



Employer Survey 2021

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Introduction

The Employer Survey is used to measure the demand for workers within a labourshed through examining business demographics, industry and business outlook, growth and opportunities, attraction and retention of employees and skillset requirements. This survey, administered by the Durham Workforce Authority, contained all of these elements as well as information pertaining to employability and essential skills required by businesses and an assessment of the quality and availability of services in Durham Region. The Employer Survey has been designed in alignment with other surveys at the Durham Workforce Authority to allow for the potential for cross survey analysis. This iteration of the Employer Survey remains on schedule with past versions being offered every two years, and the last iteration occurring in 2019. For the 2021 Employer Survey, the Durham Workforce Authority brought on the Social Research Centre at Ontario Tech University to program and host the survey using their Qualtrics platform and to complete the analysis phases of the project. The Durham Workforce Authority was still directly involved in the employer recruitment processes, as well as editing/reviewing the survey materials, along with the final analysis and report.

Methodology

The survey instrument was developed in collaboration with the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (Ontario Tech University), Social Research Centre, the Literacy Network of Durham Region and the Durham Workforce Authority. The parties involved in the survey development worked to ensure that questions were in plain language and easy to comprehend for all skills levels. Input for survey questions was initially gathered from municipal government, local economic development departments and committees, chambers of commerce and boards of trade, educational institutions, employers and Employment Ontario Service Providers. The generation of survey questions utilized a community-based research approach in order to capitalize on the perspectives of all key stakeholders to ensure that the questions being asked were fully representative and relevant in surveying large, diverse groups of businesses over a large geographic area.

The Employer Survey has been prepared based on best practices and using information gathered from previous literature and research in the field. Additionally, the Employer Survey was designed with significant reference to the Durham Workforce Authority's Workforce Survey to ensure compatibility between the two instruments. In a Skillshed setting, the Employer Survey is used to gather information on the demand side of the labour force. Employer surveys generally collect the following information on businesses, including but not limited to, business demographics, industry and business outlook, growth and opportunities, attraction and retention of employees, and skillset requirements. Given the impacts on employment by COVID-19, a number of additional questions have been developed in order to identify how employers in Durham Region have needed to adapt accordingly.

The data was collected through an anonymous survey that was composed of both qualitative and quantitative aspects to gain a thorough and complete depiction of the labour market demand. The survey instrument was anonymous, and all questions were voluntary. Answers from the survey did not contain any identifiable markers. There was no risk or harm associated with participating in the survey. The survey instrument was designed to be applicable to all businesses in Durham Region regardless of industry, size of business or geographic location. The survey instrument and all recruitment materials

were approved by the University of Ontario Institute of Technology's Research Ethics Board (REB #16296). The survey instrument can be found in the Appendices.

Participants were primarily recruited through advertising material available on social media and distributed through a variety of business networks in Durham Region including chambers of commerce and boards of trade, economic development and Employment Ontario Service Providers. Marketing materials can be found in Appendices. This participant base was e-mailed with a survey link to access the survey. The email sent to participants can be found in the Appendices. Participants were able to withdraw from the study at any time by closing the browser window or skipping the remaining questions. Any data collected to that point was kept for analysis. This was outlined to participants in the informed consent form. There were no consequences for a participant who chose to withdraw.

Electronic data was housed on the Qualtrics servers, which are located in Canada. Aggregate data which was downloaded to the computers doing the analysis was housed on password protected computers that were kept in locked offices when not in use. The data collected was anonymized. Anonymized data means that information is irrevocably stripped of direct identifiers, a code is not kept allowing future re-linkage, and the risk of re-identification of individuals from remaining indirect identifiers is low or very low.

Upon completion of recruitment, the University of Ontario Institute of Technology's Social Research Centre conducted data analysis to examine correlation between variables, gather demographic information about employers, examine recruitment and skill trends and produce recommendations.

Scope and Limitations

The Employer Survey was designed through consultation with Ontario Tech University's Social Research Centre, economic development, chambers of commerce and boards of trade, business associations and Employment Ontario Service Providers. The Survey was targeted for Durham Region in its entirety and for all businesses regardless of the number of employees or industry. As a result, it became challenging to ensure that the data collected was representative of the economy in individual municipalities, as well as industry sectors and business size.

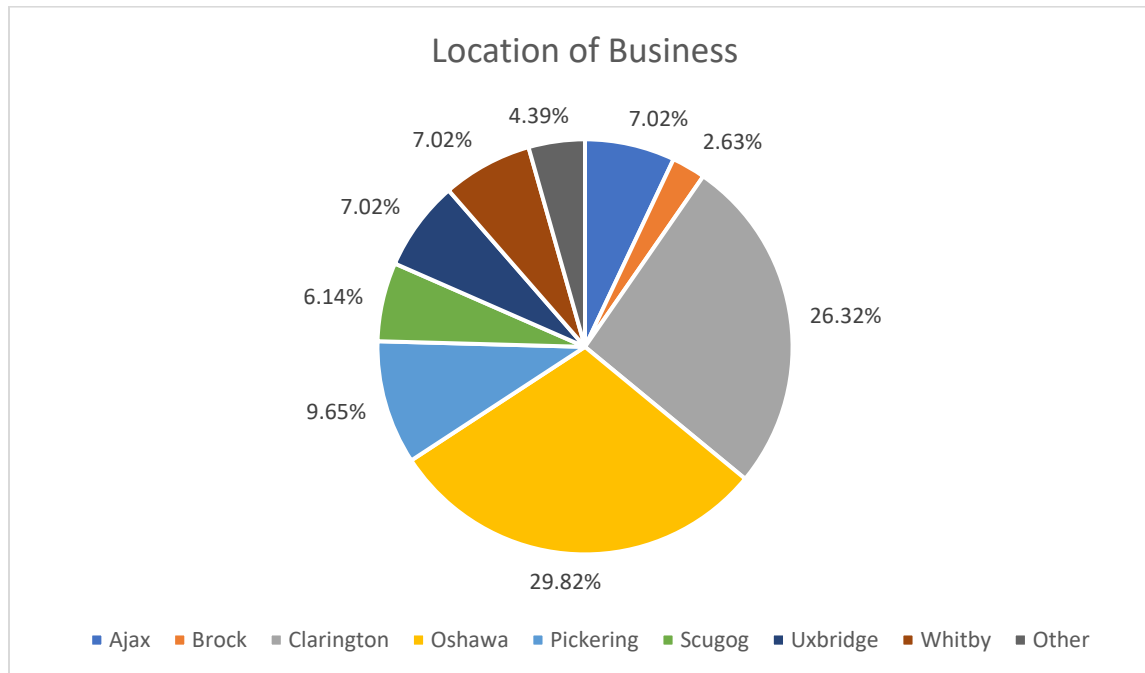
The primary limitation of this iteration of the Employer Survey is due to the potential survey fatigue that currently exists in the general population, and particularly among employers. Given the current environment with COVID-19, there are a number of research projects currently being developed and implemented throughout the community. As a result, some employers who may usually take the time to participate in the employer survey, may not have opted in this year. The overall response rate was still primarily positive for this survey with 113 employers recording a response. That said, under different circumstances, the hope would have been for a larger overall sample. Due to an error in recruitment updates from the Social Research Centre, there was a pause in active recruitment, which may have impacted the overall sample size. The Social Research Centre apologizes for this error and has taken steps to ensure that it will not occur in the future.

