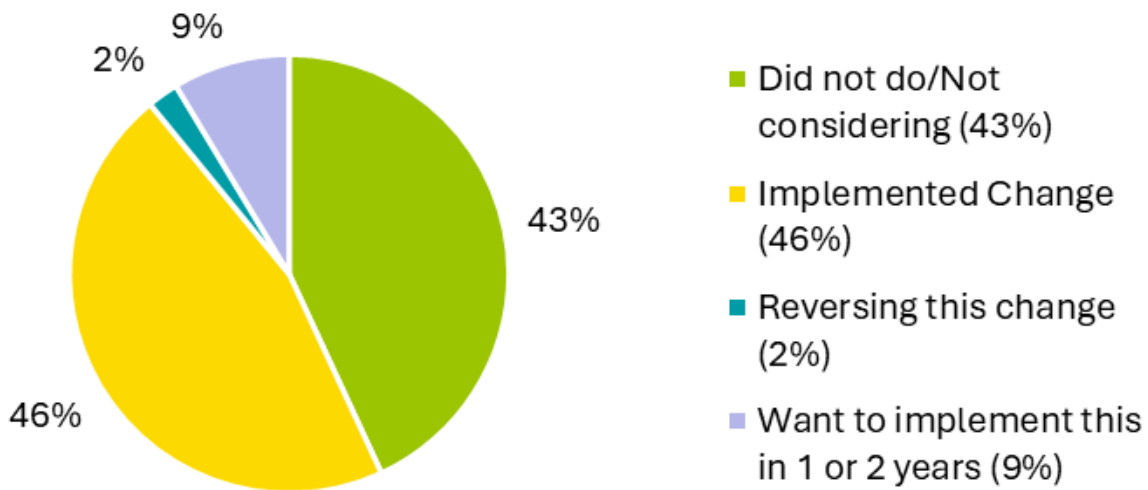


- Agree was the most common answer given by employers when asked if their organization has gained skills and tools it wouldn't have without hiring a specific group. This mixed with the high rate of Strongly Agree leads to a positive outlook regarding continued hiring of specific groups.

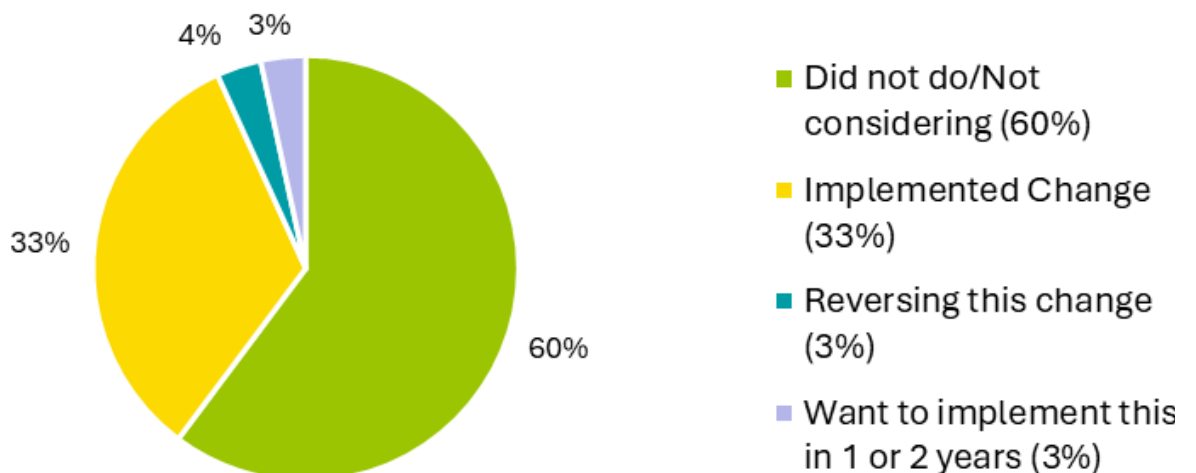
Section H: Work Trends

More than ever, workplaces are becoming attractive to job seekers when their workplace attempts to understand and accommodate their needs. Considering how an organization can build upon current trends continues to be a recruitment and retention tool. This section is to help determine if local employers are making changes and which ones.

