Boone County Labor Skills Assessment Survey

Report Prepared by

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Executive Summary

REDI contracted with the Docking Institute of Public Affairs to conduct a survey of Boone County employers with 20 or more employees to ascertain the quality of the existing labor force, prevailing wage levels among certain occupational categories, and residential location of Boone County employees. The survey instrument was a self-administered questionnaire mailed in three waves to employers between November 2000 and January 2001.

The primary objectives of the survey were to:

ö   Ascertain the required skill level for organizations/businesses in Boone County.

ö   Determine the need for improvement in basic skills, thinking skills, personal quality skills, and technical skills of the Boone County work force.

ö   Ascertain the skill levels of new employees today relative to new employees five years ago and the ability to hire skilled employees today compared with this ability two to three years ago.

ö   Determine the need for training on basic skills, thinking skills, personal quality skills, technical skills, and computer skills in the Boone County work force.

ö   Determine the importance of the public education system in Boone County for local business investment and expansion, and ascertain the strength of the public school system for the business environment of the area.

ö   Estimate prevailing wage levels associated with common occupational categories.

ö   Map Boone County employees by place of residence.

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

ö   About 58% of the employers describe the required skill level in their business/organization as average, while 37% describe required skill level as high.

ö   About 48% indicate that the necessary entry level skills in their business/organization have increased slightly over the past five years, and about 19% indicate that they have increased significantly.

ö   Employers generally rated basic skills to be the most solid of all skill areas. Employers see a greater need for improving thinking skills, personal quality skills, and to a lesser extent, technical skills.

Ö The skill levels of new employees today are about the same as the skill levels of new employees five years ago for the following skill areas: personal qualities skills, thinking skills, and basic skills. The technical skills level of new employees today exceeds that of new employees five years ago.

Ö Employers report that their new hires are generally meeting the needs of the organization in the occupational categories of skilled trades, technical, sales, professional managerial, and clerical, with the strongest being the professional and managerial categories. General labor is the one category that stands out among the respondents as weakest in terms of new hires having skills that meet organizational needs.

Ö The ease in hiring full time skilled employees has declined over the previous two to three years.

Ö The ease in hiring full time unskilled employees has also declined over the previous two to three years but less so than the ease in hiring full time skilled employees.

Ö Employers tend to see a need for more training in all facets of thinking skills and personal quality skills. In the area of basic skills, employers regard listening and oral communications skills most in need of improvement, and in the area of technical skills, software competency, technical language, business/management, and governmental regulation compliance are regarded as those skills specific skill areas as most in need of training.

Ö Similar percentages of respondents regard the workforce in Boone County as a strength (40%) and a weakness (41%) of the area's overall business climate.

Ö A strong majority considers the public education system to be important for decisions to invest and expand locally.

Ö A strong majority considers the area's public education system as a strength of Boone County's business environment.

Ö In terms of average hourly wages, engineers ($22.88), business/management professionals ($21.30), and "other professional" ($20.58) command the highest compensation. The lowest hourly wages tend to be found among uskilled labor ($8.77), customer service staff ($9.76), and clerical ($10.21) positions.

Ö A strong majority of employers offer vacation, health care coverage, and retirement benefits for all occupational categories represented in their organization. The percentage of each occupational category that receives any one of these benefits ranges from a low of 72% to a high of 99%.

Introduction

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

Methods

Findings of this study are based on a self-administered, three-wave mail survey of the 310 employers in Boone County who employed at least 20 individuals during the first quarter of 2000. The employer list was acquired from the Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations and was the most current listing of employers available. The first copy of the survey was mailed with a cover letter on November 6, 2000. It was signed by REDI's President, Victoria Pratt. A follow-up letter and survey were mailed on November 29, 2000, to those who had not yet responded to the original mailing. A third, and final, follow-up letter and survey were mailed on December 19, 2000. A total of 125 completed questionnaires were returned by January 15, 2001, the end of the data collection period. This resulted in a response rate of 40%.

Survey Instrument

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

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[1] A copy of the questionnaire appears in the Appendix.

Type of Employees and Characteristics of Organization

Table 1 shows summary statistics for the number of full and part time employees. The number of full time employees ranges from a low of zero to a high of 4290, while the median number of full time employees is 29. Part time employees range in number from zero to 807, with a median of four. The minimum number of total employees ranges from two to 5097, with a median of 40.

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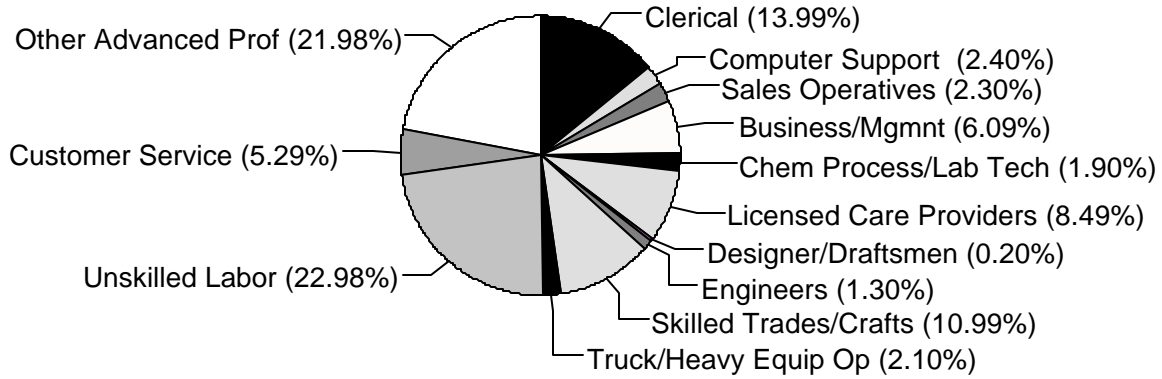and Total Number of Employees**

	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Full Time	29	0	4290
Part Time	4	0	807
Total	40	2*	5097

*It is important to note that while only organizations with 20 or more employees were sampled, about 20% of the respondents indicated that they currently have fewer than 20 employees. It is possible that fluidity in production processes largely accounts for the 20% who currently have fewer than 20 employees, even though the Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' records for the first quarter of 2000 show at least 20 employees among all organizations surveyed.