Employer Survey Analysis

The 2021 Employer Survey had 113 recorded responses from across Durham Region. The following table provides a breakdown of respondents by the municipality. As was the case in the 2018 survey, this iteration of the Employer Survey found that most of the businesses were located in Clarington (26.32%)

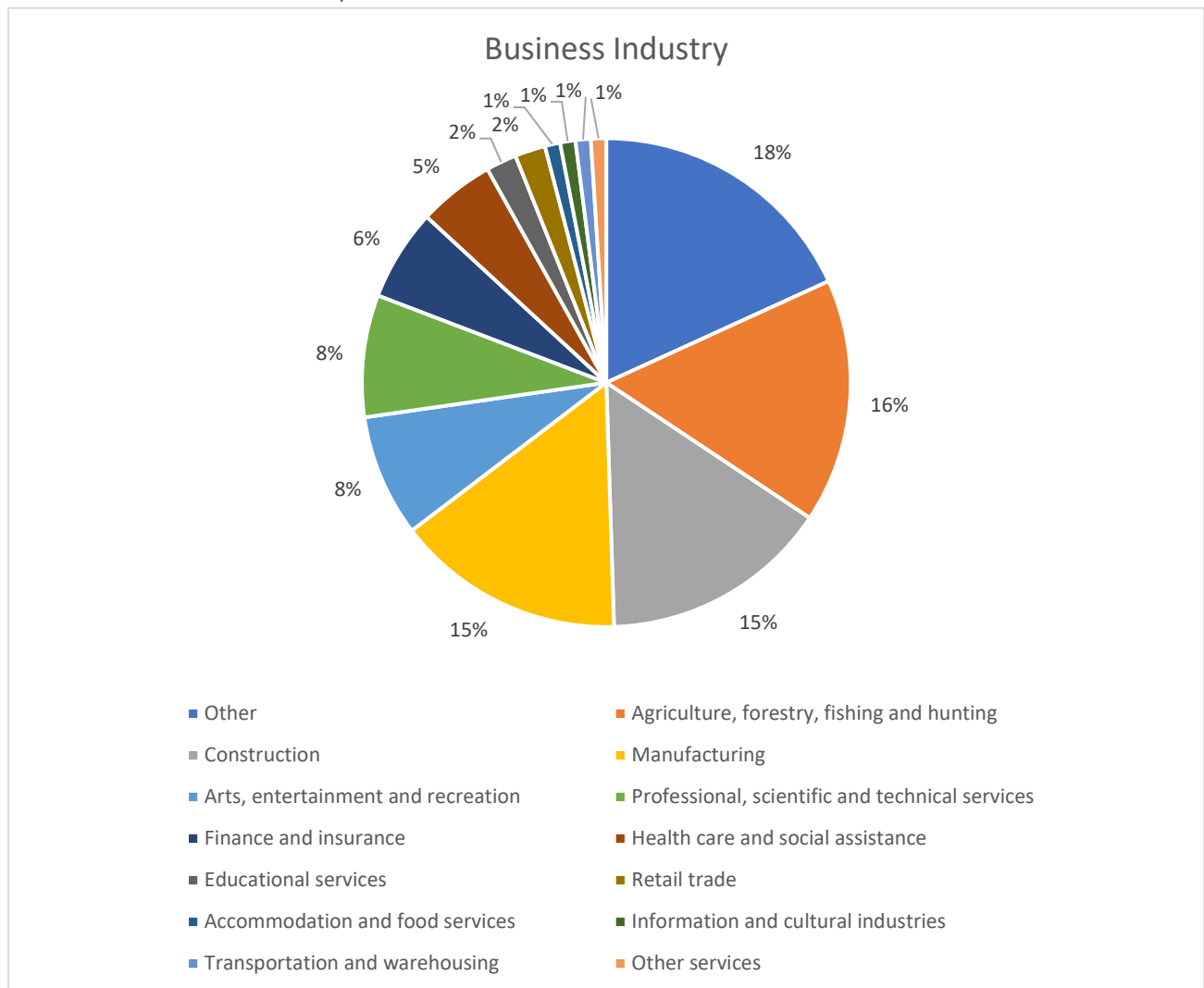
and Oshawa (29.82%), but there were responses from each of the municipalities. Five respondents selected other for their location, and these locations were spread out over Ontario, Canada and the United States. Most businesses (82.56%) identified that they had a single location with the remaining 17.44% of businesses having multiple locations.

Chart 1 - Location of Business



Nearly 80% of businesses who responded to the Employer Survey were locally operated, with 9% being a branch or division of a regional, national or international company. Other responses in this category included: charities, not for profits and government organizations. Over 40% of respondents indicated that their business had been in operation for more than 35 years, with another 32.95% being in operation between 11 and 35 years and 19.32% in operation between 4 to 10 years.

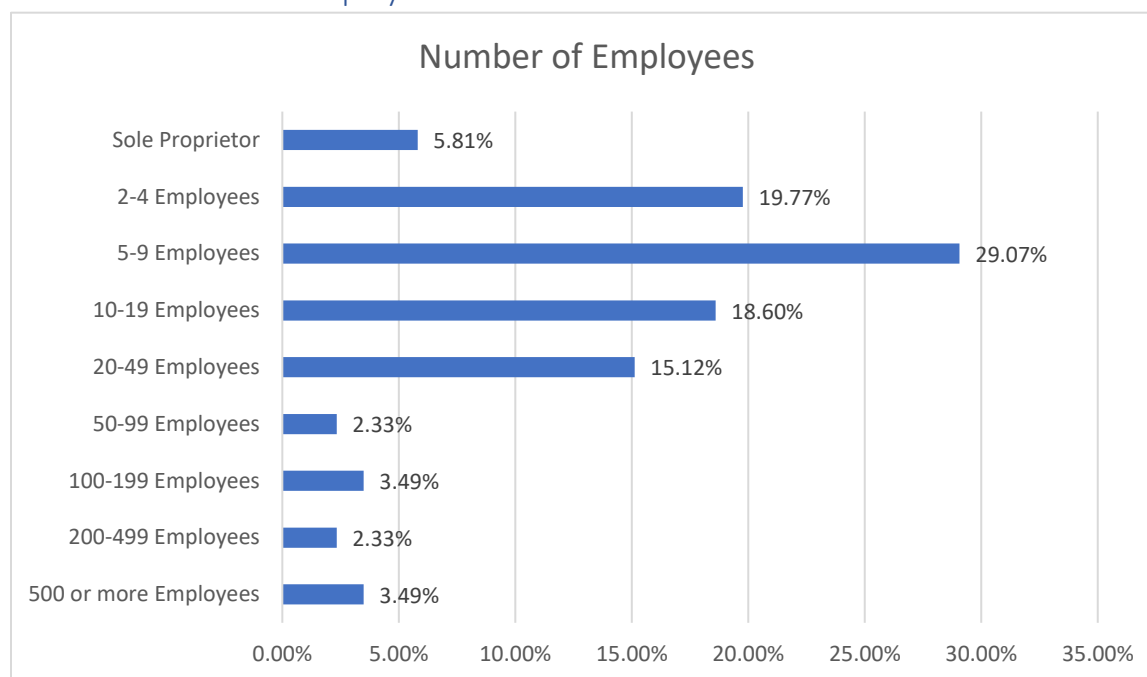
Chart 2 - Business Industry



The Employer Survey had representation from a variety of industries by respondents. Chart 2 provides a breakdown by industry of the survey respondents. Similar to previous iterations of the survey, many of the respondents who selected other would have fit into the broad industry categories. Despite best efforts to make the industries all encompassing, it is likely that there will always be a subset of participants who are unable to find themselves within the industry categories. This is an area where the responses in the other category could be analyzed for future iterations to ensure that the industry options made available to participants are that much more inclusive.

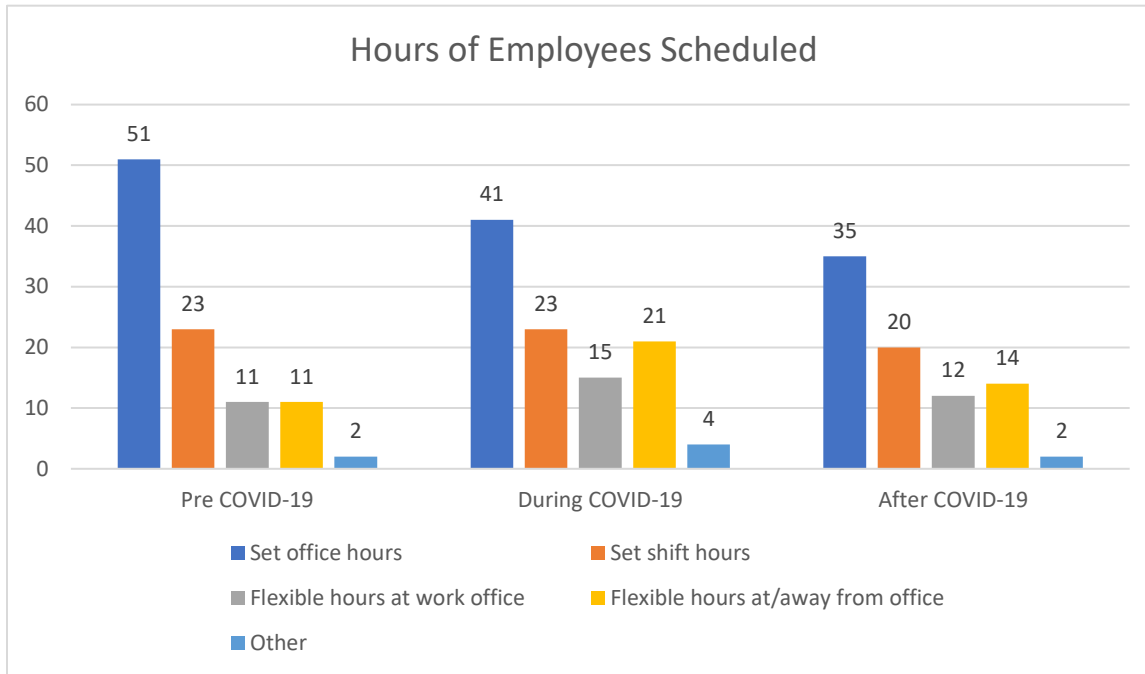
The job titles of those who responded to the survey were mostly variations on Owners, Managers, Supervisors, Directors, CEOs and Presidents. There was a small subset of respondents who were seemingly not in the highest position in their business.

