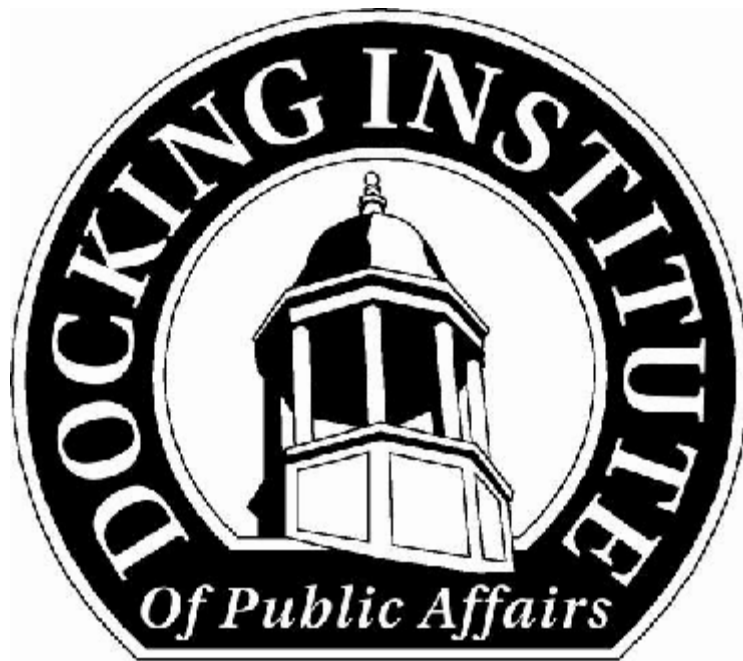


Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership

Regional Labor Skills Assessment Analysis - 2002



Conducted For

The Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership

By

The Docking Institute of Public Affairs

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The staff of **The Docking Institute of Public Affairs** and its **University Center for Survey Research** are dedicated to serving the people of Kansas and surrounding states.

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Executive Summary

OREP contracted with the Docking Institute of Public Affairs to conduct a survey of regional employers with five or more employees to ascertain the skill levels of employees, workforce productivity, employee training needs, and perceived underemployment. The survey instrument was a self-administered questionnaire mailed in three waves to employers between June 3, 2002 and August 5, 2002.

The primary objectives of the survey were to:

- % Ascertain the required skill level for organizations/businesses in the OREP region.
- % Determine the need for improvement in basic skills, thinking skills, personal quality skills, and technical skills of the OREP regional work force.
- % Ascertain the skill levels of new employees today relative to new employees five years ago and the ability to hire skilled employees today compared with this ability two to three years ago.
- % Ascertain the productivity of employees today compared to the productivity of employees three years ago.
- % Determine the level of underemployment among employees of organizations/businesses in the OREP region.
- % Determine the need for training on basic skills, thinking skills, personal quality skills, technical skills, and computer skills in the OREP regional work force.
- % Determine the importance of the public education system in the OREP region for local business investment and expansion, and ascertain the strength of the public school system for the business environment of the region.
- % Estimate prevailing wage levels associated with common occupational categories.

From the analysis of the survey results, we find that:

- % About 64% of the employers describe the required skill level in their business/organization as average, while 29% describe the required skill level as high.
- % Over 42% indicate that the necessary entry level skills in their business/organization have increased slightly over the past five years, and 21% indicate that they have increased significantly.
- % Employers generally rated basic skills to be the most solid of all skill areas. Employers see a greater need for improving thinking skills, technical skills, and to a lesser extent, personal quality skills.

- % The technical skill levels of new employees today have improved compared to those of new employees five years ago. Thinking skills and personal quality skills have decreased among today's new employees compared to those from five years ago. Basic skill levels of new employees today are about the same as the skill levels of new employees five years ago.
- % Employers report that their new hires are generally meeting the needs of the organization in the occupational categories of technical, sales, professional, and clerical, with the strongest being the clerical and sales categories. Skilled trades, managerial, and general labor occupations stand out as the weakest in terms of new hires having skills that meet organizational needs.
- % 34% of employers indicate that 16% or more of their employees are underemployed.
- % 69% of employers indicate that hiring full time skilled employees has grown more difficult in the past three years, and 34% expect it to grow more difficult over the next three years. 44% of employers indicate that ease in hiring full time unskilled employees has stayed the same over the past three years, and 61% expect it to remain the same over the next three years.
- % Employers tend to see a need for more training in all facets of thinking skills and all facets of personal quality skills, with the exception of gender and minority relations. In the area of basic skills, employers regard listening and oral communications skills most in need of improvement, and in the area of technical skills, software competency, business/management, and governmental regulation compliance are regarded as specific skill areas most in need of training.
- % A strong majority (81%) considers the public education system to be important for decisions to invest and expand locally.
- % About 47% of employers regard public education in the region as a strength, and slightly over 29% regard it as a weakness.
- % In terms of average hourly wages, engineers (\$22.43), other advanced professionals (\$21.81), and business/management professionals (\$19.86) command the highest compensation. The lowest hourly wages tend to be found among unskilled labor (\$7.78), customer service staff (\$8.20), and clerical positions (\$9.37).
- % A majority of employers offer vacation and health care coverage for all occupational categories represented in their organization, and a smaller majority offer retirement benefits. The percentage of each occupational category that receives vacation benefits ranges from 76% to 96%, and 68% to 93% for health care benefits. The percentage of each occupational category that receives retirement benefits ranges from 51% to 77%.

Introduction

In an economy that is becoming increasingly global, employees must have skills to be competitive with workers in other states and countries. In a future increasingly influenced by technology, workers must have flexible technical and thinking skills. To determine skills levels among workers in the Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership (OREP) area, OREP contracted the Docking Institute of Public Affairs to conduct a labor skills assessment in the region.

Methods

Findings of this study are based on a self-administered, three-wave mail survey of 671 employers in the region. The employer list was acquired from the Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations and was the most current listing of employers available.

The first copy of the survey was mailed with a cover letter on June 3, 2002. It was signed by OREP's Manager, Allen Kunkel. Follow-up letters and surveys were mailed on June 18, 2002, to those who had not yet responded to the original mailing. A third, and final, follow-up letter and survey were mailed on July 9, 2002. A total of 190 completed questionnaires were returned by August 5, 2002, the end of the data collection period. This resulted in an overall cooperation rate of 28%.

Survey Instrument

OREP and the Docking Institute agreed on the survey items used, with the former identifying the study objectives and the latter developing items that were valid, reliable, and unbiased. Question wording and the design of the survey instrument are the property of the Docking Institute and are not to be used for additional surveys unless written permission is given by the Director of the Docking Institute.¹

¹ A copy of the questionnaire appears in the Appendix.

Section 1 Overall Regional Results

Type of Employees and Characteristics of Organization

Table 1 shows summary statistics for the number of full time and part time employees reported by employers. The number of full time employees ranges from a minimum of zero to a maximum of 1,495, and the median number of full time employees is 11. The number of part time employees ranges from a minimum of zero to a maximum of 411, and the median number of part time employees is two. The number of total employees ranges from two to 1,893, with a median of 15.

Table 1: Summary Statistics on Full Time, Part Time, and Total Number of Employees

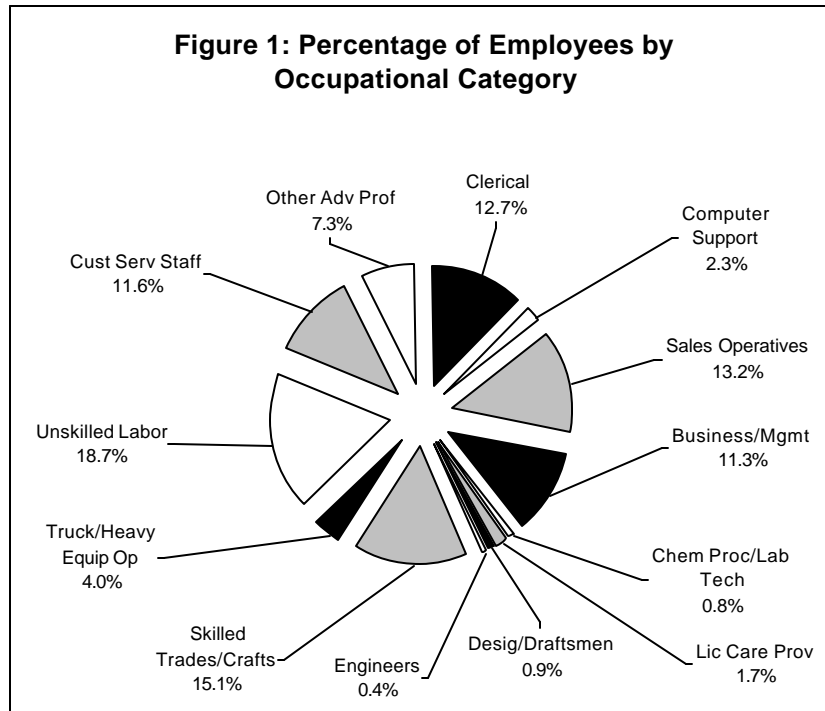
	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Full Time	11	0	1495
Part Time	2	0	411
Total	15	2*	1893

* While only organizations with 5 or more employees were sampled, 4.4% of respondents indicated they currently have fewer than 5 employees. It is possible that fluidity in production processes largely accounts for the 4.4% who currently have fewer than 5 employees, even though the Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' records for the fourth quarter of 2001 show at least 5 employees among all organizations surveyed.

