

EMPLOYER *one* survey

**2022
RESULTS**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1
BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS.....	2
INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS.....	4
2021 HIRING TRENDS.....	5
FUTURE HIRES.....	7
RECRUITMENT & RETENTION.....	8
2021 SEPARATIONS.....	10
IMPACT OF COVID-19.....	11
ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK.....	12



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The views expressed in this publication are the views of the Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board and do not necessarily reflect those of the Province. The Government of Ontario and its agencies are in no way bound by the recommendations contained in this document.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The EmployerOne Survey is a community-wide survey that gathers information directly from local employers to address local workforce needs and identify trends. This report also provides job seekers and employers with data on local hiring trends and recruitment methods for future and career planning.

The survey was created to address:

- Challenges with recruitment, retention, and hard-to-fill positions.
- The challenges faced by small businesses and sole proprietors.
- The impact of COVID-19 on business operations.

This year we increased our participation rate and gathered input from 300 local employers with a larger representation from those in Retail trade, Healthcare and social assistance, and Professional, scientific and technical services. In line with survey results from previous years, employers reported having hard to fill positions, most notably in Wholesale trade, Healthcare and social assistance, and Accommodation and food services. It is anticipated this hiring need will continue as a majority of employers plan to hire this year.

As in the previous year's survey, additional questions were added to continue monitoring the impacts of COVID-19 on local businesses through post-pandemic recovery. To date, 44% of the businesses surveyed have not returned to pre-Pandemic levels of operation, and employers continue to experience challenges related to COVID-19 workplace restrictions and product/supply shortages.

This report is designed to be informative and comprehensive and delivered in a manner that all can understand and enjoy. We welcome any feedback and questions by contacting:

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BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS

Of the 300 businesses that took part in the 9th annual EmployerOne Survey, 23% were established within the past 5 years, while 77% were established more than 5 years ago. Businesses with local head offices accounted for 81% of respondents, while the remaining 19% of businesses were branches with head offices located outside of the region.

The physical landscape of the current workforce varied, as 62% of businesses indicated that staff were working onsite, 4% relied solely on remote work, and 33% utilized a hybrid approach with staff working both remotely and on-site. Sole proprietors primarily worked out of a home office (82%), while a smaller percentage worked out of a commercial space or storefront (14%) or out of a shared/coworking space (4%).

Of those who indicated they utilized a remote/hybrid workforce, 68% plan to continue with the approach post-Pandemic, 22% indicated they planned to discontinue their current remote/hybrid practice, and 10% were unsure.

Figure 1: Physical landscape of current workforce

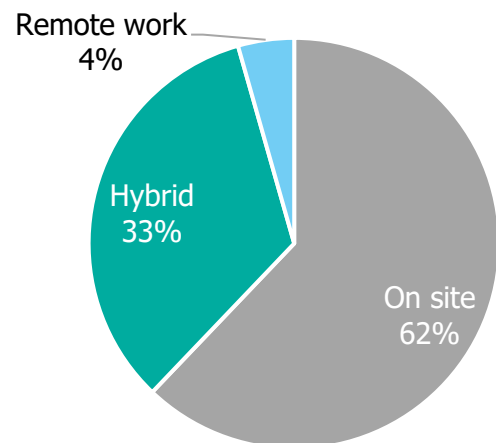
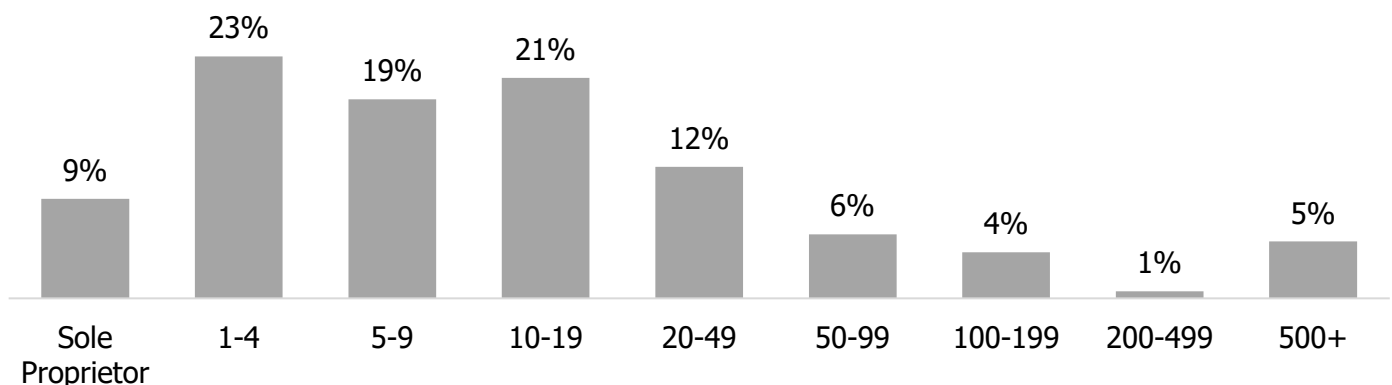


