2014-2017

employerone survey

SUMMARY REPORT

Sudbury & Manitoulin Workforce Planning
Planification en main-d'oeuvre

Ontario

This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.

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EMPLOYERONE SURVEY
SUMMARY REPORT
2014 - 2017

Sudbury & Manitoulin Districts

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INTRODUCTION

Good labour market information (LMI) is essential to various stakeholders. Employment services such as those funded by Employment Ontario use LMI to better assess job skills in demand and training that is required. Educators, particularly those in the secondary and post secondary systems use it to support program development and identify potential career opportunities for students. This includes specialized training for highly skilled professionals and for skilled trades occupations. Local employers use LMI to better understand who is available for work and challenges they may have when recruiting for some positions. Others such as municipal/provincial leaders, economic developers, business assistance and support programs use it to guide strategic planning and, in some cases, allocation of resources.

While Statistics Canada, the Labour Force Survey and the Census provide important data, key local information is often overlooked. For example, the Canadian Business Counts data confirms that as of June 2017, there were 13,588 businesses in the City of Greater Sudbury and the Districts of Sudbury and Manitoulin. This is slightly higher than the 13,421 businesses the previous year (June 2016). At first glance, this may seem like a lot of businesses, however, when one drills down into this data, we find that as of June 2017, just over 60% of these businesses have no employees or are run by people who are self employed (N=8,257). An additional 2,351 businesses only have 1-4 employees which means that for the entire area, 78% of <u>all</u> businesses fall into the *micro-enterprises* category. So again, while the number of businesses has grown, the overwhelming majority are very small.

But what does this information actually tell us about any business, large or small, and their workforce needs? Data sets (such as those available through Statistics Canada and other sources) are often far too large resulting in LMI that is interesting, but often too vague to apply locally.

Some industries collect their own LMI as a risk management strategy; in order to better understand where/how their industry is shifting, jobs that may go unfilled, training that is required, and/or how they need to adapt to changing demand and disruptive technologies. Such LMI is not as readily available, nor does it apply to the needs and challenges being faced by other industry sectors. As a result, engaging employers across all industries to help answer some of these questions makes sense but is challenging to achieve.

Since 2014, workforce planning boards across the north and elsewhere in Ontario have been conducting an annual employer survey named *employerone* to better understand the workforce needs of local employers. The *employerone* survey asks employers about their: workforce demographics; separations; current and projected hiring; recruitment strategies/challenges; perspectives on candidate skills, education, and training; top competencies required; workplace training provided; and workforce challenges that have been experienced during the year prior to the survey.

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (formerly Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development) which funds workforce planning boards across Ontario, asked each of the northern boards to summarize the results for their area from the last four survey years. This summary report highlights key information from employer respondents (from Greater Sudbury and the Districts of Sudbury & Manitoulin) and discusses similarities and differences in employer responses between survey years.

YEAR-TO-YEAR SURVEY LIMITATIONS

OUTREACH STRATEGY: For each survey year, various approaches were used to engage employers. There really was no selection or random process used as WPSM simply reached out to all employers on their database and took answers from any employer willing to respond.

It is important to put this into perspective. As previously mentioned, over 13,000 businesses exist in the WPSM catchment area and 63% of those businesses have no employees (or may include someone who is self employed). In most cases, these businesses would likely have no interest in completing a survey about their workforce, as there is no workforce. This leaves just under 5,000 businesses who might. Since there is no way of knowing what businesses have/don't have employees and there is no complete business directory available, WPSM relied on their employer database (n=just over 1200) which has been collected over the years. WPSM also relied on much smaller public directories of businesses that have been developed by other organizations and municipalities who connect with and/or support local businesses.

For each survey year, various strategies were used to reach out to businesses about the survey. This included: business-targeted mailings; personalized emails; posting a link to the survey on the WPSM website and on other employer-related websites; media releases; employer site visits; use of other business association networks and Employment Ontario to promote the survey; presentations; and disseminating survey information at events that employers attend.