Respondents with part time employees were asked to indicate "on average, how many hours a week do your part time employees work?" The average number of hours reported ranges from a minimum of two to a maximum of 80². The median number of hours worked among part timers is 20.

Respondents were asked to provide the total number of employees in the organization employed in 13 different occupational categories, and the percentage by occupational category is shown in Figure 1 (next page). Unskilled labor, skilled labor, and sales operatives represent the largest percentages of total employees at about 19%, 15%, and 13% respectively. Clerical occupations account for almost 13%, customer support staff account for 12%, and business/management occupations account for 11%.

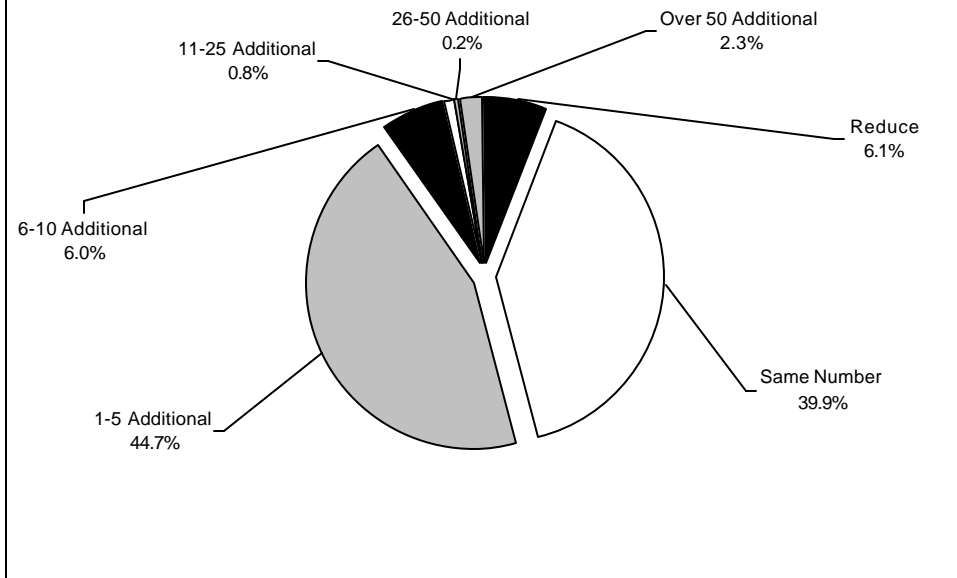
² The maximum number of hours worked by part time employees exceeds 40 hours per week as the likely result of seasonal (or temporary) employment. While these workers work more than the equivalent of a full time position, the position only lasts for weeks or months and not the entire year.



Employers were asked, "Is your business a subsidiary of a larger corporation/public organization; or is it a single local organization?" Approximately 34% report that their organization is a subsidiary organization, with single organizations representing about 66% of the sample. Employers were also asked how long their organization has been in business in the area, and the tenure ranges from a minimum of one year to a maximum of 163 years. The mean tenure among organizations is about 30 years.

Respondents were asked to identify, from a list of options, their organization's hiring plans over the next year, and the results are shown in Figure 2 (next page). Over 6% indicate that their organization will reduce its workforce in the next year, and about 40% indicate they will keep the same number of employees. Almost 45% of the sample expect to hire one to five additional employees in the next year.

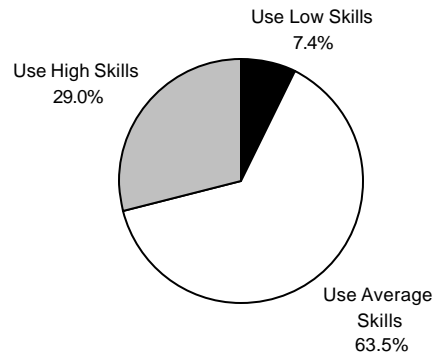
Figure 2: Employer Hiring Plans Over the Next Year



Skill Levels

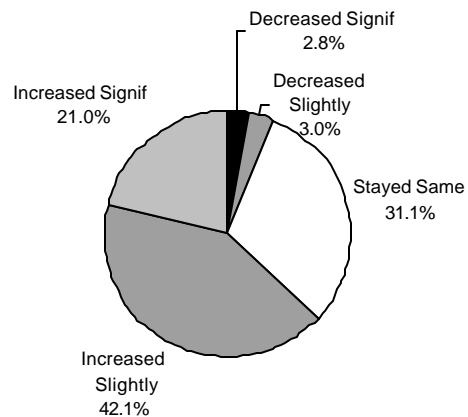
Employers were asked to assess the required training and educational standards of employees and the skill levels of current employees. Figure 3 shows the majority (63.5%) of employers report the required skill level for most employees is average, while 29.0% report the required skill level is high. Only 7.4% indicate the required skill level of most employees is low.

Figure 3: Required Skill Level for Most Employees



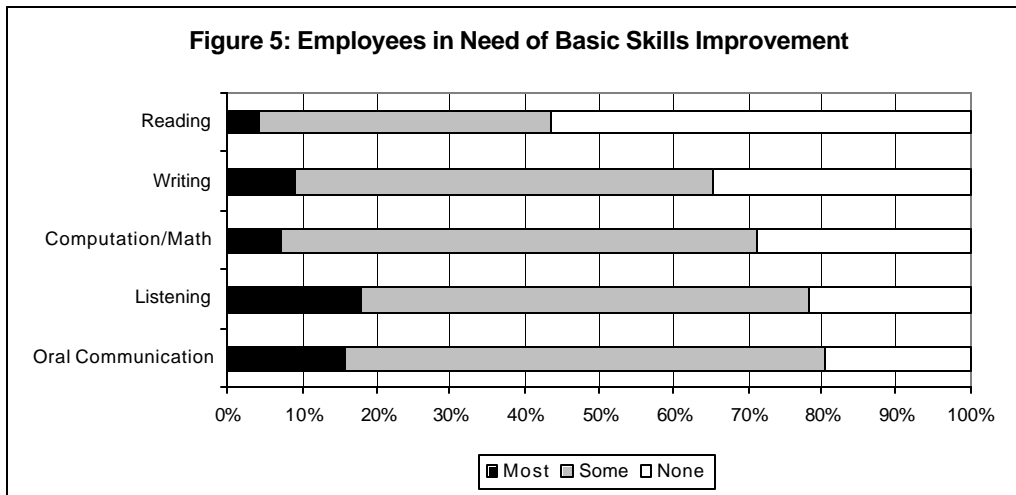
Employers were also asked whether the skill requirements for entry-level jobs in their organization had increased or decreased within the last five years (Figure 4). Most employers (42.1%) indicate that skill requirements have increased slightly, while 21.0% indicate that skill requirements have increased significantly. Over 31% indicate that skill requirements for entry level jobs have remained unchanged, and a combined total of 5.8% indicate that skill requirements have decreased slightly or significantly.