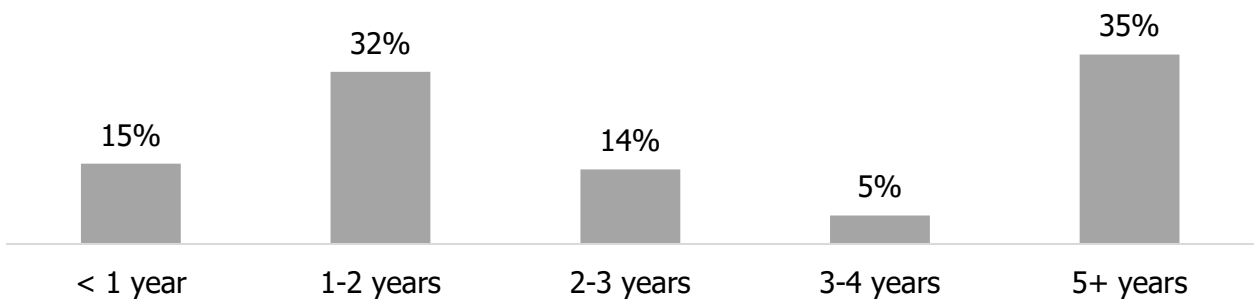
Figure 2: Business size categorization of survey respondents



In addition to changes in the physical landscape of work, there were also shifts in the ways in which businesses offer their products and services. Among businesses with employees, 31% indicated they offered their products/services via e-commerce, with 46% indicating they had only been offering the services within the last 2 years. Among sole proprietors, 39% utilize e-commerce, with 64% implementing it within the last 2 years.

Businesses with employees (9%) and sole proprietors (6%) who do not currently utilize e-commerce planned to implement e-commerce into their business operations in the next 12 months. Overall, those businesses both with employees and without plan to continue to use e-commerce post-COVID.