Chart 3 - Number of Employees



Nearly 1/3 of businesses surveyed had between 5-9 employees in total, with over 80% of respondents indicating that they had between 2-50 employees working for them. When respondents were asked about the amount of their employees that were full time versus part time, businesses with 2-4 employees demonstrated the most even split between full (N=24, 31.58%) and part time (N=20, 41.67%), all other business sizes other than a single employee were more heavily focused on full time employees as compared to part time employees. Nearly two thirds (63.89%) of all respondents indicated that 90% or more of their employees had permanent status, compared to contract, temporary/seasonal or internship/volunteer and unpaid which were primarily 20% or less.

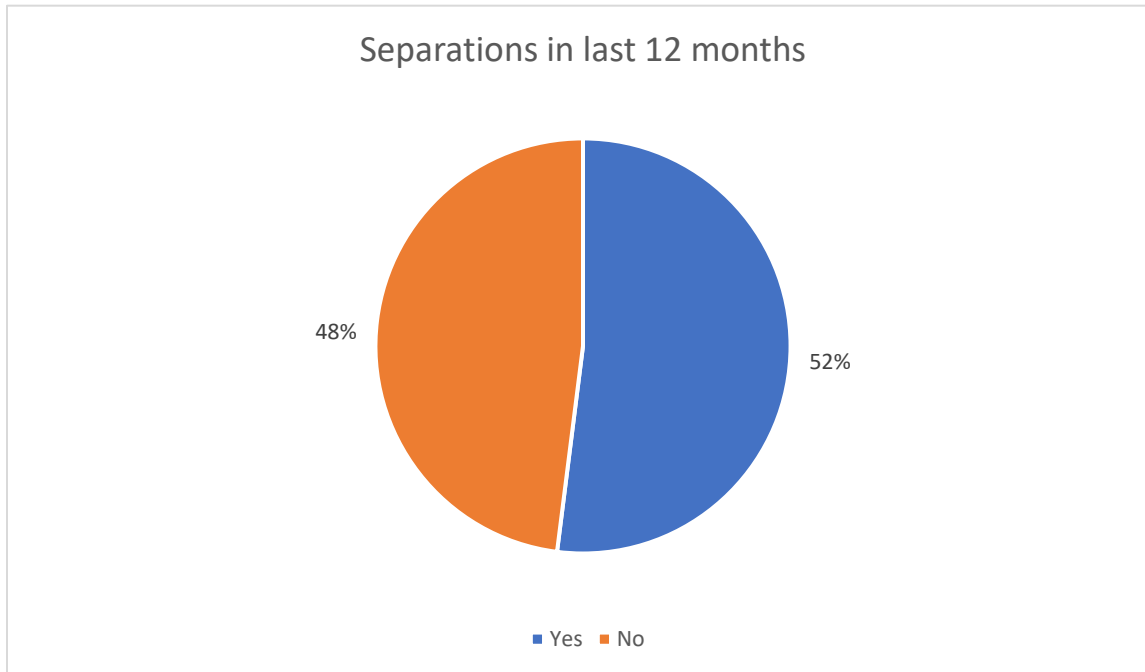
Chart 4 - Hours of Employees Scheduled



In exploring how the hours of their employees were scheduled before, during and after COVID-19, between 28-40% of respondents had fixed office hours in all three time periods, with the highest percentage of set office hours being before COVID-19. During COVID-19, there was a clear increase towards flexible hours at/away from the office. After COVID-19, employers are mostly shifting back to the pre COVID-19 hour distribution, with a slight shift towards flexible hours at/away from the office and a significant drop off (40.16% to 27.56%) in set office hours.

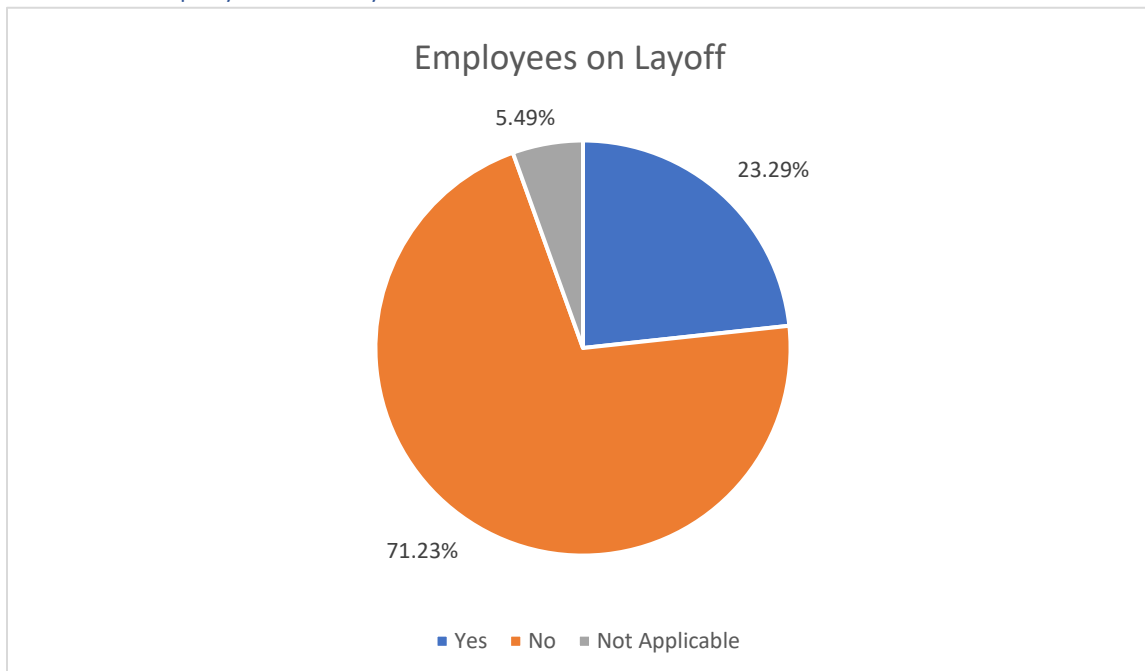
Over half of respondents (57.89%) indicated that their business hired in the last 12 months. Of those who hired in the last 12 months, over three quarters of respondents (77.27%) indicated that they hired between one and five employees. When respondents were asked if they planned to hire in the next 12 months over half (54.67%) indicated that they did intend to hire, with 40% either not wanting to hire in the next 12 months or being unsure based on worker interest. Similar to the past 12 months, most respondents (86.44%) indicated that if they were hiring that they would hire between 1-5 employees.

Chart 5 - Separations in Last 12 Months



There was a nearly even divide in businesses that faced separations as compared to those that didn't. Of the businesses that faced separations, it was primarily due to retirement, maternity/paternity leave and to a lesser extent caregiving, medical/disability leave, resignations or downsizing.

Chart 6 - Employees on Layoff



Nearly three quarters of all businesses surveyed (71.23%), indicated that they did not have any employees on layoff. Of the 23.29% of businesses that did have employees on layoff, 82.35% of them had employees on layoff as a result of COVID-19, with another 11.76% having employees on layoff both due to COVID-19 along with other reasons. Nearly 1/3 of layoffs (29.41%) were for a duration of 4-6 months, with the majority of the layoffs being less than that amount of time (47.06%).

Respondents were then asked as to what methods they used to recruit employees. The most popular options included personal networks (16.60%), online job search engines (14.52%), referrals from current employees (9.13%), and the company's website (8.71%). Other somewhat common responses included: student internship or co-op programs (6.22%), local media advertising (5.81%), government job banks (4.98%), social media (4.98%), post-secondary job boards (3.73%), unsolicited resumes and walk-ins (3.73%), other classified websites (3.32%), Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre (2.90%), Durham College Community Employment Resource Centre (2.49%), hiring signs on premises (2.49%), professional recruitment firms (2.49%), John Howard Society (2.07%), job fairs (1.24%), YMCA Durham Employment (1.24%) and Agilec Canada (0.41%). Other responses included internal hiring, family members, word of mouth and the Canadian Red Cross Instructor Network.