Figure 4: Change in Needed Entry Level Skills Past Five Years

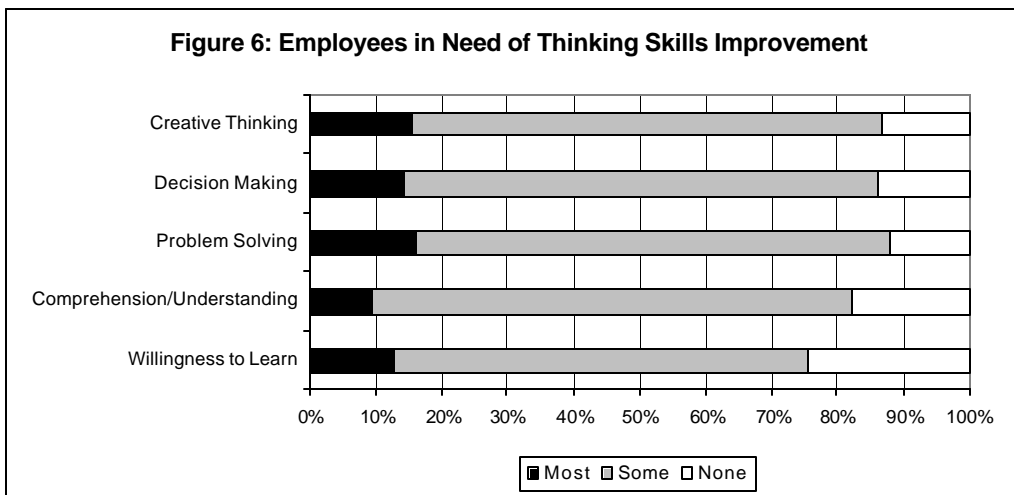


Employers were asked to indicate the extent to which their employee workforce needs improvement in various types of skills. Response categories include: most of my employees need improvement, some of my employees need improvement, and none of my employees need improvement. Figure 5 (next page) shows the extent to which employers think their employees need improvement in basic skills: reading, writing, math,

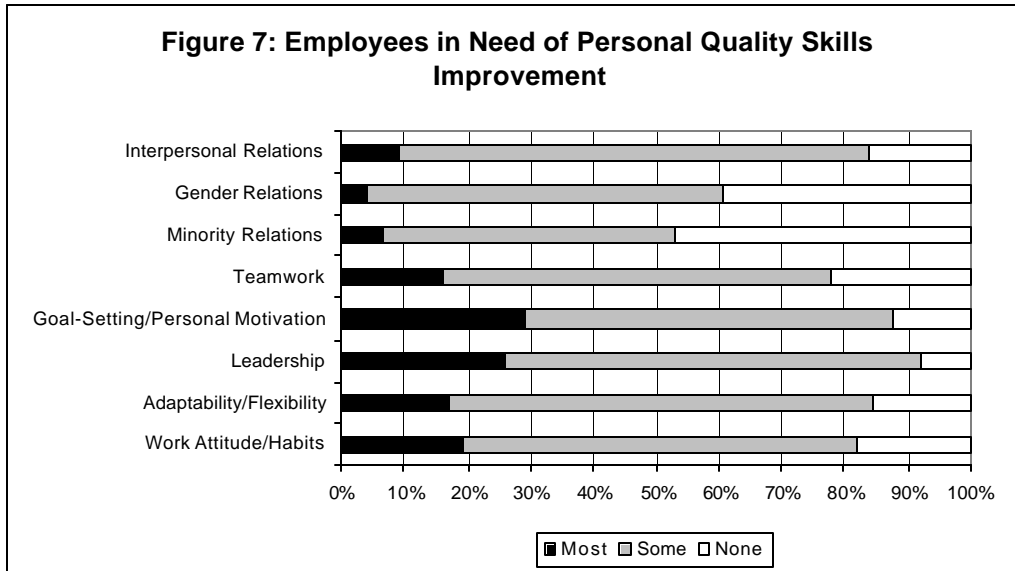
listening, and oral communication. The two areas in most need of improvement are oral communication and listening. Over 80% of employers indicate that some or most of their employees need improvement in oral communication skills, and about 78% indicate that some or most of their employees need improvement in listening skills. Employers are relatively happy with reading skills among employees, as about 57% indicate that none of their employees need improvement and only 4% indicate that most of their employees need improvement.



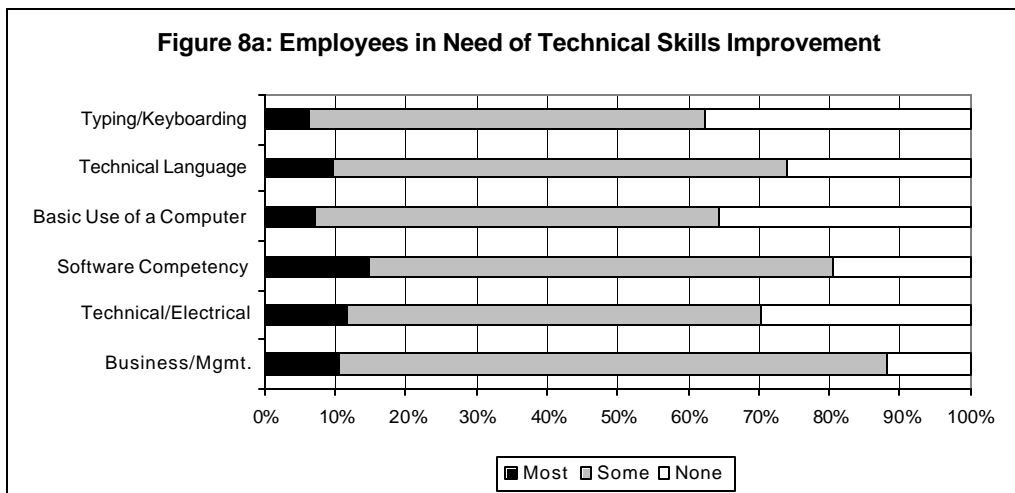
Employers were also asked to indicate the extent to which their employees need improvement in the following thinking skills: creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, comprehension, and willingness to learn. Figure 6 shows that a substantial percentage of employers believe some or most of their employees need improvement in problem solving (88%), creative thinking (87%), and decision making (86%) skills. About 82% think that some or most of their employees need improvement in comprehension skills, and about 75% believe that some or most of their employees could improve their willingness to learn.

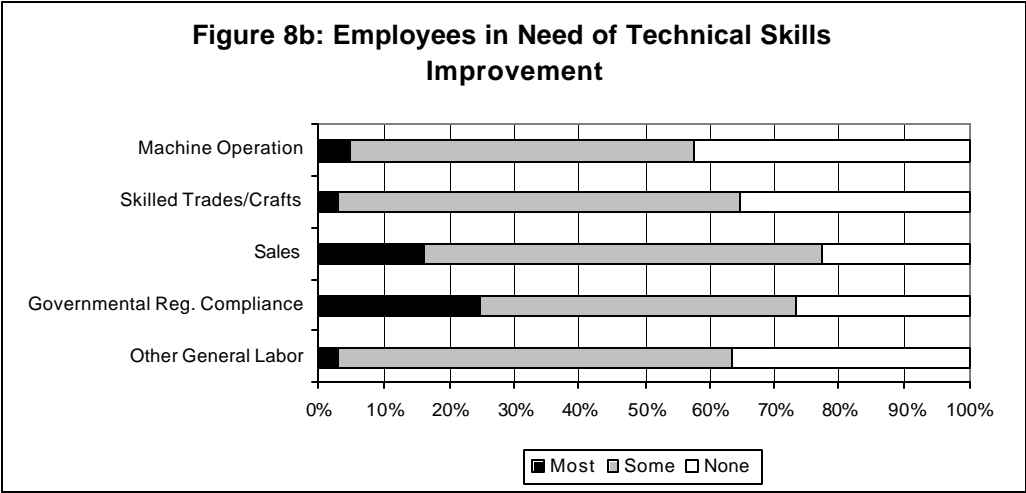


Personal quality skills are important characteristics of employees, and employers were asked to rate employees' need for improvements in this area. Figure 7 shows that about 92% of employers feel that some or most of their employees need improvement in leadership. At least 77% feel that some or most of their employees need improvement in all other personal skill areas, with the exception of gender relations (61%) and minority relations (53%).

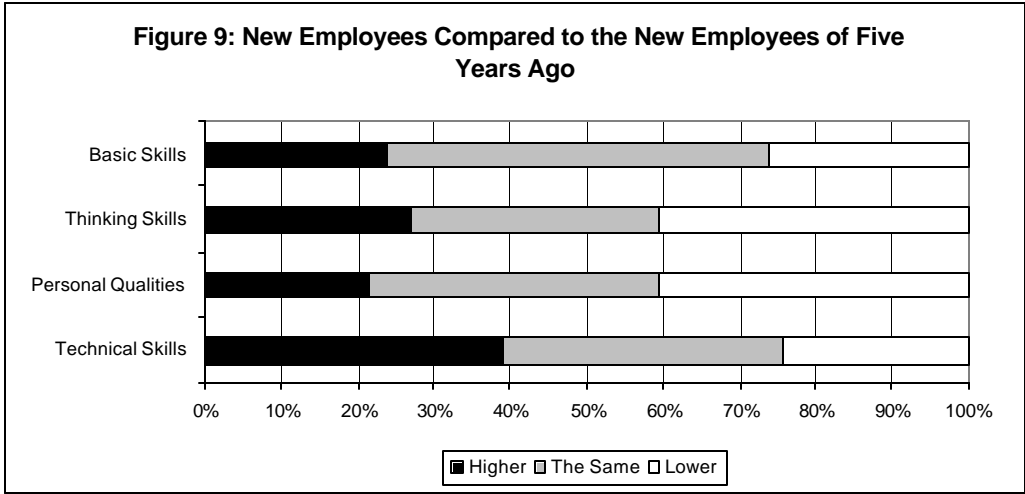


The final skills area assessed is technical skills. Figures 8a and 8b (next page) show employer results regarding employee needs for improvement in technical skills. The figures show that the technical skill areas of most concern are business management, software competency, and sales, with at least 77% of employers indicating that some or most of their employees are in need of improvement in each of these areas.