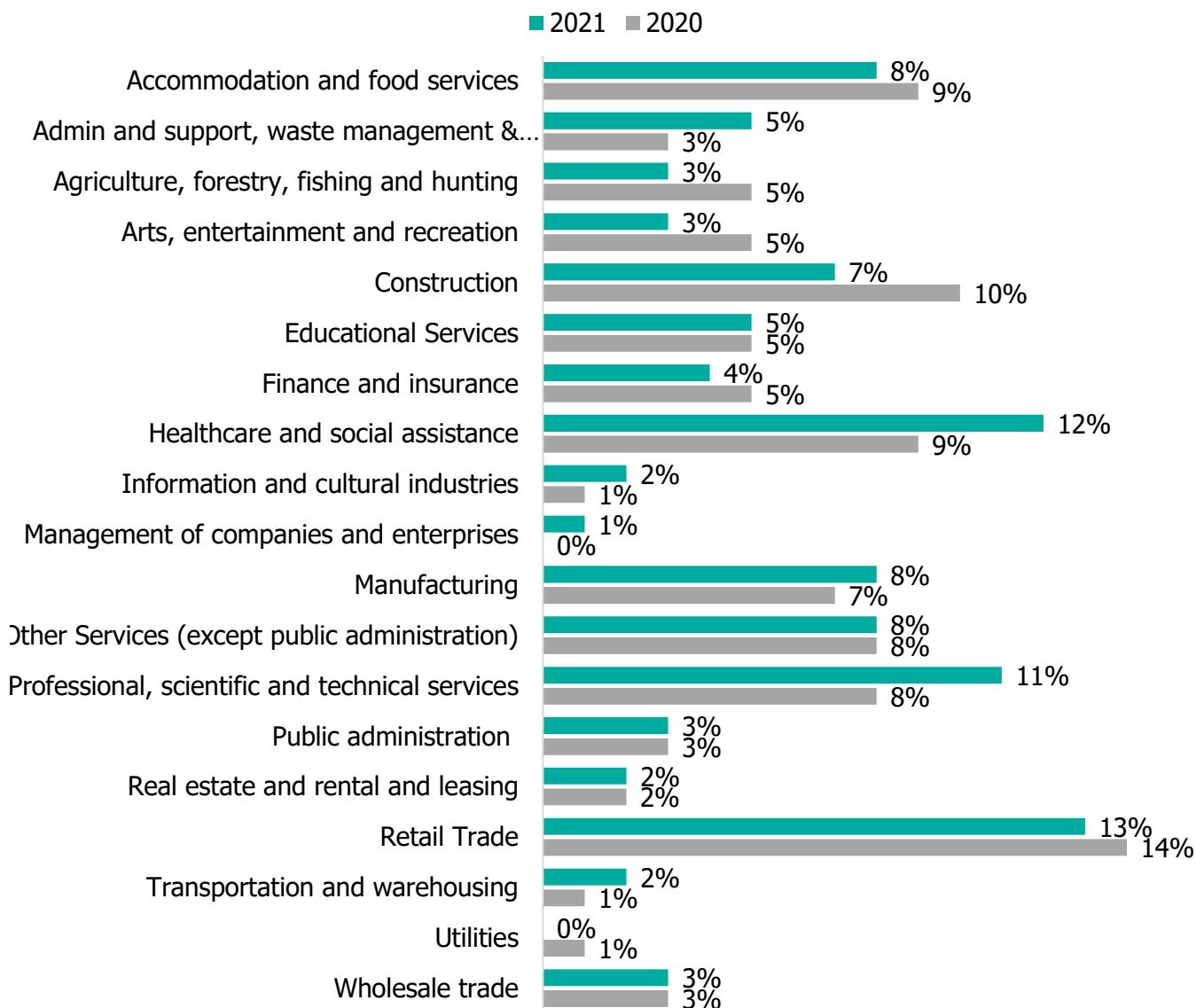
Figure 3: Length of time respondents reported utilizing e-commerce



INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Compared to the previous year's EmployerOne Survey results, there was an increase in the number of responses from businesses within Healthcare and social assistance (+12), Professional, scientific and technical services (+11), Administration and support, waste management and remediation services (+6), and Information and cultural industries (+5). Industries with the largest decrease in responses from the previous year's EmployerOne Survey were among business operating in Agricultural, forestry, fishing and hunting (-7), Arts, entertainment and recreation (-6), and Construction (-6).

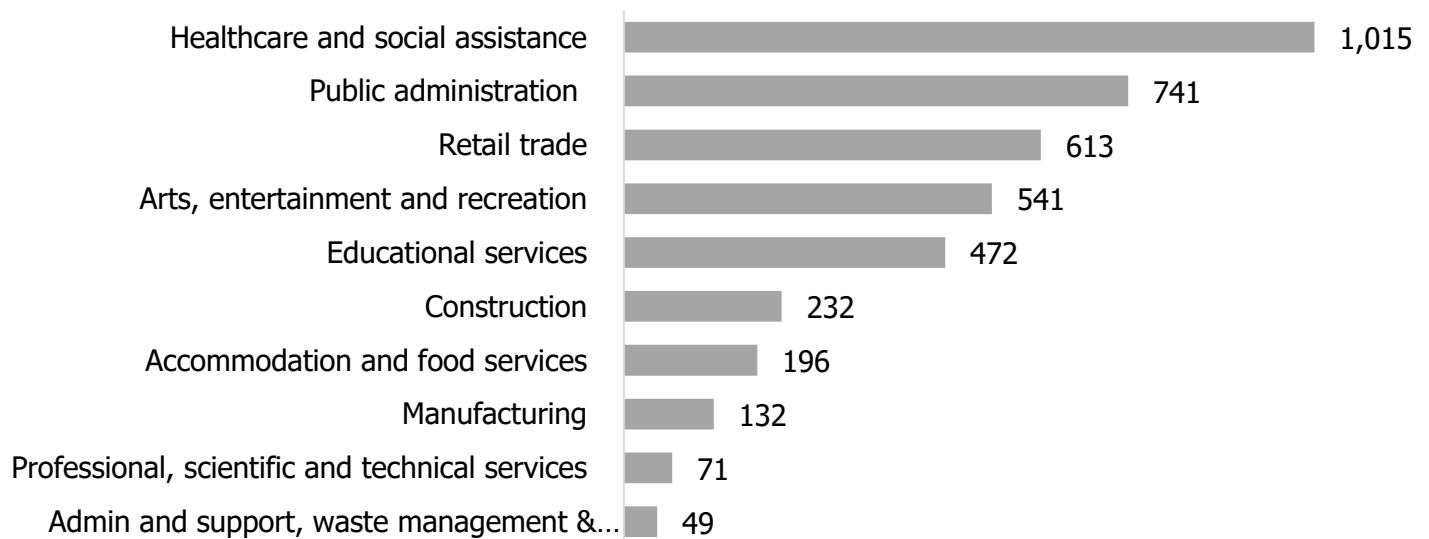
Figure 4: Industry categorization of survey respondents