SURVEY QUESTIONS: Over the last four survey years, employers expressed concerns about the following: having to complete the same survey year after year; the repetitiveness of the questions; the annual nature of the survey; and the time required to complete the survey. This was reported by both large employers (too many staff to report on) and small employers (don't have an HR department to collect the data requested).

In an effort to acknowledge and respect employer concerns, the survey was modified and shortened each year, but this created a significant limitation, especially in our ability to identify shifting trends over time. Interestingly however, although specific questions may have been slightly changed or modified, the responses on a number of similar questions have remained fairly consistent year after year, regardless of the size of the business.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: For each year, an online platform was used for the employerone survey. One of the complications with using this format is that respondents could open the survey and: not complete any of it; complete only part of it; or complete all of it. Although each email address that opened the survey was available to WPSM (as the agency gathering the data), there was no way to assess why some employers would start the survey and not complete it, even though the survey allowed the respondent to save their responses and return to the survey at a later date. Was this due to: lack of time? lack of interest? lack of access to data being requested? lack of relevance? and/or other commitments?

As a result, each survey year had varying numbers of respondents who entered some sort of information. Over the four survey years, 700 employers opened and started the survey, but only 400 completed it in its entirety.

To compensate for this, the report for each survey year consistently identified the number of respondents that answered each question, not the entire survey. This was felt to represent a better assessment of how many did and conversely did not answer that question. Again, the reasons why an employer chose to answer one question and not another, are however, largely unknown.

RESPONDENTS BY INDUSTRY: Over the last four survey years, there was a general consistency in the distribution of respondents by industry, with only a few variations: *Educational Services* had large fluctuations, as did *Other Services* and *Public Administration*. In 2017, another category was added, called *Other* which no doubt siphoned off some responses from *Other Services.* The NAICS (North American Industry Classification System) code for *Other Services* is defined by Statistics Canada to include: *Repair and Maintenance; Personal and Laundry Services; Religious, Grant-making, Civic, Professional, and Similar Organizations*. This was a flaw with the 2017 survey as the category *Other* should not have been included as ALL industries do fall into one of the listed industry categories. It may however signal that some employers may not identify with a NAICS code or simply don't understand where they fit or their purpose.

The industries that employer respondents identified that are higher (by 3% or more) than the actual (according to Canadian Business Counts data for 2017) are shaded GREEN, and those that are lower (by 3% or more) are shaded RED. One can see the patterns of consistent over/under-representation.

Oddly, the years with a smaller sample size (2014 and 2017) had fewer over/under-represented categories than years with more respondents.

TABLE 1: INDUSTRIES IDENTIFIED BY EMPLOYER RESPONDENTS

industry	actual 2017	2017	2016	2015	2014
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1.6%	2.2%	1.9%	2.1%	0.0%
Mining, Quarrying and Oil & Gas Extraction	0.7%	5.5%	4.7%	5.7%	6.4%
Utilities	0.2%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Construction	12.5%	9.9%	10.3%	6.4%	13.8%
Manufacturing	3.9%	7.7%	6.5%	4.3%	6.4%
Wholesale Trade	4.8%	2.2%	0.9%	2.1%	2.1%
Retail Trade	15.7%	14.3%	9.3%	12.1%	14.9%
Transportation and Warehousing	3.2%	1.1%	6.5%	2.9%	2.1%
Information and Cultural Industries	1.0%	4.4%	1.9%	0.7%	2.1%
Finance and Insurance	3.5%	5.5%	3.7%	3.6%	6.4%
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	4.8%	1.1%	0.9%	0.7%	2.1%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	7.6%	7.7%	7.5%	1.4%	7.4%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%
Administration and Support, Waste Mgmt.	4.0%	1.1%	0.9%	0.7%	0.0%
Educational Services	1.3%	0.0%	9.3%	8.6%	0.0%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	13.2%	13.2%	17.8%	12.1%	16.0%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	2.0%	1.1%	0.9%	2.9%	1.1%
Accommodation and Food Services	9.2%	5.5%	3.7%	5.0%	5.3%
Other Services	9.6%	3.3%	4.7%	22.9%	13.8%
Public Administration	0.8%	14.3%	7.5%	4.3%	0.0%
NUMBER OF RESPONSES		91	107	140	94

DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYERS BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: Across the four survey years, there is a general consistency in the distribution of respondents by size: a higher proportion of firms with 20-99 and 100+ employees, a lower proportion of firms with 1-4 employees, and around a representative proportion of firms with 5-19 employees. This is illustrated in Table 2.