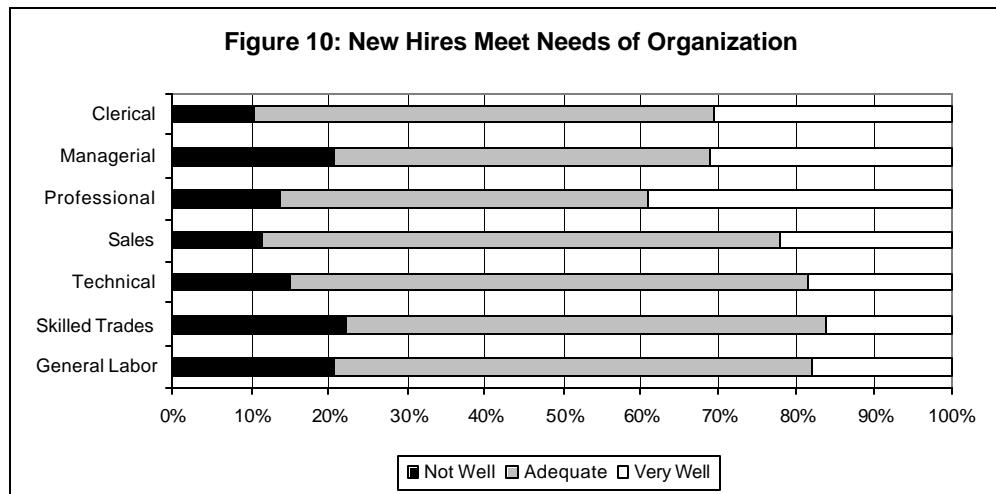


On the four general skill areas mentioned above (basic skills, thinking skills, personal qualities, and technical skills), employers were asked to assess the skill levels of newly hired employees compared to skill levels of newly hired employees five years ago. Figure 9 shows that employers tend to rate new hires from five years ago above today's new hires in thinking and personal quality skills. About 22% of employers indicate personal quality skills have improved, while 41% indicate they have declined. About 27% of employers indicate that thinking skills have improved, while 41% indicate they have declined. Technical skills appear to have increased, as about 39% of employers indicate that technical skills are higher, and only 24% indicate they are lower. A net change in basic skills is not apparent as about 25% report a decrease, and about 25% report an increase in these skills.

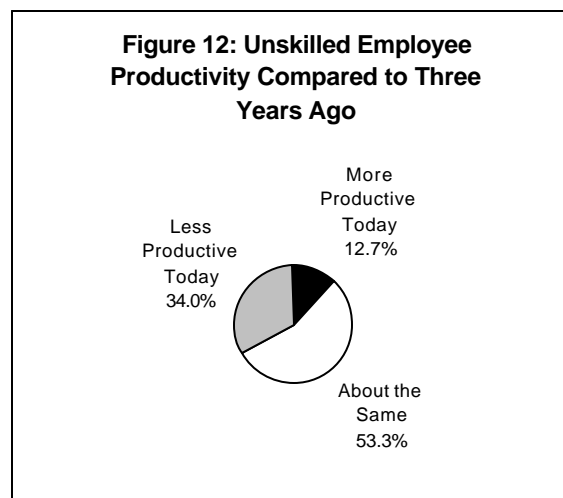
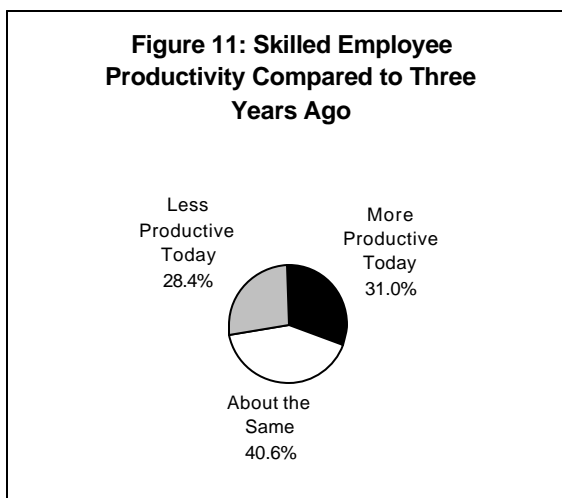


In an effort to further discern employer satisfaction with new hires, respondents were asked to indicate how well the qualifications of newly hired employees meet the needs of the organization. Figure 10 (next page) shows that, in large, satisfaction with new hires is

adequate. It is particularly high for clerical, sales, and professional positions. About 90% of respondents indicate that new clerical hires are meeting organization needs adequately or very well, 88% indicate the same for new sales hires, and 86% for new professional hires. Employers indicate experiencing the most difficulty in new hires meeting organization needs among skilled trades, managerial, and general labor positions. Respondents indicate 22% of new skilled trades hires, and 21% of both new managerial and new general labor hires, are not well qualified.



Respondents were asked to compare skilled employee productivity to that of three years ago, and unskilled employee productivity to that of three years ago, and the results are shown in Figures 11 and 12. About 41% of employers indicate that skilled employee productivity has not changed, 31% indicate that it has increased, and 28% indicate it has decreased in the last three years. Figure 12 shows that 34% of employers indicate unskilled employee productivity has decreased in the last three years, 53% feel it has stayed the same, and only 13% feel today's unskilled employees are more productive.



Respondents were also asked to indicate what percent of their organization's employees are underemployed, or are underutilized. Over 41% of employers indicate that less than 5% of their employees are underemployed. Over 15% of employers indicate that between 6% and 10% of their employees are underemployed, and over 9% suggest that between 11% and 15% of their employees are underemployed. Nearly another 11% indicate that between 16% and 20% of their employees are underemployed.

Table 2: Percent of Business/Company Employees Underemployed

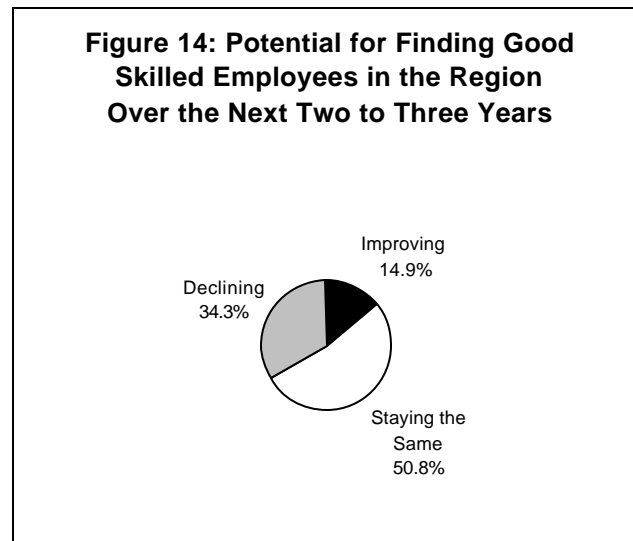
	# of Employers	Valid Percent
0-5%	70	41.3%
6-10%	26	15.3%
11-15%	16	9.3%
16-20%	18	10.5%
21-25%	13	7.5%
26-30%	14	8.1%
More than 30%	13	7.9%
Total	170	100.0%

Training and Skill Requirements

A series of questions dealt with the required training and educational standards of the employers. Employers were asked "how difficult is it to hire full time *skilled* employees today compared to two or three years ago?" The response categories included much more difficult, slightly more difficult, about the same, slightly less difficult, and much less difficult. Figure 13 shows that 25% of the respondents find it is much more difficult to hire full time skilled employees now than three years ago. Another 44% find it slightly more difficult, and 24% believe the ability to hire full time skilled employees is about the same now as before.



The survey then asked employers to rate the potential for finding good skilled employees in the area over the next two to three years; results are shown in Figure 14. About 51% believe the potential will remain about the same, 34% anticipate a decline in the potential for finding good employees, and only 15% anticipate that the potential for finding good skilled employees will increase in the next two to three years.



Employers were also asked to rate the difficulty in finding full time *unskilled* employees today compared to two to three years ago. Figure 15 shows that about 8% report that it is much more difficult to hire unskilled full time employees compared to two or three years ago, and 28% feel that it is slightly more difficult. About 44% believe the ability to hire is about the same now as then.