2021 HIRING TRENDS

Of the 272 businesses with employees, 79% indicated they had hired an employee within the last 12 months, with an estimated total of 4,222 new hires. In contrast, there were 2,271 new hires by 178 organizations in the previous year. Employment types varied, as 43% were permanent full-time, 29% were permanent part-time, and 28% were contract/seasonal positions.

Figure 5: Total number of hires by industry categorization



Of those who hired, 62% indicated they experienced hard-to-fill positions which either took longer than expected to fill or were not filled. Hard-to-fill positions were echoed among 47% of small businesses (1-99 employees), 80% of medium businesses (100-499 employees) and 63% of large businesses (500+ employees). The primary reasons that positions were hard to fill were a lack of applicants (67%) and a lack of qualifications (40%). Other reasons echoed by employers that are not listed in the chart below include applicants “ghosting” employers, an inability to offer competitive wages, and unmotivated workers.

Industries that experienced hard to fill positions as a result of not enough applicants include those in Transportation and warehousing (100%), Arts, entertainment, and recreation (100%), Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting (100%), and Professional, scientific and technical services (88%). In addition, industries that experienced hard-to-fill positions due to a lack of qualifications include those in Transportation and warehousing (67%), Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (67%), and Professional, scientific and technical services (63%).

Reasons why positions were hard-to-fill:

- Not enough applicants (67%)
- Lack of qualifications (40%)
- Lack of work experience (39%)
- Lack of motivation, attitude, or interpersonal abilities (37%)
- Lack of technical skills (24%)
- No applicants at all (22%)
- Inability to compete with other employers (17%)

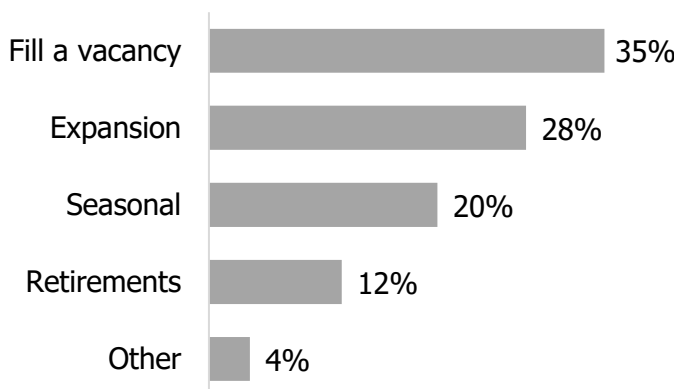


FUTURE HIRES

Looking to the future, 75% of respondents with indicated that they expect to hire an estimated 2,781 employees in the coming year. Many of the planned hires will serve to fill a current or expected vacancy or are a result of anticipated business expansions. Industries that anticipate recruiting the largest number of new hires in 2022 include Construction (1,135), Retail trade (586), and Healthcare and social assistance (279).

Industries that expect to hire as a result of expansions include Wholesale trade (100%), Information and cultural industries (80%), and Professional, scientific and technical services (76%). In contrast, industries that expect to see the most retirements include Public administration (43%), Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (40%), and Transportation and warehousing (40%).