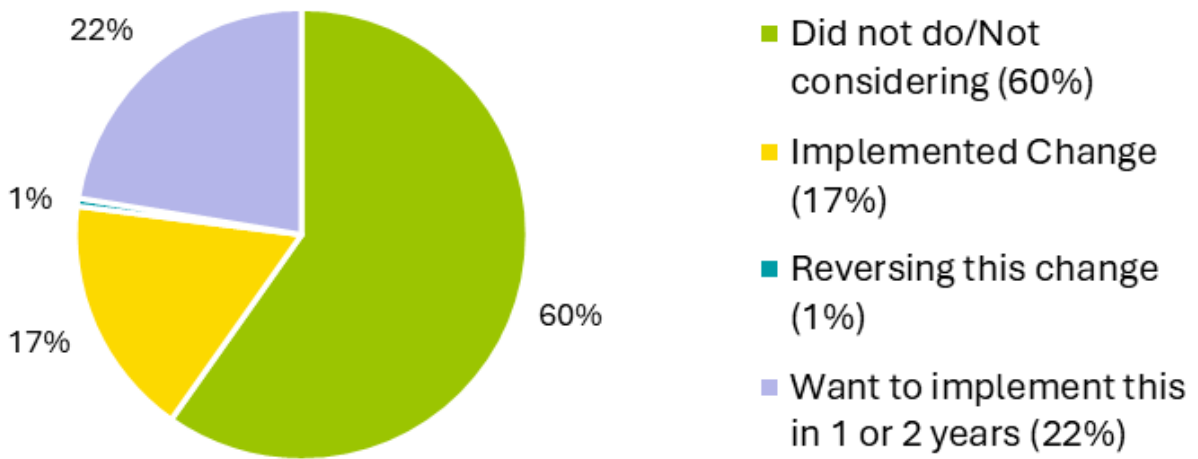
Offer More Flexible Work Hours To Promote Work-Life Balance



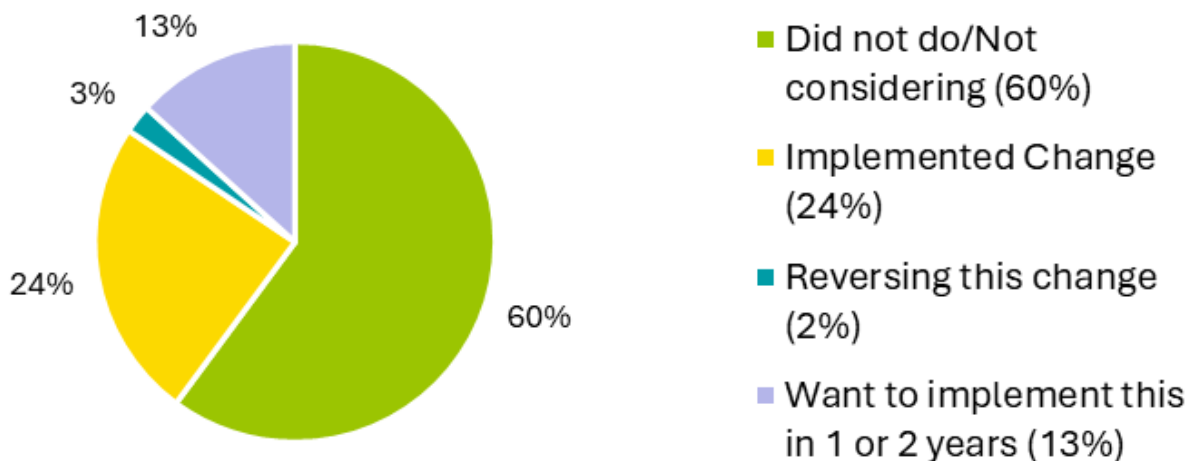
Shift to Work From Home (Part-Time or Full-Time) For At Least Some of The Workforce



Introduce Automation or Artificial Intelligence To Some Roles



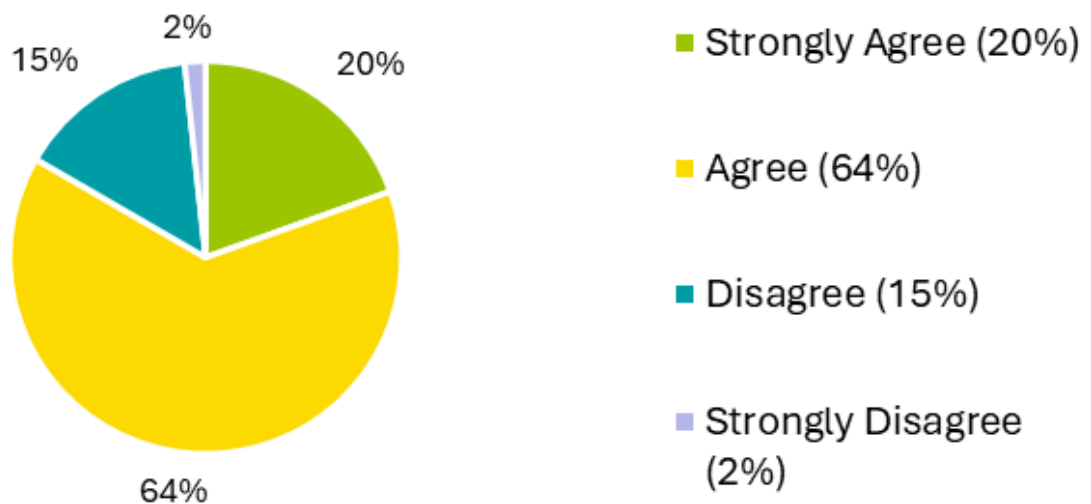
Change The Workplace Set-Up to Accommodate Collaboration, Working At Office On Occasion