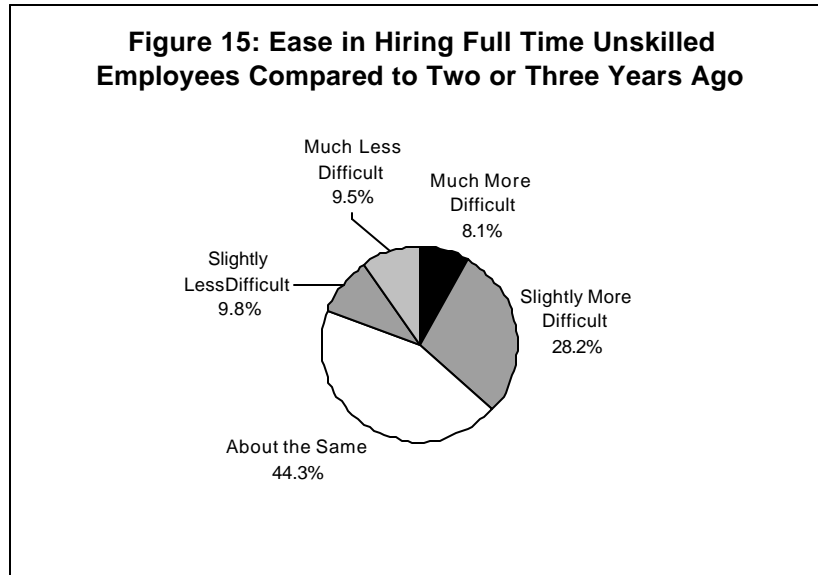
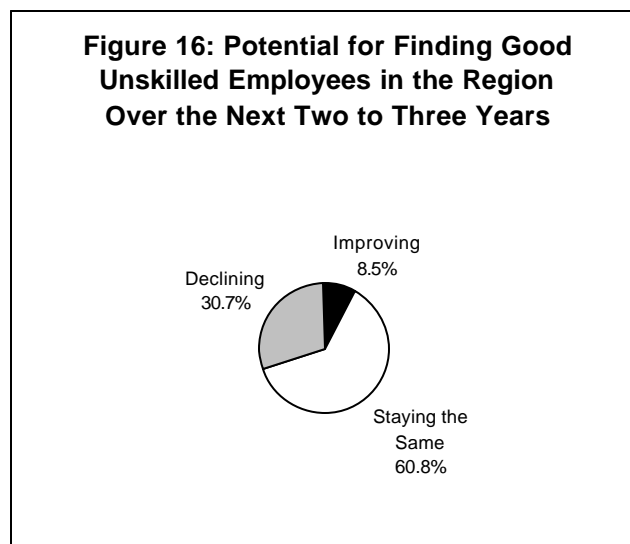


Figure 16 shows results when employers are asked to rate the potential to find good unskilled employees in the area over the next two to three years, 61% of respondents believe that it will remain the same, and 31% believe that it will become more difficult. Relatively few (around 9%) anticipate that the potential to find good unskilled employees will improve in the next two to three years.



To identify areas in which training will be needed over the next two to three years to help organizations adapt to technological change, employers were asked whether they anticipate that their employees will need additional training in particular skills. The skills correspond to those mentioned earlier under the categories of basic skills, thinking skills, personal qualities skills, and technical skills.

Figure 17 shows results for basic skills. Oral communication and listening are the two basic skills in which employers anticipate the greatest need for improvement over the next two to three years to help the organization adapt to technological change. Over 61% of employers see a need for additional training in oral communication, and over 53% see a need for additional training in listening. About 43% anticipate a need for additional training in math skills.

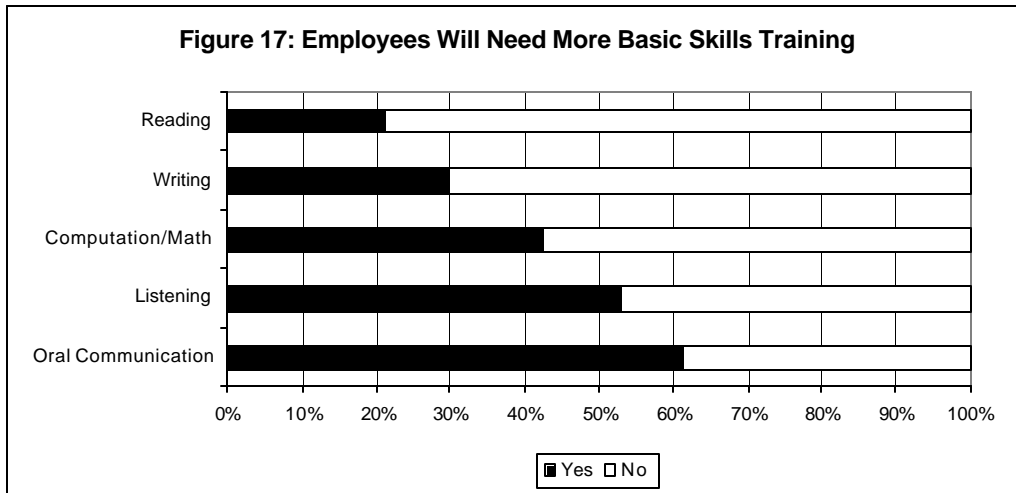
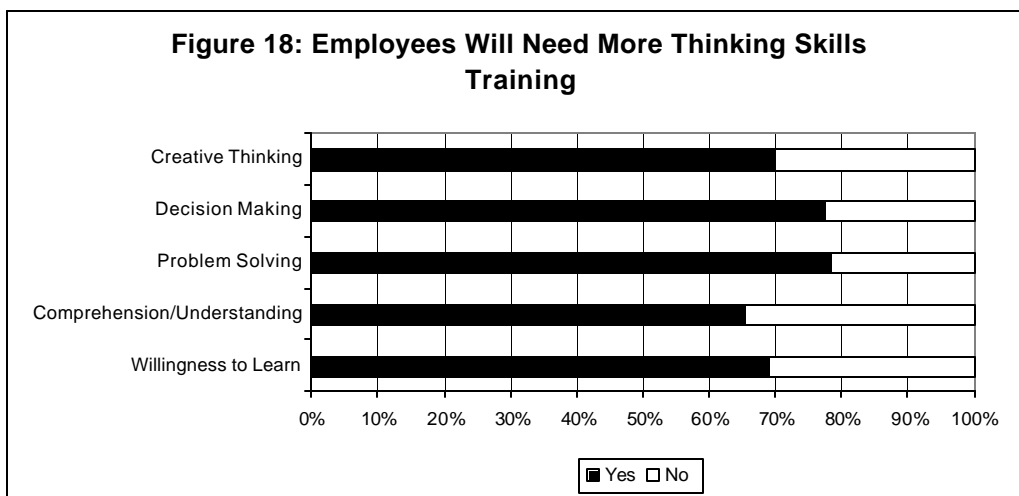
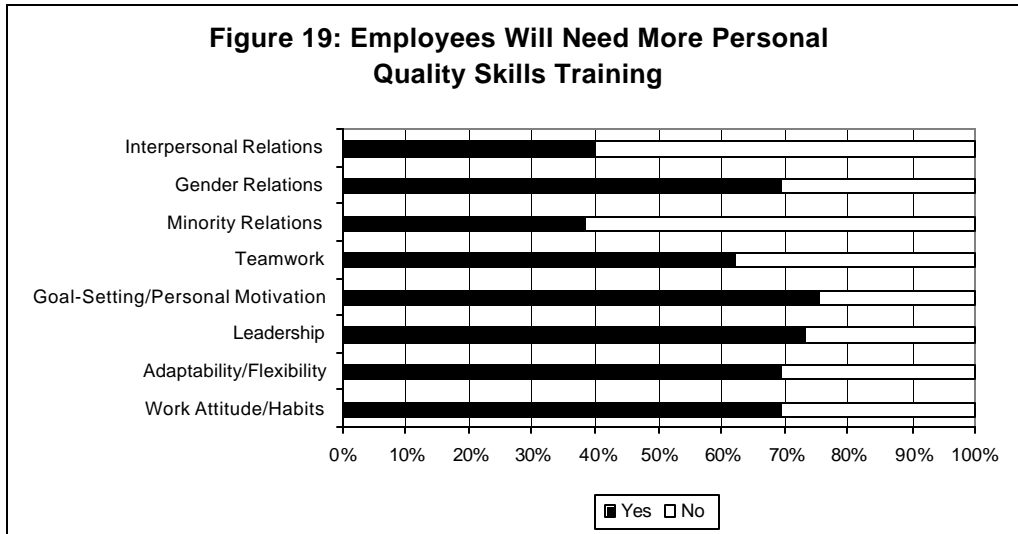