Figure 6: Expected reasons for hiring in 2022



Occupations expected to be recruited for in 2022:

Construction

- Administration
- Labourer
- Project Manager
- Site Supervisor
- Skilled Trades (Boilermaker, Pipefitter, Carpenter, Millwrights, Heavy Equipment Operator, Plumber)

Retail trade

- Cashier
- Clerk
- Customer Service Representative
- Sales staff
- Social Media Manager
- Store Manager

Healthcare and social assistance

- Alternative Healthcare Professionals
- Childcare Worker
- Personal Support Worker and Direct Support Professional
- Program Coordinator
- Receptionist
- Registered Nurse / Registered Nurse Practitioner
- Social Worker and Counselor



RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

Survey results from the previous eight years indicate that the top recruitment method used by local employers was consistently word of mouth, personal contacts, and informal networks, however the top recruitment method identified this year was the use of online job boards.

Other notable recruitment methods used by local employers include the use of Government and Non-government or community employment service centres or websites, union halls, and newspaper ads.

Although employers continue to rely heavily on the use of word-of-mouth recruitment tactics (30%), the increase in the use of job boards reveals how technology has increased in significance as employers pivot their recruitment strategies.

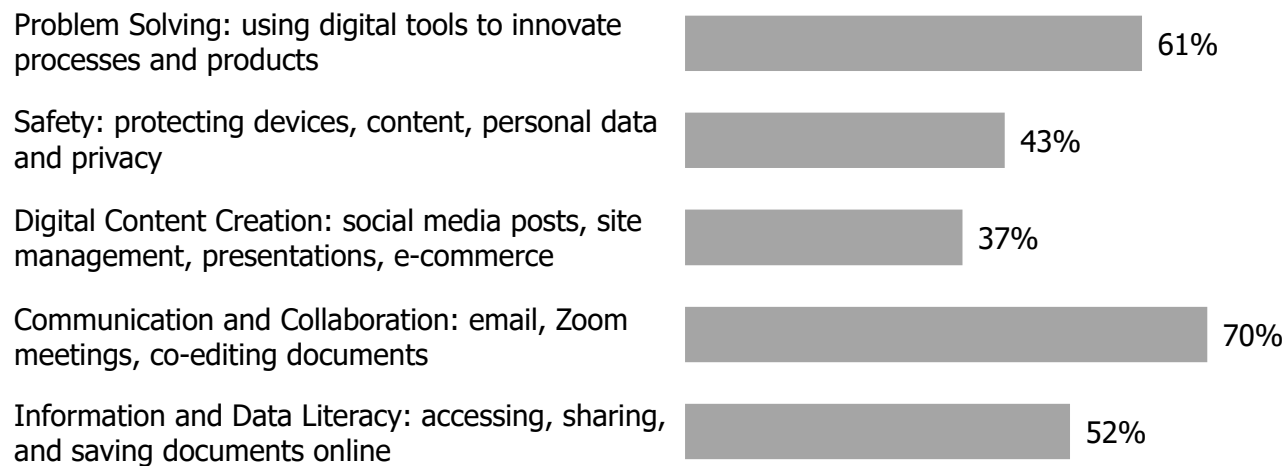
When rating the availability of qualified workers in the Sarnia Lambton area, employers have indicated an overall decrease compared to previous years. Last year 49% of employers indicated that the availability of qualified workers was excellent or good; in contrast, this year only 40% did so.

Top competencies employers look for when recruiting:

Self-motivated/ability to work with little or no supervision	43%
Work ethic	41%
Dependability	36%
Teamwork/interpersonal	36%
Customer service	31%
Willingness to learn	28%
Communication (both oral and written)	24%
Professionalism	23%
Problem solving, reasoning	21%

As in previous years, the top competencies employers recruit for indicate that they are seeking candidates who are self motivated, have a strong work ethic, and are dependable. In addition, digital skills were a requirement when recruiting candidates according to 58% of respondents, with an emphasis on digital skills related to communication and collaboration (email, Zoom meetings, co-editing documents).

Figure 7: Digital Skills employers look for when hiring



Retention remained a concern for 51% of employers, and similarly 51% of respondents indicated they had a succession plan in place to accommodate projected growth and/or retirements over the next 3 to 5 years. The top industries that indicated a concern for retention include Transportation and warehousing (67%), Accommodation and food services (63%), Healthcare and social assistance (61%), and Public administration (60%).