However, when it comes to the number of employees represented by individual respondents there were some significant differences. The 2015 survey period boasted the highest number of employer responses (n=140 employers who responded) and the number of employees they represented (n=21,359 employees). According to the 2016 Census, the total number of employed residents living in the City of Greater Sudbury and the Districts of Manitoulin and Sudbury was 90,795; so roughly one quarter of all employed residents where represented by employers who responded to the survey that year.

It is important to note however, that during that survey year, there was a concerted effort to reach out to the area's largest employers such as the local hospital, several mining companies, local colleges, the university, school boards and the City of Greater Sudbury. This would account for the increase in both the number of employer respondents for that year and in turn, the number of employees that they represent.

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES REPRESENTED BY RESPONDENTS					
survey year	**1-4 employees**	**5-19 employees**	**20-99 employees**	**100+ employees**	**total # of employees represented**
ACTUAL 2017*	**46%**	**37%**	**14%**	**2%**	
2017	**21%**	**37%**	**29%**	**13%**	**8,435**
2016	**14%**	**39%**	**27%**	**21%**	**12,386**
2015	**20%**	**39%**	**29%**	**13%**	**21,359**
2014	**18%**	**35%**	**37%**	**10%**	**3,168**

**from Canadian Business Patterns (June 2017)*

DISTRIBUTION OF SEPARATION BY REASON OF SEPARATION: By and large, there has not been much difference as far as the reason for separation goes. The responses for 2015 seem like more of an outlier. In 2017, the category of *Other* was not offered as an option which may have influenced employer respondents; thereby forcing them to choose from all of the other categories.

It is also important to note that these are only separations identified by employers who responded and does not represent all separations in the catchment area for which we have no data. The other detail that this data does not provide is why someone quit. Quit was consistently the highest reason for separation as reported by employers. Did the employee go to another job? were they dissatisfied with their current job? did they go back to school? or did they relocate? etc.

Also, the survey only asked questions of the employer, not the employee…so even the employer may not know the full reason behind an employee quitting or may not want to divulge it, particularly if there were some internal conflict, management or performance issues.

TABLE 3: DISTRIBUTION OF SEPARATION BY REASON OF SEPARATION							
	quit	**retirements**	**temp lay-off**	**perm lay-off**	**dismissal**	**other**	**total # of separations**
2017	**43%**	**15%**	**20%**	**13%**	**9%**	**-**	**901**
2016	**27%**	**8%**	**22%**	**14%**	**9%**	**20%**	**587**
2015	**47%**	**17%**	**6%**	**2%**	**12%**	**17%**	**1,436**
2014	**60%**	**3%**	**17%**	**13%**	**6%**	**2%**	**444**

REPORTED HIRING BY RESPONDENTS: Employer respondents were asked how many positions they hired for in the previous 12 months. For the first few survey years, employers were asked to identify specific occupation categories they hired for. A number of employers felt it was onerous to breakout hiring by occupation, and as a result, for the final two survey years, this part of the question was dropped. This resulted in less informative data but was done in an effort to respect the request of employer respondents. As a result, Table 4 only indicates number of people hired during the previous 12 months with no detail as to what jobs they were hired.