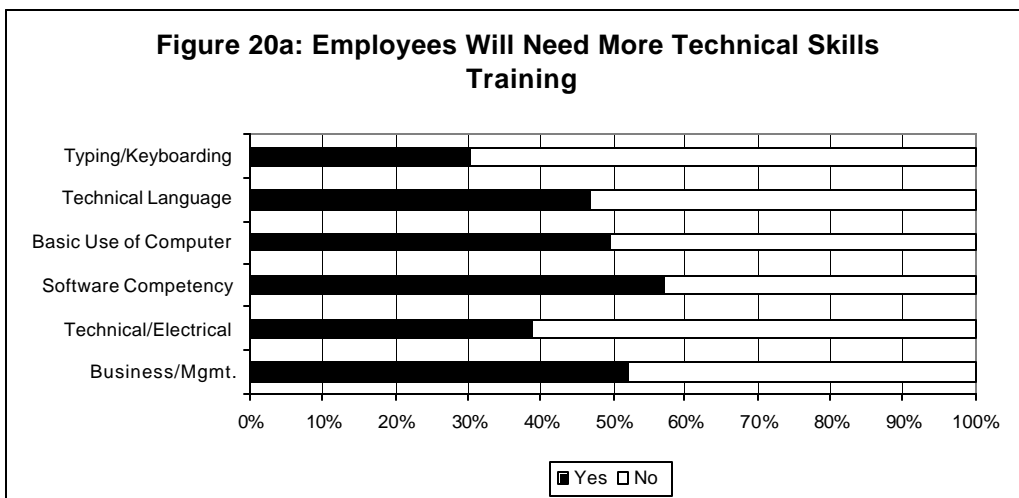
Figure 18 shows employers' anticipated need for additional employee training in thinking skills. Employers who anticipate a need for additional training over the next two to three years outnumber those who do not on every thinking skill listed. There is particular concern for training in problem solving and in decision making skills, with about 78% of respondents indicating a need for each.

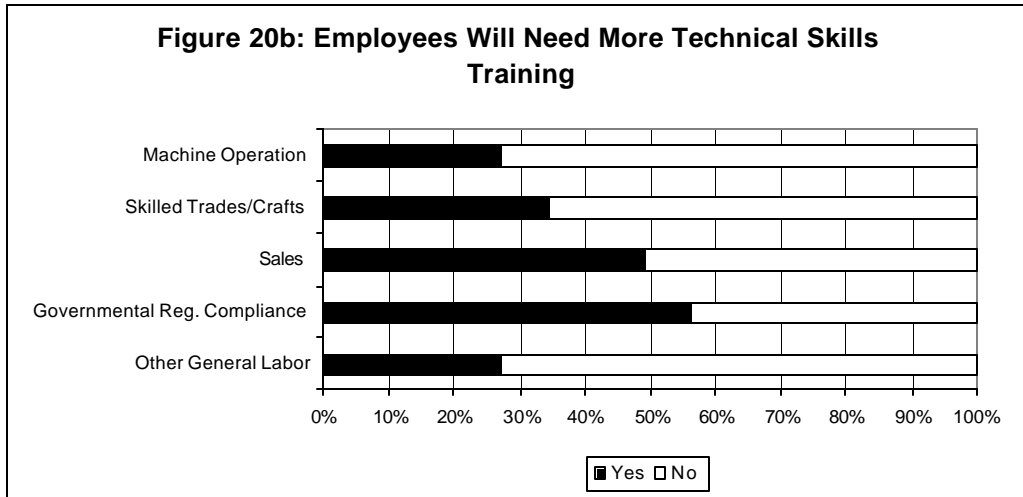


Turning to findings in Figure 19, about 75% of employers anticipate a need for training in goal-setting/personal motivation, and about 73% anticipate a need for leadership training. About 70% of employers anticipate a need for training in gender relations, adaptability/flexibility, and work attitude/habits.

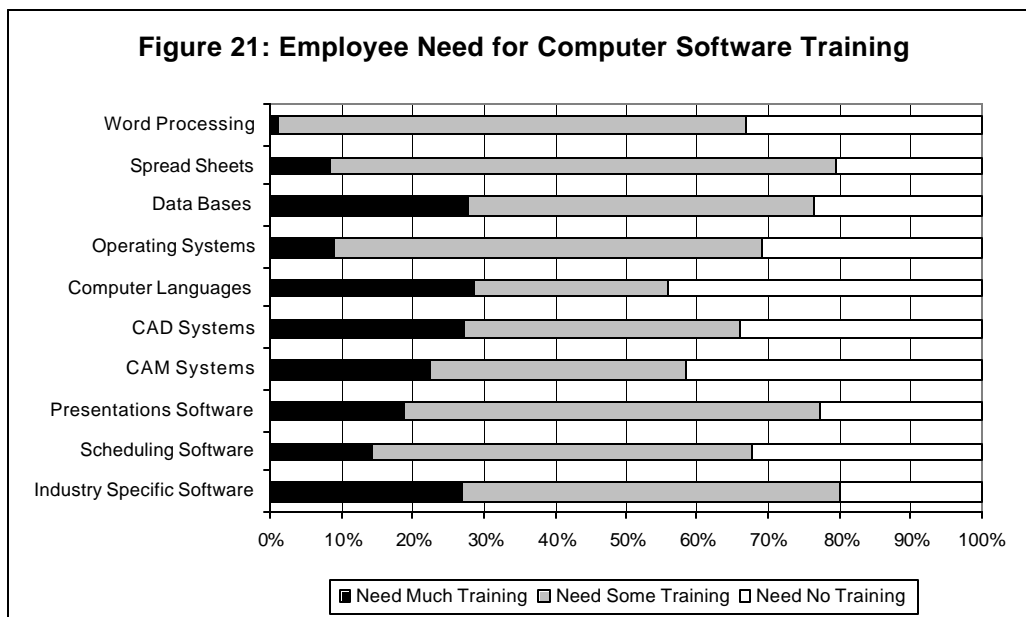


The final skills area assessed is technical skills in Figure 20a and 20b (next page). About 57% of employers anticipate a need for additional training in software competency, and 56% anticipate a need for additional training in government regulation compliance. The only other area of technical expertise in which a majority of employers anticipate a need for additional training is business/management, with 52%.

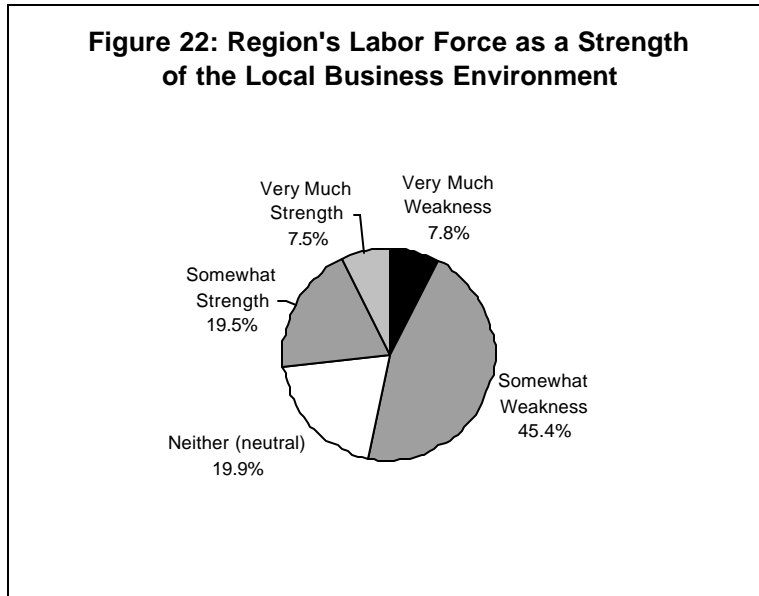




Concerning specific training needs, employers were asked the extent to which training for various types of software packages and operating systems needs to be implemented in their organization. Results for each item reported in Figure 21 pertain to only those respondents whose organization uses the respective type of software or operating system. The areas in which employers perceive the greatest organizational need for training are industry specific software and spreadsheets, with 80% of those that use industry specific software and spreadsheet packages in their organizations indicating that at least some training is needed in order to fully use the software's capability. With the exception of computer languages and CAM (computer aided manufacturing software) at least 65% of all respondents feel that at least some training would be necessary among their employees to use the software's full capability for software and operating system items listed.



On the issue of labor force skills, respondents were asked whether they would rate the area's labor force as a strength or weakness of its business environment. Figure 22 shows that a combined total of 53% felt it to be somewhat of a weakness or very much a weakness, compared to 27% who felt it to be somewhat of a strength or very much a strength. About 20% responded that the area's labor force is neither a strength nor a weakness of its business environment.



Public Education and the Business Environment

The public education system is a crucial provider of skills that businesses and organizations seek in a workforce. To determine the extent to which area employers rely on public education to provide important background skills for their own business/organization, the survey asked employers to assess the importance of the public education system in a community to their firm's decision to expand or invest in the area. Figure 23 shows that most employers consider the quality of the public education system to be an important factor in local expansion and investment decisions. Only 19% indicate that the community's public education system is unimportant in such decisions.

As a follow-up, employers were asked, "Would you rate public education as a strength or weakness of the area's business environment?" Figure 24 shows that a combined total of about 47% consider the local public education system to be somewhat of a strength or very much a strength of the local business environment. A combined total slightly over 29% consider the public education system to be somewhat of a weakness or very much a weakness. Respondents view of the public education that exists in the area is favorable.