There was a fairly even divide across respondents as to whether they faced any challenges with hiring employees with 44.59% indicating yes and 48.65% responding with no. The remaining responses were uncertain as to whether they faced any challenges. When asked about the external challenges that applicants faced in recruiting employees, the most common responses included not having enough applicants (23.47%), applicants not having the necessary experience (23.47%), applicants not having the correct skills (22.45%), applicants not having the necessary credentials (11.22%), applicants turning down job offers (11.22%) and other responses (8.16%). Other responses included COVID restrictions and people not wanting to work in specific types of jobs.

Respondents were then asked as to what skills applicants did not tend to have in applying for jobs in their workplace. In these responses, two categories of skills emerged: general work skills and job specific skills. General work skills included: work ethics, self-management, multitasking, client and customer service, hard work, initiative, common sense, working in a drug and alcohol-free workplace environment. The job specific skills included: mechanical work, record keeping, law procedures, equipment operation, electrical knowledge, roofing experience, welding experience, software engineering aptitude, bricklaying or general construction knowledge, counselling backgrounds, working with children and youth and various farming knowledge.

Following this question, respondents were asked about areas of experience that were lacking in job applicants. Many of these responses were specific to the jobs themselves, such as: working with children and youth, roofing, bricklaying, networking, maintenance, engineering, library, video production, warehouse and legal knowledge. That said, similar to the previous question, there were also a number of more general responses covering a lack of hands on or on the job experience, general computer skills, physical labour or soft skills.

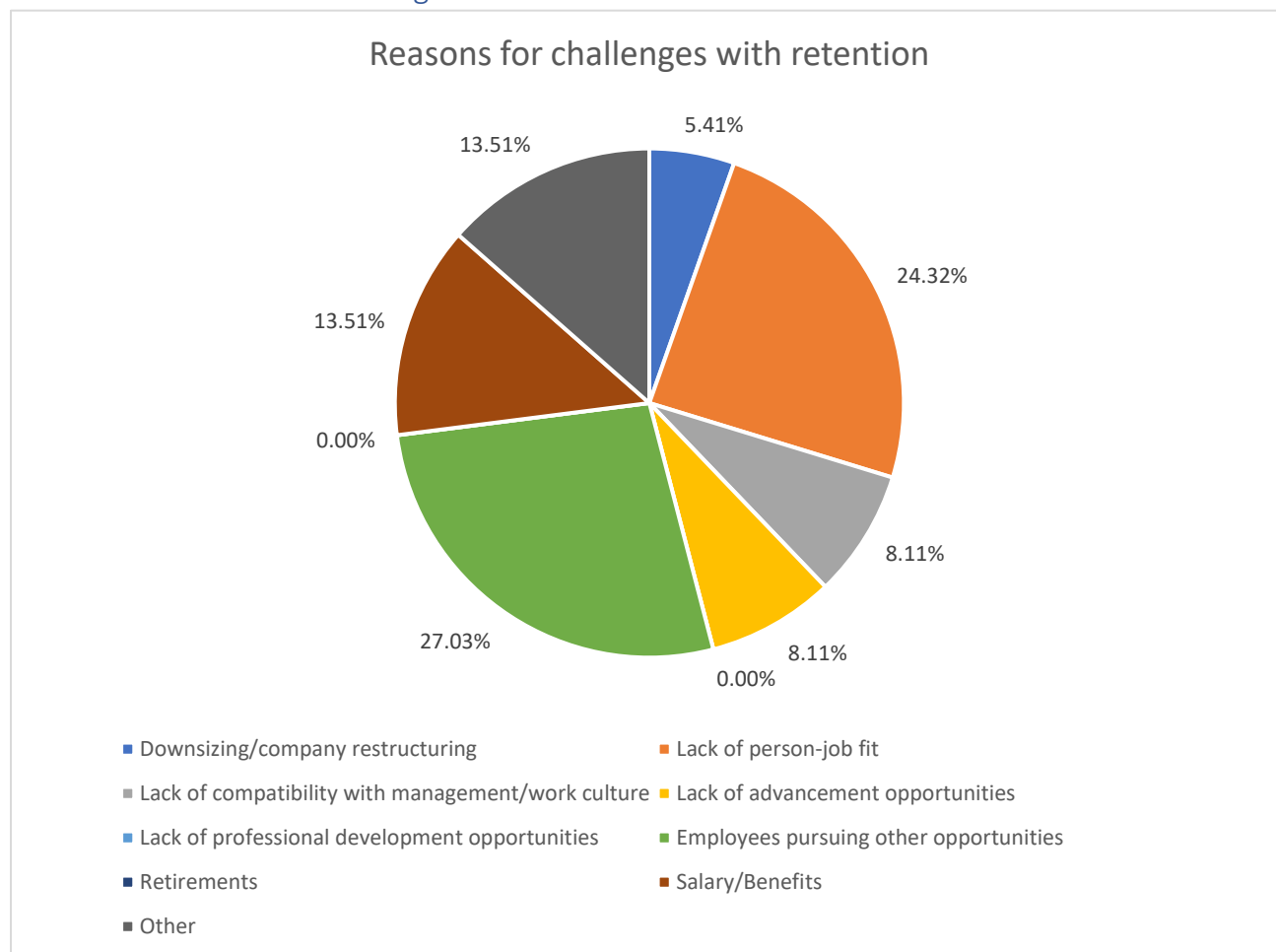
Respondents also identified a few areas of credentials that job applicants tend to lack, including: red cross instructor, apprenticeship training, safety training, high five training, first aid training, agricultural background, Masters in Library Studies or the designation of being a Social Service Worker.

Common Internal challenges within businesses in recruiting employees were primarily divided between budget (30.23%) and lacking resources to conduct the hiring process (32.56%). Lacking time and other responses each accounted for 18.60% of all respondents. Other responses included: lacking in applicants, lacking in skilled trades, interview challenges during COVID, participants lying during interviews and not being able to find anyone willing to work. The following table lists the various positions that employers find the most challenging to fill with new employees.

Electricians	Apprentices	Office Management
Hairstylist	Mechanical Repairs	Food Safety
Machinery Operator	Garden Help	Farm Store Assistant
Farm Lead Hand	Red Cross First Aid Instructor	Red Cross BLS Instructor
Real Estate Clerk	Personal Assistant	Civil Litigation Clerk
Manager	Order Selector	Laboratory/QA
AZ Drivers	Engineers	Maintenance
Installers	Welder	Labourers
Fitter	Wage subsidies	Surveyors
Human Resources	Machinist	Administrative Coordinators
Civil Engineering Technologists	Senior Management	Residential Caseworker
Customer Service	Foreman	Editorial
Swim Instructors	Researchers	Business Developer
Automotive Technician	Program Support	Administrators
Sales	Cleaners	Recruiters
Line Operators	Bricklayers	Front Line Caseworkers
Membership Sales	Program Activity Leaders	

Most respondents indicated that they did not face any challenges in retaining employees (77.94%), with the remaining respondents indicating that they were facing some challenges.

Chart 7 – Reasons for Challenges with Retention



The most common reasons for challenges with retention were either employees pursuing other opportunities (27.03%) or lack of person-job fit (24.32%). Slightly less common responses included: salary/benefits (13.51%), lack of compatibility with management/work culture (8.11%), lack of advancement opportunities (8.11%), and downsizing/company restructuring (5.41%). Other responses to this question included: scheduling and transportation issues. It is important to note that both retirements and lack of professional development opportunities were not found to be reasons for challenges with retention.

Over 2/3 of businesses (69.01%) were able to provide support or ongoing training or education opportunities for their employees within the last 12 months. The types of training offered varied significantly based on the field of work. Some of the most common types of training included: health and safety training, COVID-19 based education, software and online work-based training, and some industry specific training in areas of farming, construction, and law. The most significant barrier to training mentioned was cost (27.5%) followed by loss of productivity during training time (15%), relevant training not being offered locally (13.33%) and losing trained employees to other businesses (12.5%).

Other barriers mentioned included: distance to travel to training/educational facilities (9.17%), awareness of existing training programs (8.33%) and awareness of training support programs (7.5%).