TABLE 4: HIRING BY YEAR	
survey year	**# of hires**
2017	**1,138**
2016	**901**
2015	**5,491**
2014	**497**

Across the survey years, in most cases, employers reported both hiring and separation activity in the same year. Only 10% of respondents indicated that they had neither a hire nor a separation in the previous year. When hiring and separation numbers are far apart, it becomes difficult to determine if new jobs have been generated or old jobs have been restructured. Additionally, as noted, each survey year engaged a variety of employers and in 2015, there was a concerted effort to reach some of the area's largest employers. This undoubtedly resulted in an increase in the number of hires and separations for that year. It is important to note again however that these figures are no way indicative of the true number of hires or separations in the area for that year or other years as the sample of employers that responded was not random, nor was it representative.

LARGEST # HIRES AMONG HIGH FREQUENCY HIRING OCCUPATIONS:

This question produced a variety of answers over the years and would appear to be highly dependent on which employer is responding to the survey. Not only does the ranking of occupations by number of hires change considerably, but also the actual numbers for a given occupation change dramatically from year to year. This is particularly noticeable when several very large employers participated in the survey. Some of the largest employers in Greater Sudbury include Vale; City of Greater Sudbury; Laurentian University; Health Sciences North; Rainbow School Board, Canada Revenue Agency; and others. In fact, according to Statistics Canada, in the City of Greater Sudbury, there are 19 large employers with over 500 employees.

TABLE 5: LARGEST # OF HIRES AMONG HIGH FREQUENCY HIRING OCCUPATIONS BY SURVEY YEAR

2017		2016		2015		2014	
occupation	#	occupation	#	occupation	#	occupation	#
Part-time faculty and support staff	88	Administrative support staff	93	Labourer	556	PSW	66
Labourer	66	Personal support worker (PSW)	87	Faculty	520	Health care aide	35
Registered nurse	54	Registered nurse	30	Student intern	311	Millwright	21
Trades and safety	50	Registered practical nurse	25	Admin support, assistance, clerical	126	Registered nurse	21
Carpenter	35	Summer student	22	Outdoor rink staff (part-time)	85	Registered practical nurse	20
Ironworker	30	Paramedic	27	Health care aide, PSW	78	Retail clerk	20
Full-time support staff	29	Truck driver	17	Technologist	76	Machinist	15
Welder/fabricator	25			Heavy equipment operator	75	Welder	14
Registered practical nurse	24			Truck driver	75	Roofing apprentice	12
Summer student	22			Tree planter and supervisor	65	Scaffolder	12
Housekeeping	21			Registered nurse	61	Staff accountant	12
Part-time support worker	20			Volunteer firefighter	38	Supportive housing aide	11
Server	20			Server/waitress/ bus person	37		

Occupations that were identified three or more times over the four survey years are highlighted in green, all of which were health-related occupations. Although this question has some value, it needs to be taken into context; more than likely this is a reflection of which employers answered the survey. It does not necessarily mean that there is an unusually high demand for certain occupations across Greater Sudbury or the Districts of Sudbury and Manitoulin, but it does mean that for those who did respond, these occupations represented the largest number of hires among high frequency hiring occupations.

FREQUENCY OF USE OF RECRUITMENT METHODS: Each year, employers were asked to indicate all of the methods they use for recruitment. There are three general observations to be made about responses to this question:

- Over the course of the three years from 2014 to 2016, the trend was an increasing use of almost every form of recruitment. There were only two recruitment strategies where the trend-line was flat: *Executive search/temp agencies* and *Job fairs*, and one recruitment strategy: *Word of mouth/personal contacts/referrals/information networks* that stood out as the most commonly used recruitment method.
- 2017 shows quite a jump for all recruitment method categories, beyond the trend lines; this may suggest that 2017 respondents were a bit of an outlier; on the other hand, unemployment went down and perhaps employers were that much more active in searching for employees.
- It is nevertheless likely that employers are making more use of each method, and making use of more methods, which may suggest they are using more resources and are searching with greater intensity. It may also indicate great competition for the same talent pool as various employers are commenting on shortages in certain occupations.

Table 6 illustrates the trends well; where the pattern of recruitment method becomes very evident.