Figure 23: Importance of Public Education for Organization Expansion and Investment

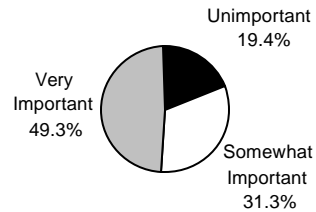
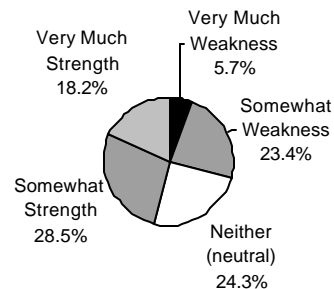
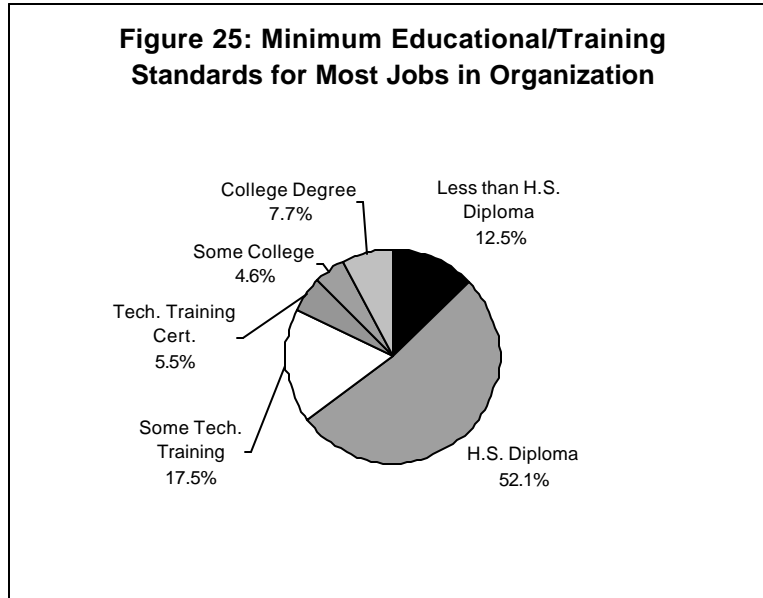


Figure 24: Public Education in Region as a Strength of the Local Business Environment



Respondents were also asked to identify the minimum educational/training standards for most jobs in their organization, and the result are shown in Figure 25. About 8% indicate that a college degree is required for most jobs in the organization, and about 5% indicated some college was necessary. About 6% indicate that at least a technical training certificate is needed, and nearly 18% indicate that at least some technical training is necessary. Slightly over 52% require a minimum of a high school diploma, and about 13% indicate that educational/training standars for most jobs in the organization require less than a high school diploma.



Wage and Benefit Levels

Employers were asked to provide wage and benefit information for the various occupational categories found in Table 3. In terms of average hourly wages, engineers (\$22.43), other advanced professionals (\$21.81), and business/management professionals (\$19.86) command the highest compensation. The lowest hourly wages tend to be found among unskilled labor (\$7.78), customer service staff (\$8.20), and clerical positions (\$9.37). The percentage of employers providing vacation benefits across the occupational categories ranges from 96% for truck drivers and heavy equipment operators to 76% for unskilled labor. The percentage providing health care coverage ranges from 93% for both engineers and other advanced professionals to 68% for unskilled labor. Finally, the percentage of employers providing retirement benefits across the occupational categories ranges from 77% among computer support personnel to 51% for unskilled labor.

Table 3: Wage and Benefit Levels by Occupational Category

Position	Average Hourly Wage (\$/hour)	Range of Hourly Wage Rate (\$/hour)	Vacation Benefits (%)	Health Care Benefits (%)	Retirement Benefits (%)
Clerical	\$9.37	\$5.50 - \$16.00	90.6%	76.6%	65.0%
Computer Support	\$12.28	\$6.00 - \$20.00	92.8%	88.1%	77.0%
Sales Operatives	\$14.09	\$2.13 - \$45.00	84.7%	86.8%	64.3%
Business/Mgmt	\$19.86	\$6.25 - \$121.00	93.1%	86.8%	73.9%
Chem Proc/Lab Tech	\$11.95	\$7.50 - \$16.00	86.3%	86.3%	62.0%
Lic Care Prov	\$13.40	\$6.00 - \$30.00	84.7%	71.8%	53.1%
Designer/Draftsmen	\$14.21	\$8.00 - \$30.00	94.5%	81.0%	57.3%
Engineers	\$22.43	\$10.00 - \$40.00	92.7%	92.7%	66.7%
Skilled Trades/Crafts	\$12.46	\$6.00 - \$21.00	90.5%	84.5%	61.0%
Truck/Heavy Equip Op	\$11.30	\$7.75 - \$20.00	96.0%	89.5%	69.9%
Unskilled Labor	\$7.78	\$5.30 - \$14.00	75.8%	67.8%	51.3%
Cust Serv Staff	\$8.20	\$2.13 - \$16.00	78.2%	72.2%	59.3%
Other Adv Prof	\$21.81	\$8.00 - \$100.00	89.2%	92.6%	75.3%

Appendix

When completing this survey, please fill in the circles or the blank space provided accordingly. You may use a pen or pencil to mark your responses.

Example of how to mark a response:

For an answer of "2" For an answer of "50" For an answer of "623"
0 0 0 2 0 0 5 0 0 6 2 3

Q1. How many of your employees are classified **Full Time**?

—	—	—	—
0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9

Q2. How many of your employees are classified **Part Time**?

—	—	—	—
0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9

Q3. If you have **Part Time** employees, on average, how many hours a week do your part time employees work?

—	—
0	0
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9

Q4. About how many employees of each type does your organization employ? If your business employs no workers in a particular category, please indicate so by writing 0.

- _____ Clerical
- _____ Computer Support Staff (Programming, Data Processing, etc.)
- _____ Sales Operatives
- _____ Business/Management
- _____ Chemical Process/Lab Technicians
- _____ Licensed Care Providers
- _____ Designer/Draftsmen
- _____ Engineers
- _____ Skilled Trades/Crafts (Machine Operators, Assemblers, Inspectors, Mechanics/Machinists, Electronic/Electrical)
- _____ Truck Drivers and Heavy Equipment Operators
- _____ Unskilled Labor (Stockers, Custodial, etc.)
- _____ Customer Service Staff
- _____ Other Advanced Professionals

Q5. Which of the following best describes the required skill level for most of your employees. (Please fill in the bubble that corresponds to your answer)

- ① Core work processes use *relatively low* employee skill levels.
- ② Core work processes use *average* employee skill levels.
- ③ Core work processes use *very high* employee skill levels.

Q6. The one to three scale below can be used to assess whether your employees need improvement in the following skills. Using the bubbles beside each skill, please indicate whether (1) most of your employees need improvement, (2) some of your employees need improvement, or (3) none of your employees need improvement.

- 1 Most of my employees need improvement
- 2 Some of my employees need improvement
- 3 None of my employees need improvement
- 9 DK or NA. Don't know or not applicable

Basic Skills

	Most	Some	None	Don't Know
Reading	①	②	③	⑨
Writing	①	②	③	⑨
Computation/Math	①	②	③	⑨
Listening	①	②	③	⑨
Oral Communication	①	②	③	⑨

Thinking Skills

	Most	Some	None	Don't Know
Creative Thinking	①	②	③	④
Decision Making	①	②	③	④
Problem Solving	①	②	③	④
Comprehension/Understanding	①	②	③	④
Willingness to Learn	①	②	③	④

Personal Qualities

	Most	Some	None	Don't Know
Interpersonal Relations	①	②	③	④
Gender Relations	①	②	③	④
Minority Relations	①	②	③	④
Teamwork	①	②	③	④
Goal-setting/Personal Motivation	①	②	③	④
Leadership	①	②	③	④
Adaptability/Flexibility	①	②	③	④
Work Attitude/Habits	①	②	③	④

Technical Skills

	Most	Some	None	Don't Know
Typing/Key Boarding	①	②	③	④
Technical Language	①	②	③	④
Basic Use of a Computer	①	②	③	④
Software Competency	①	②	③	④
Technical/Electrical	①	②	③	④
Business/Management	①	②	③	④
Machine Operation	①	②	③	④
Skilled Trades/Crafts	①	②	③	④
Sales	①	②	③	④
Governmental Regulation Compliance	①	②	③	④
Other General Labor	①	②	③	④

Q7. Over the last five years, how much have the skill requirements increased or decreased for entry level jobs in your business? (Please fill in the bubble that corresponds with your answer)

- ① Decreased significantly
- ② Decreased slightly
- ③ Remained unchanged
- ④ Increased slightly
- ⑤ Increased significantly

Q8. What are the minimum educational and training standards for most jobs in your business?