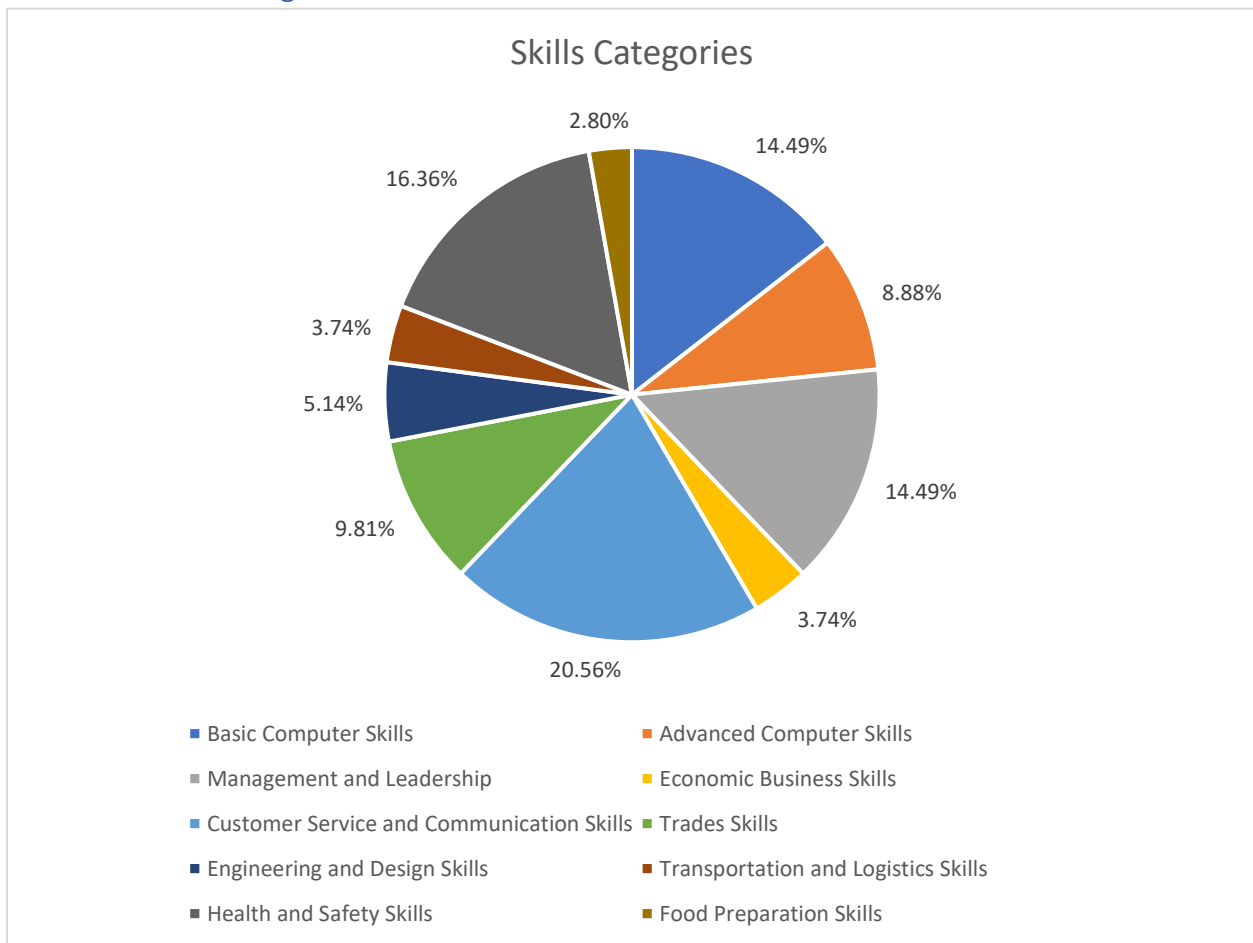
Table 2 - Required versus Unnecessary Skill Sets

Skill Set	Required Skill	Useful Skill	Neither Required or Unnecessary	Optional Skill	Unnecessary Skill
Understanding and evaluating written material	67.86%	3.23%	0.00%	9.68%	83.87%
Analyzing information from multiple sources	50.00%	0.00%	6.67%	33.33%	56.67%
Reading and understanding information from graphs and charts	22.81%	3.33%	13.33%	40.00%	30.00%
Making calculations	43.86%	0.00%	13.33%	23.33%	56.67%
Performing scheduling, budgeting or accounting activities	19.30%	0.00%	3.33%	20.00%	70.00%
Organizing or recording information	54.39%	3.33%	26.67%	43.33%	20.00%
Writing a comparison or analysis	15.79%	0.00%	3.33%	30.00%	60.00%
Using word processing software	49.12%	13.33%	36.67%	13.33%	26.67%
Demonstrating tasks to other workers	44.83%	3.33%	16.67%	26.67%	46.67%
Responding to customer questions regarding a product	57.63%	3.33%	26.67%	33.33%	26.67%
Explaining procedures	50.88%	0.00%	3.33%	13.33%	76.67%
Making long-term work plans	21.43%	3.33%	6.67%	20.00%	66.67%
Remaining organized in a changing environment	62.07%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	73.33%
Finding and accessing new learning material	29.31%	3.33%	6.67%	30.00%	53.33%
Accepting constructive criticism	63.16%	0.00%	6.90%	27.59%	62.07%
Waiting to be told what to do	6.90%	3.33%	16.67%	53.33%	26.67%
Adapting to unexpected change	62.07%	0.00%	0.00%	25.81%	67.74%

Changing their point of view based on new information	43.10%	25.81%	6.45%	0.00%	9.68%
Motivating others	44.83%	6.25%	3.13%	21.88%	59.38%
Showing initiative	78.95%	0.00%	3.33%	33.33%	60.00%
Clearly and concisely communicating information	71.19%	0.00%	0.00%	30.00%	63.33%
Not wasting time because they are easily distracted	68.97%	0.00%	0.00%	13.33%	80.00%
Having a polite and courteous attitude	77.97%	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	76.67%
Managing body language if they are disinterested in a conversation	51.72%	0.00%	10.00%	13.33%	73.33%
Other	100%	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	76.67%

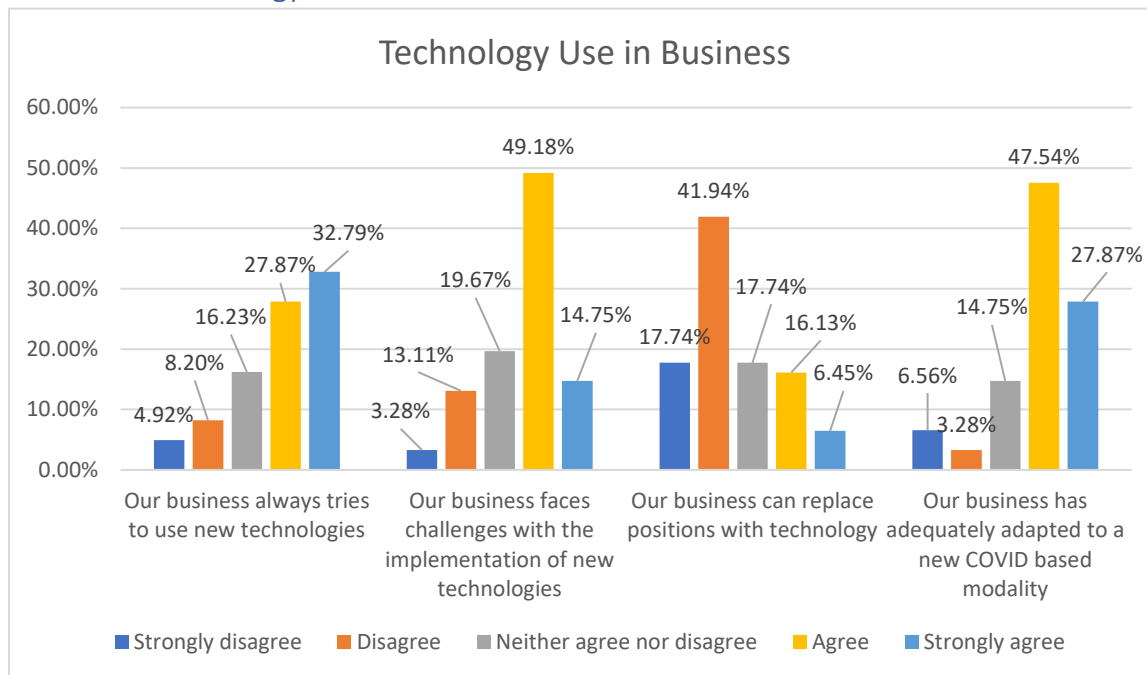
Employers were then asked as to what skills they needed of their employees. Options available included: required skills, useful skills, neither required nor unnecessary, optional skill and unnecessary. Some of the most required skills were showing initiative (78.95%), having a polite and courteous attitude (77.97%), clearly and concisely communicating information (71.19%), not wasting time because they are easily distracted (68.97%), understanding and evaluating written material (67.86%), and accepting constructive criticism (63.16%). Conversely, employers found waiting to be told what to do (36.21%) and writing a comparison or analysis (24.56%) to be mostly unnecessary.