TABLE 6: FREQUENCY OF USE FOR EACH RECRUITMENT METHOD

recruitment method	% frequency of use			
	2017 n=75	2016 n=74	2015 n=105	2014 n=n/a
word of mouth / personal contacts / referrals / informal networks	89%	77%	66%	65%
online job boards / postings	78%	66%	55%	37%
company's own website	73%	51%	42%	31%
on-site recruitment at schools, colleges, universities	59%	20%	15%	12%
newspaper ads	57%	45%	35%	18%
government employment centres or websites	57%	42%	30%	22%
unsolicited resumes	54%	39%	19%	19%
non-government or community employment service centres/websites	52%	20%	17%	5%
on-site job signs or posters	41%	27%	21%	12%
trade or professional association publications	35%	15%	12%	8%
job fairs	32%	8%	6%	6%
executive search companies or temp agencies	18%	10%	8%	8%

GEOGRAPHIC AREAS FOR RECRUITMENT: In the first three years, this question asked which areas employers targeted their recruitment efforts. This included: *within Sudbury/ Manitoulin, within Ontario, within Canada* and *Internationally*. In 2017, the same question was asked, but broken down by sub-categories such as which areas were 'regularly, sometimes or never' targeted. As a result, while not an exact comparison, the 'regularly' response from 2017 was used for year-to-year comparison purposes.

As one can see in Table 7, there is a very high degree of similarity across the years in the response to this question. While this result is not surprising, it is reassuring to see that employers continue to recruit from the local talent pool first (*within Sudbury/Manitoulin*), followed by *within Ontario* even though we often hear otherwise.

TABLE 7: GEOGRAPHIC AREAS FOR JOB RECRUITMENT

	within Sudbury/ Manitoulin	within Ontario	within Canada	internationally
2017	90%	43%	11%	1%
2016	93%	36%	10%	3%
2015	89%	34%	12%	4%
2014	85%	23%	4%	1%

EXPECTED VS. ACTUAL HIRES: During each survey year, respondents were asked the actual number of hires they had, as well as what their projections were for hires in the coming year. Table 8 below lists the total number of projected vs. actual hires, as well as the percentage breakdown by employment type such as: *full time; part-time; contract;* and *seasonal*.

TABLE 8: NUMBER OF PROJECTED HIRES FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS COMPARED TO REPORTED PAST YEAR HIRES BY EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY

Year (projected/actual)		full time	part-time	contract	seasonal	total #
2014	PROJECTED	48%	24%	20%	8%	465
2015	ACTUAL	15%	23%	50%	12%	5491
	PROJECTED	17%	7%	55%	10%	2482
2016	ACTUAL	39%	26%	24%	12%	901
	PROJECTED	26%	22%	44%	8%	662
2017	ACTUAL	21%	21%	54%	5%	1087

While the projected number of hires vs. actual hires tends to be out of alignment, this is the consequence of different employers responding and the number and size of the employer responding each year. For example, the presence or absence of a few large employers could change the numbers significantly. In retrospect, this calculation should have been in relation to the total number of employees represented by the survey respondents, not by the total number of employer respondents.

Interestingly however, although not part of the employerone survey, other data provided by EMSI analyst (Economic Modelling Specialists Incorporated), an economic modelling tool being used by WPSM, did signal projected hiring increases for 2015 and a decrease in hiring for 2016. Surprisingly, this was consistent with the results from the employerone survey.

Another data source, Vicinityjobs showed that for the year 2017, there were 8,091 jobs posted online for Greater Sudbury; 315 for the District of Sudbury; and 128 for the Manitoulin District. This data also showed that employment categories for jobs posted online, varied across the area. For Greater

Sudbury, 40.5% of jobs were for full time positions and that the highest number of jobs were in *Sales and Services* occupations at 29.8%. 36.5% were full time jobs for the District of Sudbury and similar to Greater Sudbury, the highest number of jobs were for *Sales and Services* occupations at 30.4%. Only 28.1% of jobs posted for the Manitoulin District were for full time positions with *Health Care and Social Services* occupations leading the way at 21.9%. The good news is that employers are continuing to hire and are continuing to state that they expect to hire in future.