Section I: Industry Perceptions

When looking internally at the industry that your organization is a part of one hopes that it is seen in a positive light and that it is attractive to potential future workers. Sometimes though, this can be a biased viewpoint or does not address the reality of the public's viewpoints. As workers change from generation to generation, what they are looking for changes but those in charge may be holding on to outdated mindsets. With this in mind, in this year's EmployerOne, the Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin asked employers some questions about their industry and what they believe the public thinks of it.

My Organization Is Competitive With Its Compensation Package



- 84% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that their organization is competitive with their compensation package.
- This could align with the retention strategies being used regarding increasing wage and employee “perks”



Does the public view your industry in a positive light?

Industry	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Wholesale trade	2	0	0	0
Information and cultural industries	0	3	0	0
Real estate and rental and leasing	0	2	0	0
Transportation and warehousing	0	0	1	1
Public administration	1	3	2	0
Accommodation and Food Services	1	5	1	0
Finance and insurance	2	4	2	0
Educational Services	3	6	0	1
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	5	6	0	0
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	2	10	1	0
Professional, scientific and technical services	0	11	1	0
Construction	1	6	4	0
Healthcare and social assistance	6	14	0	0
Retail Trade	7	8	5	0
Other Services (except public administration)	8	9	1	1
Manufacturing	6	16	6	0
TOTAL	44 (25%)	103 (59%)	24 (14%)	3 (2%)

What do you think draws people to your industry and what keeps people away?

Industry	Draws	Deterrents
Wholesale trade	Workplace environments	Wages and lack of "flashiness" for attracting talent
Information and cultural industries	Creative and flexible Well paying	Recent large layoffs in industry intimidation by everchanging technology
Real estate and rental and leasing	Flexibility of work hours Income potential	Work required outside of traditional 9 to 5 Monday to Friday Lack of income stability
Public administration	Stability Desire to give back to community (public service)	Perception that private sector pays more and is more exciting
Accommodation and food services	Multiple skill set (Jack of all trades) Engaging and fast passed	Perceived low rate of pay and low value (not seen as full time career) Hours of work (weekends and evenings)
Finance and insurance	Independence and flexibility Variety of opportunities Customer focused	Perception that finance people are "boring" General stigma surrounding the industry High standard of educational requirements and time commitment to obtain them
Educational services	Seen as a fun and easy job Enjoyment of working with children	Stressful work leading to potential burnout Wages and compensation/benefits
Arts, entertainment and recreation	Fun place to work Working with children and youth	Need for more work than is readily available (part time/seasonal) Hours (evenings/weekends) Wage

Industry	Draws	Deterrents
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	Knowledge and passion for the environment and addressing items like climate change	Lack of permanency and lack of desire to get hands dirty
Professional, scientific and technical services	Variety in day to day work	Stigma around industry lower pay [in some cases] Heavy workload Training required can be long process to obtain
Construction	Good pay for those with no credentials Working hours	Hard physical work in all weather conditions Seasonality of the industry Workplace environment
Healthcare and social assistance	Desire to help people Job security	Low pay Overworked Fast paced and stressful
Retail trade	Low entry requirement Flexible schedule Interaction with the public	Perception of not worthwhile work Wage Hours required (evenings and weekends)
Other services (except public administration)	Work Culture	Wages Physically demanding
Manufacturing	Likes working with hands Curiosity of process wages	Stigma around industry (dirty and unsafe, not requiring intelligence/ education) Hard physical work Shift work

*Transportation and warehousing not listed due to no responses from that industry



Workforce Planning Board
of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin

To get involved with EmployerOne as a partner or if you
have further inquiries about the data,

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