Chart 8 – Skills Categories



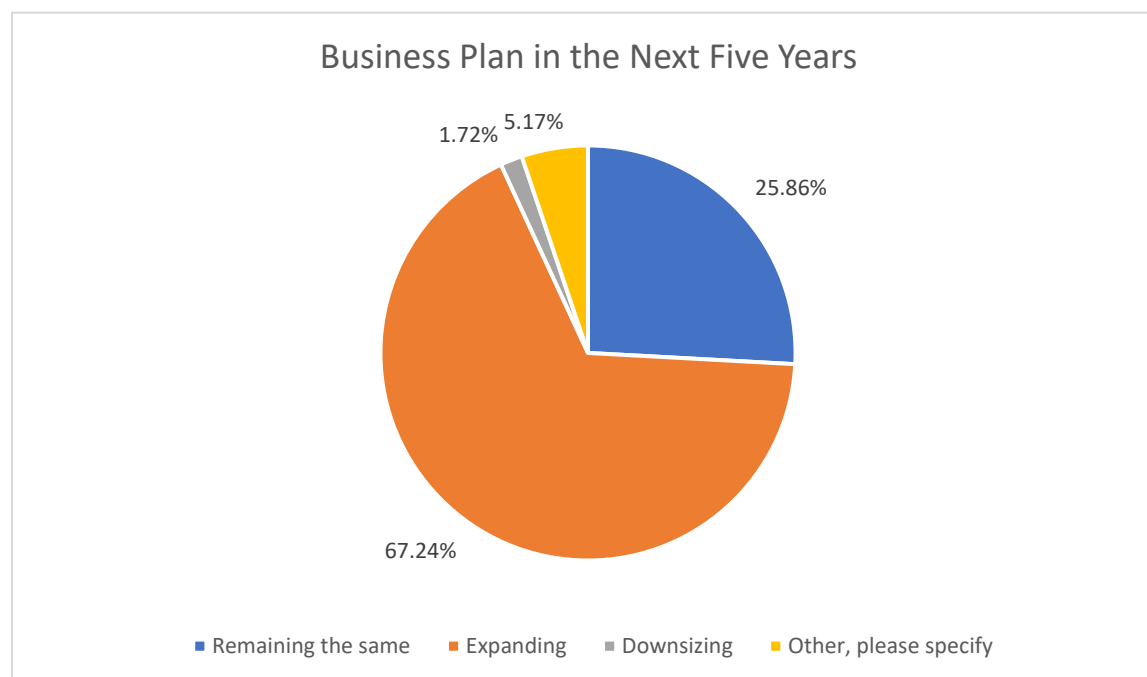
The most common skill categories applicable to the workplace in the employers surveyed included: customer service and communication skills (20.56%), health and safety skills (16.36%), basic computer skills (14.49%) and management and leadership skills (14.49%). The least applicable skill categories consisted of food preparation skills (2.80%), transportation and logistics skills (3.74%) and economic business skills (3.74%).

Chart 9 – Technology Use in Business



In terms of technology usage and adoption, businesses most strongly agreed that they regularly tried to use new technologies (32.79%), and they moderately agreed that they faced new challenges with the implementation of new technologies (49.18%) and adapted to new COVID based modalities (47.54%). Respondents primarily disagreed that their business could replace certain positions with technology (41.94%).

Chart 10 – Business Plan in the Next Five Years



When asked as to the overall business plan in the next five years, over 2/3 of respondents indicated that they planned to expand (67.24%), with most of the other responses remaining the same (25.86%). There was one respondent who identified that they were planning to downsize with the reason provided is that the owner is getting too old to work. For the businesses that were expanding, some of the primary reasons for expansion included: increase in the breadth of services (24.10%), industry growth (21.69%), economic upturn (12.05%), increased productivity (12.05%) and increased profits (10.84%). Respondents did not really find that increased expertise (7.23%) or COVID reasonings (6.02%) were a primary reason for expansion. Other reasons provided for expansion included: expanding to remain competitive and changes to web accessibility legislation.

Most respondents (62.30%) indicated that there were no other support services or programs that they would like to be available in Durham Region. For those that were looking for additional support services and programs, some of the options included: financial support for the arts, resources and grants in training and education, networking, preparing youth for the workplace, improved job search platforms, programming to support skilled trades, affordable housing, and better pipelines to provide consistent workers.

Finally, respondents were asked to share any comments they had about business, employment in the Region, or labour market trends that were pertinent to them. Given the variety of responses, they will simply be shared below.

- Funding needs to be available for hiring and training.
- Some of the questions are difficult because we are very small so for example if you send an employee away for training you may not have enough people left to cover all the bases

- It would be very beneficial if we could get a better transit system to service the Wentworth St. East industrial park. There are not enough buses at times throughout the day to services this area, which makes it hard for non-drivers to work here. We need a more direct link from the Oshawa GO train to this industrial area, where someone doesn't have to go to the Oshawa Mall and then transfer to come here.
- We need to have better internet systems in place.
- There is an insufficient pool of people with requisite skills from which to hire in Oshawa area.
- We work in Aerospace and Nuclear. We have to train most of our employees as all are applicants seem to be working in warehouses and had not considered trades as a career. UOIT/Durham College has provided some students and we have hired multiple graduates into QA/Lab work which is great. We struggle to find operators despite offering good pay and benefits.
- We have a drug and alcohol-free workplace since pot was made illegal it's very difficult to hire young people who don't smoke pot or do other drugs many young people think because pot is legal you can do it in the workplace our workplace is a dangerous environment we cannot have that type of person working
- Our business is limited by the availability of trained staff. Our business will likely fade away as skilled staff retire.
- COVID has taught organizations and individuals that the ability to access what you require (Access Ability) is just as important, if not more important, than getting to it (mobility). The internet is the highway for many services. Things ordered are delivered to the door. Work is done from home. Web Accessibility needs to be taught in schools in order that no one is excluded based on technology. Younger developers who don't experience those with disabilities, yet build the technical infrastructure, need to be educated. This is extremely important in an aging demographic where leading edge baby boomers are in their early 70's. The number of disabled increases with age.
- One of the problems we have is trying to compete against illegal Asian roofers the GTA is full of them and they aren't paying their employees four dollars to seven dollars an hour cash that is one of the main reasons that we will probably be closing the business down
- We grow and sell Christmas trees We only hire family members I'll be 80. Next birthday not sure how long we can keep going. It's fun dealing with the public and really fun working with the family
- BGC Durham has been providing high quality recreational services to children and youth in Durham Region for over 50 years. Before COVID, we created a Strategic plan to expand programs so we could reach youth (12-15). We are one of the top employers for high school and college students in Durham Region. Pre-COVID we provided part time employment for over 150 through our Afterschool programs, Camps and Aquatic programs.

Conclusion

The Employer Survey has the potential to provide employers, local and municipal government, Employment Ontario service providers, community agencies and educational institutions access to just-

in-time labour market information to gain a better understanding of trends amongst the business community in Durham Region. Access to data, particularly in between census years, is critical to being able to provide programs and services, assist in attraction and retention and encourage economic growth and development. The Employer Survey provides Durham Region businesses an opportunity to discuss the challenges and opportunities that exist within the Region and prove to be a valuable feedback mechanism for a multitude of stakeholders in the Region.