CHALLENGES IN RECRUITMENT: Each survey year, employers were asked about recruitment challenges. How this question was analyzed however, changed after 2014, when the analysis was done on the basis of the number of jobs represented by each response. As well, in 2017, the way the question was asked changed slightly, when several statements were changed from a negative to a positive (*Applicants not meeting language requirements* was changed to *Applicants meet the language requirements for the position*). Table 9 below compares responses across each survey year, only in terms of the order in which the statements were ranked, from highest level of agreement to least.

TABLE 9: REPORTED RECRUITMENT CHALLENGES EACH SURVEY YEAR

2014	2015	2016	2017
Few applicants	Lack educational requirements	Lack skills requirements	Meet language requirements
Lack educational requirements	Few applicants	Lack educational requirements	We offer competitive wage
Lack work experience	Lack skills requirements	Lack motivation/right attitude	Few applicants
Lack skills requirements	Lack work experience	Lack work experience	Lack work experience
Lack competitive wage	Lack competitive wage	Lack competitive wage	Remote location
Lack motivation/right attitude	Lack motivation/right attitude	Turnover not a problem	Meet educational requirements
Remote location	No local qualified applicants	Adequate qualified workers	Foreign credential challenge
No local qualified applicants	Remote location	Nature of job (seasonal, shifts)	Nature of job
Nature of job (seasonal, shifts)	No applicants	Lack promotions	Have skills required
Lack promotions	Lack language requirements	No applicants	Lack promotions
Lack language requirements	Other	Remote location	Turnover a problem
No applicants	Nature of job (seasonal, shifts)	Foreign credential challenge	Adequate qualified workers
Foreign credential challenge	Lack promotions	Lack language requirements	
	Foreign credential challenge		

The change in language in 2017 seems to have turned around the rankings, which suggests respondents may have been confused by a mix of statements that were positive and negative statements. Thus, *Lack of educational requirements* had scored high in the first three years, whereas in 2017, *Meet educational requirements* scores in the middle of the pack (instead of scoring low, as would have been expected). Similarly, in the first three years, *Lack competitive wage* scored in the top five, while in 2017 *We offer competitive wage* scored second highest (which seems somewhat contradictory compared to the previous years' scores).

Interestingly, regardless of the above concerns, for the 2014 to 2016 survey years, the top 5 statements are almost exactly the same, only the order changed slightly. Again, it is very hard to compare the answers to the 2017 results since the language used in the survey for this question changed.

REASON FOR EXPECTED HIRING: This question asked employer respondents the reason behind their hiring and plans to hire. By and large, as seen in Table 10, there is broad consistency in the responses. Plans for *Expansion/Restructuring* topped the list of reasons employers expected to hire. *Other* was also generally higher than reasons provided in the survey for hiring, though as noted throughout this report, this category creates too many broad generalizations, making it difficult to accurately interpret and report; the question being, why else do employers hire?

TABLE 10: REASON FOR EXPECTED HIRING

year	retirements	expansion/ restructuring	technological change	other	n/a
2017	17%	46%	8%	29%	20%
2016	27%	30%	4%	35%	18%
2015	16%	33%	1%	23%	27%
2014	5%	56%	1%	24%	15%

TOP COMPETENCIES (what employers are looking for): Over the last four survey years, employers were asked to rate the importance of various competencies for their employees and assess each competency according to its level of importance on a scale of 0-4; 0 being not important at all to 4 being extremely important. Competencies listed included: a) *work ethic, dedication, and dependability;* b) *teamwork/interpersonal skills;* c) *communication;* d) *willingness to learn;* e) *professionalism;* f) *self-motivated;* g) *time management;* h) *customer service;* i) *problem-solving;* j) *computer literacy;* k) *technical skills; and* l) *analytical/research skills*.

Each survey year brought similar results, with some slight variations in the top four competencies employer respondents identified. *Work ethic* was one of the top competencies identified each year as noted in green.