Strategies used by local employers to encourage retention:

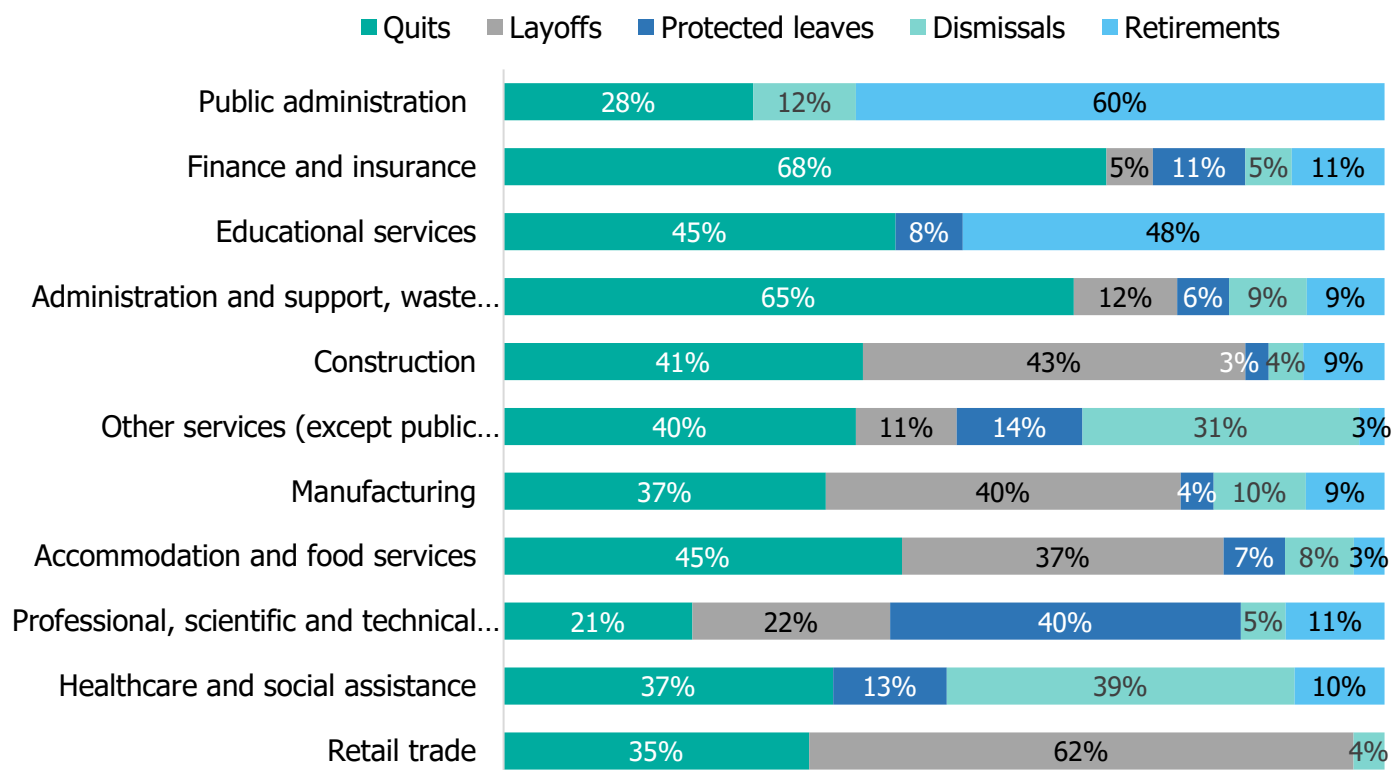
- Regular increases in salary (68%)
- Recognition for service and/or outstanding work (59%)
- Training opportunities (46%)
- Job flexibility (i.e., work from home arrangements, flex time, job sharing) (42%)
- Employee “perks” (38%)
- Clear promotional paths or advancement opportunities (23%)
- Job rotation opportunities (17%)
- Regular increases in benefits (16%)

2021 SEPARATIONS

There were 4,684 separations over the last 12 months across 272 local employers who completed the survey, compared to the previous year where there were 2,657 separations across 176 local employers. Industries that experienced the largest number of separations include Arts, entertainment and recreation (36%), Healthcare and social assistance (15%), Retail trade (15%), and Public administration (12%).

Separations were comprised of quits (32%), layoffs (28%), paid/unpaid protected leaves (20%), dismissals (12%), and retirements (8%). In comparison to last year, there was an increase in the percentage of quits (25% last year), retirements (4%) and dismissals (4%) and a significant decrease in the number of layoffs (64%). Other factors that resulted in separations which were prominent within the healthcare industry include COVID-19 workplace vaccination mandates.