Insights and Limitations

- The majority of survey respondents were located in Clarington and Oshawa. This could be in part due to buy-in from local area supporting organizations, or due to the localized nature of the Durham Workforce Authority. In future iterations of the survey, it may be advisable to target recruitment efforts, particularly for Ajax, Pickering and Whitby to improve representation.
- As mentioned previously in the Scope and Limitations section, due to an error in recruitment updates from the Social Research Centre, there was a pause in active recruitment, which may have impacted the overall sample size.
- As has previously been the case, employers have struggled to properly fit themselves within industry categories. This is both a challenge with the categories themselves, in aligning with higher level business categorizations, and also with businesses being able to see where they fit within an industrial definition. Work could be done in the future to help educate local area businesses about industry definitions. However, this may not be a worthwhile endeavor given the regular challenges with these categorizations.
- The majority of respondents to the survey were representing small to medium size businesses with only a small amount of larger scale businesses. There are a multitude of factors as to why smaller businesses would show greater representation in a regional survey such as this. That said, it may be worth an attempt to emphasize recruitment in larger scale businesses in future iterations of this survey.
- The impacts of COVID-19, while felt throughout the survey, were not as significant in the anticipated areas. The main area of impact of COVID-19 was in the distribution of hours worked and temporary layoffs as a result of the pandemic.
- In terms of skills requirements, the majority of requested skills were more general communication and customer service skills. That said, there were a number of respondents who focused on particular industry specific skills that impacted their business.
- Respondents identified a particular need to adapt to new technological modalities as a result of COVID-19, but also indicated that they regularly needed to apply new technologies. This emphasizes the importance of technologies beyond the scope of COVID-19, but more so on a regular basis.
- The majority of businesses indicated that they would like to expand in the next five years in response to industry growth and a demand for a greater breadth of service offerings.

Appendix A – Survey Questions

Employer Survey - 2021

Start of Block: Consent

Q1 Consent Form to Participate in a Research Study Title of Research Study: Durham Region Employer Survey **Name of Principal Investigator (PI):** Matthew Stein, Director of the Social Research Centre **PI's contact number(s)/email(s):** 905-721-3092, matthew.stein@ontariotechu.ca **Names(s) of Co-Investigator(s):** Paige Lewer, paige.lewer@durhamwa.ca **Departmental and institutional affiliation(s):** Durham Workforce Authority **External Funder/Sponsor:** Durham Workforce Authority You are invited to participate in a research study investigating employment skills in the Durham Region. This research study is titled: Durham Region Employer Survey. Please read the information about the study presented in this form. The form includes details on study's procedures, risks and benefits that you should know before you decide if you would like to take part. You should take as much time as you need to make your decision. You should ask the Principal Investigator (PI) or study team to explain anything that you do not understand and make sure that all of your questions have been answered before signing this consent form. Before you make your decision, feel free to talk about this study with anyone you wish including your friends and family. Participation in this study is voluntary. This study has been reviewed by Ontario Tech University's Research Ethics Board [# 16926] and originally approved on February 11, 2021.

Purpose & Procedure: *Purpose:* The purpose of this study is to explore employers in the Durham Region through the skills, education and support systems that exist and are used by employers. You have been invited to participate in this study as you are a representative of an employer in the Durham Region. You may refuse to answer any question that you are uncomfortable or unable to answer *Procedures:* Participation in this study will consist of the completion of a short (15 to 20 minute) online survey, which will explore general information about your business (e.g. location of operation); characteristics of current, former and anticipated employees (e.g. types of occupations); skill needs at your workplace; future outlook on your business (e.g. retention of employees); technology use and support services usage in the Durham Region.

Potential Benefits: You will not benefit directly from participating in this study, but your feedback has the potential to impact employment processes in the Durham Region. **Potential Risks or Discomforts:** There are no known or anticipated risks to you from participating in this study.. However, if there are any questions that make you uncomfortable or that you do not wish to answer, please feel free to skip that question. **Confidentiality:** No information that can be linked to you will be released. To protect your responses, any disseminated data files, reports, or presentations will be in the aggregate (i.e., no names of individuals or organizations will be used). Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law, professional practice, and ethical codes of conduct. Please note that confidentiality cannot be fully guaranteed while data are in transit over the Internet. In the case of a security breach, information will be made available through all recruitment tools that this

survey used. **Use and Storage of data:** Data will be stored indefinitely on encrypted university servers. No one other than study personnel will have access to the full data set. Aggregate level data will be shared with the Durham Workforce Authority. Any data will be de-identified for ongoing storage, and will not be shared with anyone outside the study unless required by law. You will not be named in any reports, publications, or presentations that may come from this study. In the case the data is no longer needed, the indefinitely stored data will be securely deleted. **Voluntary Participation** Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may partake in only those aspects of the study in which you feel comfortable. You may also decide not to be in this study, or to be in the study now, and then change your mind later. You may leave the study at any time without affecting your relationship with the Durham Workforce Authority. You will be given information that is relevant to your decision to continue or withdraw from participation. Such information will need to be subsequently provided. **Right to Withdraw:** Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You may choose to discontinue your participation and/or refuse to answer any of the questions at any time. On quitting the browser window, survey data up until that point will be kept. If you would like this data to be removed from the study, please e-mail Matthew Stein with the approximate time your survey was completed and the data will be removed, you do not need to offer any reason for making this request. Once the data is fully de-identified, it will be impossible to withdraw your data from this study. The deadline for withdrawal will be July 30, 2021. By consenting to this study, you are not waiving any legal rights or recourse. **Conflict of Interest:** The Durham Workforce Authority is the sponsor of the study and will reimburse Ontario Tech and the Social Research Centre for the costs of administering this study. All of these people have an interest in completing this study. Their interests should not influence your decision to participate in this study. **Compensation:** There will be no compensation, reimbursement or incentives affiliated with this study. There should be no expenses incurred as a result of participating in this study. **Participant Rights and Concerns:** Please read this consent form carefully and feel free to ask the researcher any questions that you might have about the study. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, complaints, or adverse events, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 721-8668 ext. 3693 or at researchethics@ontariotechu.ca. If you have any questions concerning the research study or experience any discomfort related to the study, please contact the researcher Matthew Stein at matthew.stein@ontariotechu.ca. By signing this form you do not give up any of your legal rights against the investigators, sponsor or involved institutions for compensation, nor does this form relieve the investigators, sponsor or involved institutions of their legal and professional responsibilities.

1. I have read the consent form and understand the study being described.
2. I am free to ask questions about the study in the future.
3. I freely consent to participate in the research study, understanding that I may discontinue participation at any time without penalty. A copy of this Consent Form has been made available to me.

I AGREE

I DO NOT AGREE

Skip To: End of Survey If Consent Form to Participate in a Research Study Title of Research Study: Durham Region Employer S... = I DO NOT AGREE

End of Block: Consent

Start of Block: Demographic Information

Q2 How many locations does your business have?

- One
- More than one
-

Q3 Where does your business/company/organization have locations?

- Town of Ajax
- Township of Brock (Beaverton, Cannington, Sunderland)
- Municipality of Clarington (Bowmanville, Courtice, Orono, Newcastle)
- City of Oshawa (Columbus)
- City of Pickering (Seaton)
- Township of Scugog (Blackstock, Greenback, Nestleton Station, Port Perry, Seagrave)
- Township of Uxbridge (Goodwood, Udora)
- Town of Whitby (Brooklin)
- Other, please specify: _____
-

Q4 What are the first three digits of your postal code (i.e., L1G, L1C). Please select one for each location.

L1N

L1G

L1H

L1J

L1V

L0C

L1C

L1S

L0B

L1R

L1L

L1P

L1K

L1M

L1W

L1Y

L1Z

- L1T
 - LOH
 - L1X
 - LOG
 - LOE
 - LOK
 - L9L
 - L9P
 - LOA
 - L1E
 - L1B
 - Other _____
-

Q5 Is your business:

- Locally owned and operated
 - Branch or division of a regional, national or international company
 - Other, please specify _____
-

Q6 How long has your business been in operation in the Durham Region?

- Less than 1 year
 - 1 to 3 years
 - 4 to 10 years
 - 11 to 25 years
 - 26 to 35 years
 - Over 35 years
-

Q7 What industry is your business/company/organization in? Please select the industry most closely related.

- Accommodation and food services
- Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services
- Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
- Arts, entertainment and recreation
- Construction
- Educational services
- Health care and social assistance
- Finance and insurance
- Information and cultural industries
- Management of companies and enterprises
- Manufacturing
- Mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction
- Professional, scientific and technical services
- Public administration
- Real estate and rental and leasing
- Retail trade
- Transportation and warehousing
- Wholesale trade
- Other services (except public administration)
- Utilities

Other, please specify _____

Q8 What is your job title?

Page Break _____

Q12 How are the hours of your employees scheduled? Select all that apply.

	Pre COVID-19	During COVID-19	After COVID-19
Set office hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set shift hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flexible hours at work office (i.e., employee decides office hours that add up to a certain number of hours per week)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flexible hours at/away from office (i.e., employees work from home/offsite for their total working hours each week)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, please specify	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

End of Block: Demographic Information

Start of Block: Hiring

Q13 Did your business/company/organization hire in the last 12 months?