TABLE 11: TOP 4 COMPETENCIES AS REPORTED BY RESPONDENTS

2017	2016	2015	2014
Work ethic	Work ethic	Customer service	Work ethic
Teamwork	Willingness to learn	Work ethic	Technical skills
Willingness to learn	Teamwork	Teamwork	Customer service
Professionalism	Professionalism	Self-motivated	Self-motivated

WAYS IN WHICH EMPLOYERS SUPPORT TRAINING/EDUCATION: For each survey year, employers were asked if they provide training/education supports for their staff but for years 2015, 2016 and 2017, they were asked what kind of supports they provide. As one can see from Table 12, the kind of supports provided were similar for 2015 and 2106, and that there were considerable differences with 2017 in terms of *Supplying information on career advancement*, *Flexibility in the work schedule* and *Use of government hiring and training incentives*.

TABLE 12: PERCENT OF EMPLOYERS WHO PROVIDE TRAINING/EDUCATION SUPPORTS

method of support	2017	2016	2015
Fund it (fully or partially)	78%	77%	77%
Supply information on career advancement	68%	30%	25%
Offer flexibility in work schedule	61%	41%	44%
Use government hiring and training incentives	35%	24%	21%
Other	8%	17%	14%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	76	66	101

WORKPLACE TRAINING FOR STUDENTS/FUTURE WORKERS: In 2017, employers were provided with the option of stating that they did not provide any workplace training opportunities for students which helps us to better understand how many do/do not provide such opportunities. In previous years, employers were only asked which of these programs they provided. If they did not answer this question, it was not possible to know if they simply don't provide any workplace training or they missed/skipped the question for other reasons.

TABLE 13: PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYERS WHO PROVIDE WORKPLACE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

		paid co-op	unpaid co-op	paid internship	unpaid internship	apprentice	none
2017 (n=69-71)	High school student	14%	21%	4%	0%	8%	61%
	College student	17%	14%	11%	9%	13%	51%
	University student	16%	15%	20%	4%	6%	55%
2016 (n=70)	High school student	10%	29%	1%	0%	7%	-
	College student	11%	16%	24%	7%	16%	-
	University student	10%	10%	14%	6%	7%	-
	Job-seeker	1%	6%	9%	0%	4%	-
2015 (n=125)	High school student	3%	24%	2%	2%	6%	-
	College student	9%	14%	14%	8%	14%	-
	University student	6%	10%	10%	9%	5%	-
	Job seeker	0%	3%	3%	2%	4%	-
		paid/unpaid co-op		paid/unpaid internship		apprentice	mentoring
2014 (n=49)	High school student	22%		51%		20%	16%
	College student	27%		35%		22%	18%
	University	22%		16%		8%	10%
	Job seeker	6%		6%		10%	14%

As a result, it was hard to get a sense of what portion of employers provide these programs. Instead, the sample is only those employers providing ANY workplace experience opportunity. Additionally, for the 2014 survey year, paid/un paid co-ops and paid/unpaid internships were lumped together but separated out in future surveys. In short, the responses from 2014 to 2016 cannot be compared to each other or to 2017.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Workforce Planning for Sudbury & Manitoulin has been conducting the employerone survey for the past four years and despite challenges faced reaching employers, receiving responses, and slight variations to the survey instrument, important insights have been gained. For example, regardless of industry sector, size of employer, or number of employer respondents, striking similarities surfaced in terms of hiring practices, recruitment areas, and top competencies that employers are looking for. These insights not only help us better understand the needs of employers, but how future surveys of this nature could provide even more valuable qualitative information if blended with other quantitative data.