Figure 8: Industry categorization of separation types



IMPACT OF COVID-19

The impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic were still prominent within the local community, as 44% of businesses with employees and 50% of sole proprietors indicated that they had not resumed pre-COVID levels of operation. As a result of the pandemic, local businesses indicated that they experienced or struggled with COVID-19 workplace restrictions (61%), product/supply shortages (47%), and a decrease in operation capacity (42%). Primary challenges faced by sole proprietors include a decrease in consumer demand (50%), COVID-19 workplace restrictions (50%), and product/supply shortages (43%). Additional challenges can be seen in Figure 9.

Additional factors echoed by employers include staff burnout, volatile fluctuations in demand, expansion postponements and project delays, concerns surrounding employee wellness, and the border closure.

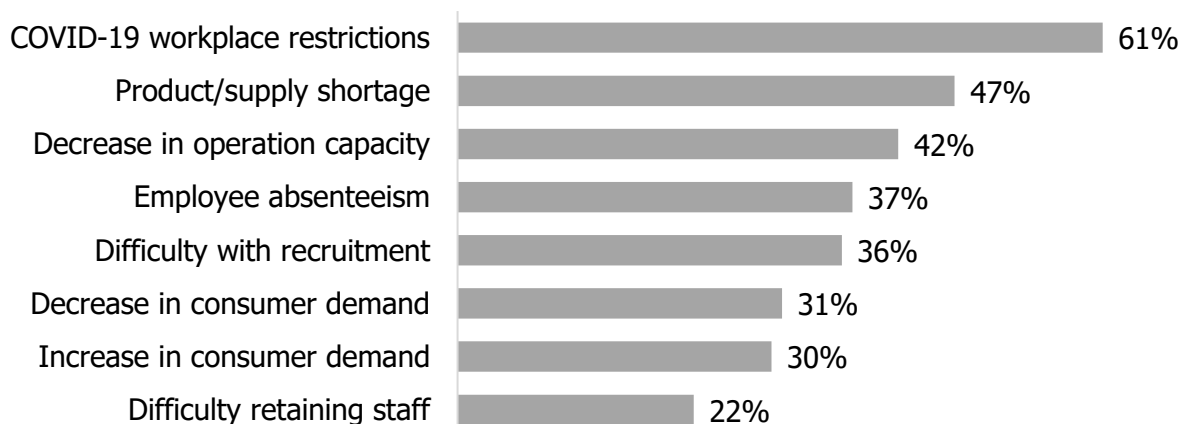
Industries with the most businesses that had not resumed pre-COVID levels of operation include:

- Management of companies & enterprises (100%)
- Real estate and rental and leasing (83%)
- Arts, entertainment and recreation (67%)
- Transportation and warehousing (67%)
- Healthcare and social assistance (64%)

Industries with the most businesses that resumed pre-COVID levels of operation include:

- Public administration (100%)
- Utilities (100%)
- Accommodation and food services (89%)
- Finance and insurance (85%)
- Wholesale trade (75%)

Figure 9: Challenges experienced by local employers as a result of the pandemic





ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK

At the end of the survey, participants are invited to share any additional insights into current and future trends in their industry.

Trends common across two or more industries:

- In general, diversifying the types of businesses in the community is essential for job growth and creation.
- Businesses across multiple industries reiterated the challenges they are facing in recruitment and retention. Many indicated that attracting and retaining youth is essential for growth.
- Skills gaps and work ethic remain key barriers when hiring new staff, and recent graduates in particular.
- Supports and resources are needed locally to support low-income and homeless populations locally.
- COVID-19 public health restrictions were a key barrier for most organizations as business operations, future growth and development remains restricted due to high levels of uncertainty.
- Many businesses have seen a surge in operating costs (wages, supplies, utilities, etc.) that is expected to negatively impact small businesses in particular.
- An increase in oil prices and the effect of carbon taxes is expected to drastically impact import costs.

Industry-specific trends:

- Skilled trades: access to skilled labour is a challenge as continuous waves of retirements are expected within these occupations.
- Social and community services: more funding is needed in order to support a robust workforce.
- Accommodation and food services: businesses are experiencing a shift in their traditional business model as many services are moving online, including food order and delivery, lodging, and rental services.
- Manufacturing: there remains a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the future of Enbridge's Line 5 for the local businesses that rely on it.



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We invite community feedback on all SLWDB publications:
[Provide feedback on the 2022 EmployerOne Survey Results](#)