

# Employee Survey Observations *Executive Summary*

2023



## Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the participation of our local workforce and thank both employees and job seekers who took the time to share their thoughts with us in the 2023 Employee Survey.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank our Advisory Committee partners for their support and contributions to this project.

The success of this project is a direct result of collaborative efforts and would not be possible without your ongoing participation. We believe that up-to-date information on concerns of our local workforce is crucial to understanding the challenges our workers are facing, thus supports employers and community stakeholders in their workforce attraction and retention strategies.

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## Executive Summary

There is excellent work being done in the Stratford-Bruce Peninsula Economic Region to attract and retain the workforce our local employers need to succeed. We thank our local Economic Development Offices, Municipalities, Schools and Colleges, Employment Service Providers, Designated Training Associations, Industry Associations and other non-profit organizations for their efforts to provide strategies and resources that support the development of our local workforce.

This survey is meant to supplement and expand on those strategies by providing employers and stakeholders some insight into what our local workforce is saying regarding their employment needs. The employment landscape has changed significantly since the Covid-19 pandemic. Since the last survey was done in 2018 we felt it was the right timing to reach out to our local workforce again.

The Four County Labour Market Planning Board conducted the 2023 Employee Survey between September 1, 2023 and November 1, 2023. The survey successfully collected 777 survey responses which included both employees and job seekers working or looking for work in the Region.

By collecting information on factors affecting the employment decisions of our local workforce, we can better understand what motivate their labour market participation, thus support and enhance efforts to attract and retain the local workforce.

We have done a thorough analysis on the responses from employees and job seekers within our region. When results were examined by age and sector, it was evident that there are differences among the factors they felt were important. We have included some of the highlights for employees by age and sector and job seekers in this executive summary.

Please refer to the full Survey Observations report for further details regarding the 2023 Employee Survey collection and analysis.



# Highlights of Survey Observations for Employees by Age

## All Employee Age Cohorts Ranked as Top 4 Factors in Employment Decisions

- Hourly pay or Salary (Wages)
- Other Compensation (Dental or Medical Benefits, Bonus, Vacation time)
- Positive work culture
- Hours of work (Flexible schedule, notice of schedule, remote work, time off)

## Other Top Ranked Employment Priorities by Age Cohort

### 20s and 30s

- Housing (Attainable and Affordable)
- Availability of public transport
- Location of Employment

### 40s

- Career development opportunities
- Ability to use my skills, or education in current position
- Location of Employment

### 50s and 60+

- Safe work environment (procedures for physical or mental well-being),
- Career development opportunities (i.e. on-the-job training, job rotation opportunities, promotions)
- Location of Employment
- Ability to use my skills, or education in current position

Compared with 16.2% among all respondents who indicated they are or will be seeking employment in the next 12 months these age cohorts were notably higher: 20-24 age cohort (36.4%), 25-29 (29%)

Furthermore, workers from major working age groups (i.e. from 25 to 44 years) are more open to taking up new employment opportunities.

On the other hand, workers aged 50 and above appeared to be more likely to stay in their current positions in the near future. The 65 and over cohort had the highest of 69.2% respondents anticipated that they plan to stay with current employment in the coming 12 months.

# Highlights of Employee Survey Observations by Sector

## Findings on Employee Retention & Satisfaction

**Active Job Searching in the next 12 months** - About 16.2% respondents said they have been or will be searching for new employment in the next 12 months. Sectors with the most employees saying so:

- Accommodation and food services (27.8%)
- Health care and social assistance (25%)
- Educational services (19.4%)

**Change jobs if opportunities arise** - Over half employees respondents in Construction, Manufacturing, Transportation and Wholesale and retail trade have responded so.