CHALLENGES: As noted in the limitations section, there were a number of challenges with the survey instrument itself, the execution of the survey, and getting employers to respond. Other challenges were also faced when trying to compare employer responses between survey years. Some of the more obvious challenges included the following:

- In some cases, comparisons between survey years became an "apples to oranges" comparison as the question changed and so did the context or responses available. Even small changes impacted on the ability to compare specific year-to-year survey answers. Whereas for other parts of the survey, questions and subsequent answers changed very little between years. As a result, for those questions, where the answer remained the same, it might not be necessary to ask them year after year.
- The variability in who answered the question (industry represented and/or size of employer) meant that it was difficult to establish any type of pattern over the years. This was particularly true with the 2015 survey year where large employers were targeted and subsequently responded. While their responses were extremely important as they represented a large number of employees and possible jobs, their answers did skew the responses of much smaller employers. As a result, responses to questions like high frequency hirings could not be taken to be representative of all jobs in demand by all employers or be compared to high frequency hires from previous or later survey years.
- Questions on hiring may actually be redundant now as questions related to occupations in demand may be better answered by access to other data sources through the Job Vacancy and Wage Survey (Statistics Canada); and other job vacancy postings/resources through Vicinityjobs and EMSI analyst. These are undoubtedly more reliable as they draw on other larger data sources.

LESSONS: As always, various lessons that can be gleaned from conducting and analyzing the last four years of the employerone survey. For example:

- Surveys, such as the employerone survey does not lend itself well to quantitative questions, such as how many hires or where the vacancies are, or even the profile of one's workforce. Each year, answers were skewed by the size and industry sector the employer represented. Again, as noted, this was particularly evident in the 2015 survey year, as a number of larger employers were targeted and subsequently answered the survey. While their responses were valued and very important, this resulted in a significant increase in the number of hires reported for that year. Is this a true reflection of all employers, likely not? Quantitative questions such as these as noted may be far better determined from the Labour Force Survey, the Job Vacancy data and even the Census.
- Instead, for surveys like employerone, more qualitative questions should be asked; like <u>why</u> are employers making the hiring decisions they are? and what is their assessment of job candidates. For

example, questions related to top competencies employers are looking for and how they, as an employer, provide training, helps to illustrate what qualities employers are seeking/expecting in their current and future workforce and if they are willing to train.

- Last, rather than asking the same questions year after year, some questions could be asked every two or three years (to see what has changed and/or trends that may be emerging). This would also be a great opportunity to explore some other topics in greater depth; for example, how technology is affecting jobs in their industry, whether or not employers have a succession plan (and if yes, does this include employee upskilling to more senior management positions), and/or zeroing in on certain occupations that appear to be key and in demand in the Sudbury and Manitoulin Districts.

FINAL NOTE

While the employerone survey over the last four years has yielded some very interesting results, it has significant limitations. Even though there is no magic way to reach all employers, the insights gained from the more qualitative questions, does help us to better understand some of the perspectives and challenges that employers are facing. It also helps us to see the divide between what employers are looking for and why it is difficult for some job-seekers to obtain employment, particularly if they are missing some of the competencies that employers are demanding.

Many of these “top competencies” as reported by employers, fit into the basket of “basic and essential skills” and are more focussed on the character traits of the job-seeker as opposed to their credentials and training. This however is a double-edged sword. Even though employers are seeking these skills, it is next to impossible for job-seekers to even get their foot in the door to be interviewed without the credentials or technical skills training listed for the job.

Whatever conclusions are drawn from the last four survey years, it is equally as important to use more quantitative data to support any trends or conclusions from these surveys. Blending the two of course is ideal; conducting the employerone survey every few years to help explore answers to more qualitative questions as noted and using more quantitative data that is more and more available (and reliable) could help strike the balance that is needed. This might help us to better understand the recruitment practices of employers, competencies they are seeking, jobs in demand and challenges they are experiencing. How this is all playing out in terms of separation trends, new jobs that are emerging, training that is required and prospects for future hiring remains to be seen.

All of this labour market information specific to employers and a wide range of industries is relevant to the secondary and post secondary systems, employment services, local governments, employers, other industries, unions, economic development leads, and others. But ultimately it will help inform and remind job-seekers of what employers are looking for in terms of their workforce, and the skills, credentials and training that is required to meet industry/employer demand now and into the future.

APPENDICES