Yes

No

Skip To: Q15 If Did your business/company/organization hire in the last 12 months? = No

Q14 How many people did you hire in the last 12 months?

- 1-5 Employees
 - 6-10 Employees
 - 11-25 Employees
 - 26-50 Employees
 - 51-99 Employees
 - 100 or More Employees
-

Q15 Do you plan on hiring in the next 12 months?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- Other, please specify _____

Skip To: End of Block If Do you plan on hiring in the next 12 months? = No

Q16 How many people do you plan on hiring in the next 12 months?

- 1-5 Employees
- 6-10 Employees
- 11-25 Employees
- 26-50 Employees
- 51-99 Employees
- 100 or More Employees

End of Block: Hiring

Start of Block: Separations

Q17 Did your business/company/organization experience any separation over the last 12 months? (i.e., retirements, resignation, maternity/paternity leave etc.)

- Yes
- No

Page Break

Q18 Please specify the best estimates (by percentages) of separations in each category:

	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%
Retirement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maternity/paternity leave	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Over caregiving leave (i.e., caring for spouse/parent etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medical/disability leave	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Resignations/quits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Downsizing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

Q19 Do you have employees on layoff?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable
- I don't know

Skip To: End of Block If Do you have employees on layoff? = No

Skip To: End of Block If Do you have employees on layoff? = Not Applicable

Skip To: End of Block If Do you have employees on layoff? = I don't know

Page Break

Q20 Are your employees on layoff as a result of COVID, or due to some other reason?

- COVID Related
 - Other Reasons
 - Both
-

Q21 Approximately how long is the average layoff term?

- 1 Month
- 2 Months
- 3 Months
- 4-6 Months
- 7-9 Months
- 10-12 Months
- 1 year or more

End of Block: Separations

Start of Block: Recruiting

Q22 What are the method(s) your business/company/organization uses to recruit employees?

- Agilec Canada
- Attend or host job fairs
- Centre d'Emploi Francophone de Durham
- Durham College Community Employment Resource Centre
- Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre
- Government job banks
- Hiring signs on premises
- John Howard Society Employment Services
- Local media advertising
- Online job search engines (i.e., Indeed, Charity Village, Workopolis etc.)
- Personal network
- Post-secondary job boards and/or career centres
- Other classifieds websites (i.e., Craigslist, Kijiji etc.)
- Professional recruitment firms
- Referrals from current employees
- Social media applications (i.e., LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter)
- Student internship or co-op programs

- Unsolicited resumes and walk-ins
 - VPI Working Solutions
 - YMCA Durham Employment
 - Your company's website
 - Not applicable
 - Other, please specify _____
-

Q23 Do you currently face any challenges with hiring employees?

- Yes
- No
- I Don't know
- Other, please specify _____

Skip To: Q30 If Do you currently face any challenges with hiring employees? = No

Skip To: Q30 If Do you currently face any challenges with hiring employees? = I Don't know

Skip To: Q30 If Do you currently face any challenges with hiring employees? = Other, please specify

Q24 What external challenges with applicants do you face with the recruitment of employees?

- Not enough applicants
- Applicants do not have the correct skills
- Applicants do not have the necessary experience
- Applicants do not have the necessary credentials
- Desired applicant(s) turn down job offer
- Other, please specify _____

Display This Question:

If What external challenges with applicants do you face with the recruitment of employees? = Applicants do not have the correct skills

Q25 What skills do applicants not have that you desire in an employee? Name up to three:

- Skill 1 _____
- Skill 2 _____
- Skill 3 _____

Page Break _____

Display This Question:

If What external challenges with applicants do you face with the recruitment of employees? = Applicants do not have the necessary experience

Q26 What experience do applicants not have that you desire in an employee?

Page Break

Display This Question:

If What external challenges with applicants do you face with the recruitment of employees? = Applicants do not have the necessary credentials

Q27 What credentials do applicants not have that you desire in an employee (i.e., apprenticeship training, MBA etc.)

Page Break

Q28 What internal challenges within your business do you face with the recruitment of employees?

- Budget
- Not enough time
- Not enough resources to conduct the hiring process
- Other, please specify: _____
-

Q29 Which positions do you face the most challenges with when it comes to hiring new employees? Please list up to three.

	Position
1	
2	
3	

Page Break

Q30 Do you currently face any challenges with the retention of employees?

- Yes
- No
- I Don't know
- Other, please specify: _____

Skip To: End of Block If Do you currently face any challenges with the retention of employees? = No

Skip To: End of Block If Do you currently face any challenges with the retention of employees? = I Don't know

Skip To: End of Block If Do you currently face any challenges with the retention of employees? = Other, please specify:

Page Break

Q31 Why do you think your business/company/organization is currently facing challenges with the retention of employees? Select all that apply.

- Downsizing/company restructuring
- Lack of person-job fit (i.e., wrong skills for the job)
- Lack of compatibility with management/work culture
- Lack of advancement opportunities (i.e., raises, promotions etc.)
- Lack of professional development opportunities (i.e., training)
- Employees pursuing other opportunities
- Retirements
- Salary/benefits
- Other, please specify: _____

End of Block: Recruiting

Start of Block: Training

Q32 Has your business/company/organization been able to provide or support ongoing training or education opportunities for your employees within the last 12 months?

- Yes
- No

Page Break

Q33 What were the three most common types of training and/or education opportunities you provided to your employees?

	Type of Training/Education
1	
2	
3	

Page Break

Q34 What are the greatest challenges/barriers to providing your employees with ongoing training and/or education? Please select all that apply.

- Cost
- Awareness of existing training programs
- Awareness of training support programs
- Relevant training is not offered locally
- Distance to travel to training/educational facility
- Losing trained employees to other businesses/companies/organizations
- Loss of productivity during training time
- Other, please specify; _____

End of Block: Training

Start of Block: Skill Requirements

Q35 For each of the following statements, please rate the level to which you need these various skills from your current and/or future employees.

Managing body
language if
they are
disinterested
in a
conversation

Other, Please
Specify

Other, Please
Specify

Other, Please
Specify



Q36 Which of the following skills categories are applicable in your workplace?

- Basic Computer Skills
- Advanced Computer Skills
- Management and Leadership
- Economic Business Skills
- Customer Service and Communication Skills
- Trades Skills
- Engineering and Design Skills
- Transportation and Logistics Skills
- Health and Safety Skills
- Food Preparation Skills

End of Block: Skill Requirements

Start of Block: Technology Use

Q37 Please respond to the following statements regarding technology with the option that best fits your business/company/organization.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	I don't know
Our business always tries to use new technologies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our business faces challenges with the implementation of new technologies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our business can replace certain positions with technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our business has adequately adapted to a new COVID based modality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

End of Block: Technology Use

Start of Block: Retention & Expansion

Q38 In the next five years, does your business plan on:

- Remaining the same
- Expanding
- Downsizing
- Relocating outside of Durham Region
- Relocating within Durham Region
- I don't know
- Other, please specify _____

Skip To: End of Block If In the next five years, does your business plan on: = I don't know

Skip To: End of Block If In the next five years, does your business plan on: = Other, please specify

Page Break

Display This Question:

If in the next five years, does your business plan on: = Downsizing

Q39 Why does your business plan on downsizing? Please select all that apply.

- Economic downturn
- COVID related reasoning
- Industry becoming smaller
- Reduce costs
- Increase productivity
- Outsourcing of work
- Automation of work
- Other, please specify: _____

Page Break

Display This Question:

If in the next five years, does your business plan on: = Expanding

Q40 Why does your business plan on expanding? Please select all that apply.

- Economic upturn
- COVID related reasoning
- Industry growing
- Increase productivity
- Increase profits
- Increase expertise
- Increase breadth of services
- Other, Please specify: _____

Page Break

Display This Question:

If in the next five years, does your business plan on: = Relocating outside of Durham Region

Q41 Why does your business plan on relocating outside of Durham Region? Please select all that apply.

- Access to resources
- Access to talent
- Better opportunities for growth elsewhere
- Cost of real estate
- Facilities require change
- Other, please specify: _____

Page Break

End of Block: Retention & Expansion

Start of Block: Doing Business in Durham Region

Q42 Are there any other support services or programs for businesses that you would like to be available in Durham Region?

Yes

No

Page Break

Q43 What programs/support services would you like to be available?

Page Break

Q44 Is there anything else you would like to share about your business, employment in the Region or labour market trends pertinent to you, that have not already been asked?

End of Block: Doing Business in Durham Region