**Stay in their current position** - About one-third employees across all sectors saying so while these sectors had high responses indicating they plan to stay in their current position:

- Utilities (58.8%)
- Information, culture and recreation (52.2%)
- Public Administration (50%)

**Support from Supervisors and Co-workers** - These sectors were among the highest who agreed or strongly agreed that they received support from supervisors and co-workers:

- Agriculture & Mining, quarrying, oil and gas extraction (83.9%)
- Utilities (82.4%)
- Transportation and warehousing (81.3%)

Those who disagreed or strongly disagreed they had the support from supervisors and co-workers were in these sectors:

- Construction (30.6%)
- Health care and social assistance (22.6%)
- Educational services (22.2%)

**Job-related Training** - In Six out of 15 sectors, over 70% employees agreed or strongly agreed that job-related training would enhance their job performance. Over 50% of respondents from all sectors except Wholesale and retail trade agreed with the positive association between on-the-job training and a long-term career path in their current position.

# Highlights of Survey Observations for Job Seekers

## Job Seeker Reasons for leaving their last position

Only around 31.4% of respondents said they quit their last job. Our survey found that health concerns is the most important factor for workers to quit, followed by lack of career development opportunities, workplace harassment or bullying, and unpredictable work schedules. It is not surprising that health concern was ranked the highest as the Region have an aging workforce who have health concerns that prevent them from participating.

## Job Seekers by Sector

The largest shares of job seekers previously worked in Health care and social assistance (20.0%), followed by Manufacturing (19.6%) and Accommodation and food services (18.4%). The three sectors contribute to about 30.8% employment in the region and are major in-demand sectors as measured by number of job postings.

It is alarming that while the second largest share of job seeker respondents previously worked in Accommodation and Food services, the sector does not stand out as their top choices for future employment.

When asked to choose up to three sectors for future employment, about 25.9% respondents selected Business, building and other support services, followed by Health care and social assistance (22.0%), Public Administration (21.1%), Manufacturing (19.8%) and Educational Services (18.5%).

## How are Job Seeker Respondents Looking for work?

When asked to rate three most preferred job searching methods, over 72% respondents selected online job boards as their top three choices, and over 45% respondents selected online Job Board as “the most preferred” method.

**Why?** Getting more updated job information is ranked by our respondents as the most important when they decided to use a particular job search channel, followed by higher chance of getting hired and easy to access.

## Analysis of Observations – A Way Forward

We have adopted a multi-factor approach to present and analyze important reasons affecting employees and job seekers to stay, quit or take up new job positions in the they have been or will be searching for new employment in the next 12 months. Despite the demographic varieties of our workforce, it is evident that other than securing earnings to cover living costs, there are multiple factors influencing their employment decisions.

- **Flexible Work Arrangements & Accommodations:** Older age cohorts have indicated that they are willing to flexibly participate in the workforce. Women and families have also indicated flexible arrangements allow them to remain in the workforce either part-time or full-time. Some job seeker respondents encountered employment barriers due to age, health, gender and disabilities.
- **Clear Career Path and Training Opportunities:** A clear career path and the availability of job enhancement training opportunities also have a huge positive impact on attracting and retaining workers. While only about one third of employees saw a clear career path in their current jobs, over 70% employees associated training opportunities with empowerment and long-term career development. When employees are provided training in the early stage of their career, they develop stronger commitment and identification with the organization, therefore reducing turnover rates.
- **Positive, Safe and Respectful Workplace:** Our survey findings revealed that our workforce values a positive, respectful and diversified organizational environment that recognizes and supports their work. Respondents highlighted that having their voices heard and receiving responses from employers are fundamental to their feeling of being treated with respect. Understanding how to manage organizational culture in the workplace with diversity by age, gender, culture, and other differences is important to overall attraction and retention.
- **Succession Planning - Knowledge Management and Transfer:** Our survey findings and comments from respondents revealed that our older age cohorts value positions that could better utilize their skills and knowledge. Older employees were frustrated that their experiences and skills were not being recognized whereas younger workforce with limited experiences hoped to get trained and learn required skills in the workplace.



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