- ① Less than high school degree
- ② High school degree
- ③ Some Technical Training
- ④ Technical Training Certification
- ⑤ Some college
- ⑥ College degree

Q9. For each skill area below, do you think the skill level of newly hired employees today tends to be higher, the same, or lower than the skill level of newly hired employees five years ago?

		Higher	The Same	Lower	Don't Know
a.	Basic Skills.....	①	②	③	④
b.	Thinking Skills.....	①	②	③	④
c.	Personal Qualities...	①	②	③	④
d.	Technical Skills.....	①	②	③	④

Q10. For each of the following types of workers, how well do the qualifications of newly hired employees meet the needs of your business? (Fill in "Not Applicable" if your organization does not employ that type of worker.)

		Not Well	Adequate	Very Well	Not Applicable	Don't Know
a.	Clerical.....	①	②	③	④	⑤
b.	Managerial.....	①	②	③	④	⑤
c.	Professional.....	①	②	③	④	⑤
d.	Sales.....	①	②	③	④	⑤
e.	Technical.....	①	②	③	④	⑤
f.	Skilled Trades...	①	②	③	④	⑤
g.	General Labor...	①	②	③	④	⑤

Q11. How difficult is it to hire *full-time skilled* employees today compared to two or three years ago? (Please fill in the bubble that corresponds to your answer)

- ① Much more difficult
- ② Slightly more difficult
- ③ About the same
- ④ Slightly less difficult
- ⑤ Much less difficult
- ⑥ Don't know

Q12. How would you rate your potential for finding good *skilled* employees in your county over the next two to three years?

- ① Improving
- ② Staying about the same
- ③ Declining
- ⑨ Don't know

Q13. How would you rate the productivity of your *skilled* employees today compared to the productivity of your skilled employees three years ago?

- ① More productive today
- ② About the same
- ③ Less productive today
- ⑨ Don't Know

Q14. How difficult is it to hire *full-time UNskilled* employees today compared to two or three years ago?

- ① Much more difficult
- ② Slightly more difficult
- ③ About the same
- ④ Slightly less difficult
- ⑤ Much less difficult
- ⑨ Don't know

Q15. How would you rate the potential for finding good *UNskilled* employees in your county over the next two to three years?

- ① Improving
- ② Staying about the same
- ③ Declining
- ⑨ Don't know

Q16. How would you rate the productivity of your *UNskilled* employees today compared to the productivity of your unskilled employees three years ago?

- ① More productive today
- ② About the same
- ③ Less productive today
- ⑨ Don't Know

Q17. For the following skills, please indicate whether you anticipate that (1) your employees will need additional training to help your organization adapt to any technological changes in the next two to three years or (2) your employees will not need more training. Please fill in your answer in the bubble beside each skill.

- 1 Yes, my employees will need more training in this area
- 2 No, my employees will not need more training in this area.
- 9 DK or NA. Don't know or not applicable.

Basic Skills

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Reading	①	②	⑨
Writing	①	②	⑨
Computation/Math	①	②	⑨
Listening	①	②	⑨
Oral Communication	①	②	⑨

Thinking Skills

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Creative Thinking	①	②	⑨
Decision Making	①	②	⑨
Problem Solving	①	②	⑨
Comprehension/Understanding	①	②	⑨
Willingness to Learn	①	②	⑨

Personal Qualities

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Interpersonal Relations	①	②	⑨
Gender Relations	①	②	⑨
Minority Relations	①	②	⑨
Teamwork	①	②	⑨
Goal-setting/Personal Motivation	①	②	⑨
Leadership	①	②	⑨
Adaptability/Flexibility	①	②	⑨
Work Attitude/Habits	①	②	⑨

Technical Skills

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Typing/Key Boarding	①	②	⑨
Technical Language	①	②	⑨
Basic Use of a Computer	①	②	⑨
Software Competency	①	②	⑨
Technical/Electrical	①	②	⑨
Business/Management	①	②	⑨
Machine Operation	①	②	⑨
Skilled Trades/Crafts	①	②	⑨
Sales	①	②	⑨
Governmental Regulation Compliance	①	②	⑨
Other General Labor	①	②	⑨

Q18. For the following types of computer software, please indicate whether your business...

- 1 Needs to obtain much training to use the software properly.
- 2 Needs to obtain some additional training to use the software's full capabilities.
- 3 Needs no additional training for this type of software.
- 4 Does not use this type of computer software.

	Much Training	Some Training	No Training	Not Applicable
a. Word Processing (WordPerfect, MS Word, WordStar, etc.)	①	②	③	④
b. Spread Sheets (Lotus, Quattro, Excel, etc.)	①	②	③	④
c. Data Bases (DBase, PCFile, Paradox, etc.)	①	②	③	④
d. Operating Systems (DOS, Windows, Unix, etc.)	①	②	③	④
e. Computer Languages (Pascal, C, etc.)	①	②	③	④
f. CAD systems, Geographic Information Systems and/or other sophisticated Management Information Packages	①	②	③	④
g. CAM (Computer Aided Manufacturing) systems	①	②	③	④
h. Presentations Software (PowerPoint, Corel Presentations, etc.)	①	②	③	④
i. Scheduling Software (Lotus Organizer, Microsoft Outlook, etc.)	①	②	③	④
j. Industry specific software	①	②	③	④

Q19. What percent of your employees do you think are working in a position that does not use the employee's skills fully (i.e. what percent would you say are underemployed in terms of work skills)? (Please fill in the bubble that corresponds to your answer)

- ① 0-5%
- ② 6-10%
- ③ 11-15%
- ④ 16-20%
- ⑤ 21-25%
- ⑥ 26-30%
- ⑦ More than 30%
- ⑧ Don't Know

Q20. Over the next year, which of the following categories best represents your workforce hiring plans? Do you plan to:
(Please fill in the bubble that corresponds to your answer)

- ① reduce workforce
- ② have the same number of employees
- ③ hire 1 to 5 additional employees
- ④ hire to 6 to 10 additional employees
- ⑤ hire 11 to 25 additional employees
- ⑥ hire 25 to 50 additional employees
- ⑦ hire over 50 additional employees
- ⑨ Don't Know

Q21. Overall, how would you rate your county's labor force as a strength or weakness of its business environment? (Please fill in the bubble that corresponds to your answer)

- ① Very much of a weakness
- ② Somewhat of a weakness
- ③ Neither a strength or weakness
- ④ Somewhat of a strength
- ⑤ Very much of a strength
- ⑨ Don't know

Q22. How important is public education in a community to your firm's decision to expand or invest in the area?

- ① Unimportant
- ② Somewhat important
- ③ Very Important
- ⑨ Don't know

Q23. How would you rate public education as a strength or weakness of your county's business environment?

- ① Very much of a weakness
- ② Somewhat of a weakness
- ③ Neither a strength or weakness
- ④ Somewhat of a strength
- ⑤ Very much of a strength
- ⑨ Don't know

Q24. Is your business a subsidiary of a larger corporation/ public organization, or is it a single local organization?

- ① Subsidiary organization
- ② Single organization

Q25. About how many years has your business or company been in this county (if it is less than 2 years, please indicate if it has been in existence about 1/2 year, 1 year, or 1 and 1/2 years)?

Number of years _____

Q26. Please write in the average hourly wage scale (e.g. \$7.75) for the following positions in your organization. Then, circle “yes” or “no” to indicate whether the position is accompanied by the particular benefits mentioned. If your organization employs no workers in a particular position, please indicate so by writing 0 in the average wage category.

Position	Average Hourly Wage	Vacation Benefits (fill in one)	Health Care Coverage (fill in one)	Retirement Benefits (fill in one)
Clerical	\$ /hr	Y N	Y N	Y N
Computer Support Staff	\$ /hr	Y N	Y N	Y N
Sales Operatives	\$ /hr	Y N	Y N	Y N
Business/Management	\$ /hr	Y N	Y N	Y N
Chemical Process/Lab Technicians	\$ /hr	Y N	Y N	Y N
Licensed Care Providers	\$ /hr	Y N	Y N	Y N
Designer/Draftsmen	\$ /hr	Y N	Y N	Y N
Engineers	\$ /hr	Y N	Y N	Y N
Skilled Trades/Crafts	\$ /hr	Y N	Y N	Y N
Truck Drivers and Heavy Equipment Operators	\$ /hr	Y N	Y N	Y N
Unskilled Labor	\$ /hr	Y N	Y N	Y N
Customer Service Staff	\$ /hr	Y N	Y N	Y N
Other Advanced Professionals	\$ /hr	Y N	Y N	Y N

Thank you from the Docking Institute of Public Affairs and the Ozark Regional Economic Partnership

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