Those respondents with part time employees were asked to indicate "on average, how many hours a week do your part time employees work?" The average number of hours ranges from one to a maximum of 40. The mean (average) number of hours worked among part timers is 20.

Respondents were asked to provide the total number of employees in the organization employed in 13 different of occupational categories. Figure 1 shows the percentage of employees by occupational category. As is common in most areas, unskilled labor, clerical and skilled labor constitute relatively large percentages of the total employees among the 13 occupational categories at about 23%, 14%, and 11%, respectively. The Boone County workforce in organizations of 20 or more employees is also clearly characterized by a relatively high percentage of advanced professionals, not specifically mentioned in the list of occupational categories. About 22% of the employees across all organizations surveyed fall in the category "Other Advanced Professionals." It is likely that these professionals are predominately employees of health care institutions in the county, as Boone County is home to a large health care industry, and educational institutions. The University of Missouri, along with many elementary and secondary schools, is located in Boone County. It is likely that education professionals also fall within the "Other Advanced Professionals" category.

Figure 1. **Percentage of Employees by Occupational Category**

Clerical (13.99%)
Computer Support (2.40%)
Sales Operatives (2.30%)
Business/Mgmnt (6.09%)
Chem Process/Lab Tech (1.90%)
Licensed Care Providers (8.49%)
Designer/Draftsmen (0.20%)
Engineers (1.30%)
Skilled Trades/Crafts (10.99%)
Truck/Heavy Equip Op (2.10%)
Unskilled Labor (22.98%)
Customer Service (5.29%)
Other Advanced Prof (21.98%)

Employers were asked, "Is your business a subsidiary of a larger corporation/public organization; or is it a single local organization? About 46% report that their organization is a subsidiary organization. Single organizations represent 55.5% of the sample. Employers were also asked how long their business or organization has been in the Boone County area. The tenure ranges from a low of one year to a high of 174 years. The mean tenure among organizations is about 32 years.

Respondents were also asked to indicate whether their organization is within city limits, within one mile of city limits, or more than one mile from city limits. The vast majority (82%) are within city limits, and equal percentages (about 9%) are within one mile of city limits or more than one mile from city limits.

employees need improvement, and none of my employees need improvement. Figure 4 shows the extent to which employers think their employees need improvement in basic skills including, reading, writing, math, listening, and oral communication. The two areas in need of most improvement are communication and listening, with about 70% of employers indicating that some of their employees need improvement in these two basic skills. Employers are relatively satisfied with reading skills, as about 51% indicate that none of their employees need improvement and only about 3% indicating that most of their employees need improvement.
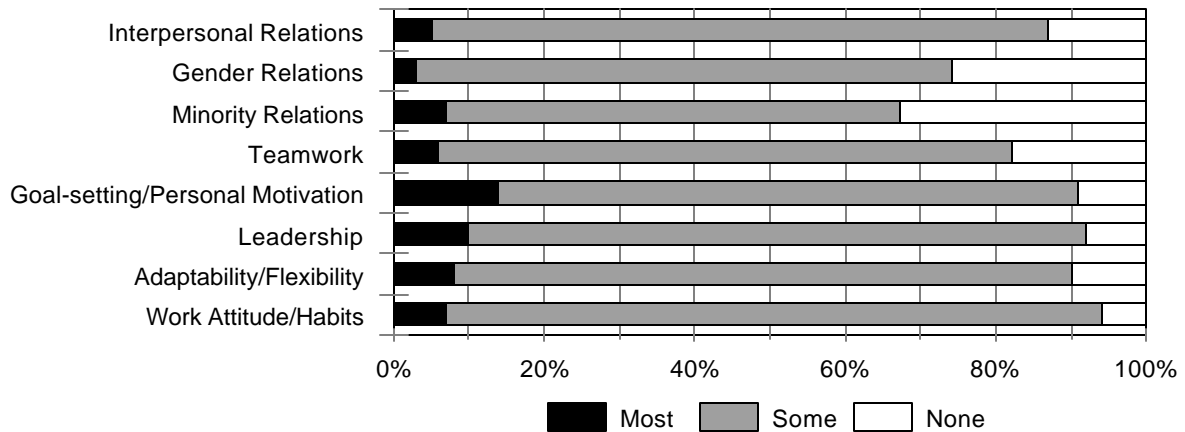
Employers were also asked to indicate the extent to which their employees need improvement in the following thinking skills: creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, comprehension, and willingness to learn. Figure 5 shows that a substantial percentage of employers (about 90%) believe some of their employees need improvement in creative thinking, decision making, and problem solving skills. About 85% think that some of their employees need improvement in comprehension skills, and almost 80% believe that some of their employees could improve their willingness to learn.

Figure 5. Employees in of Need Thinking Skills Improvement
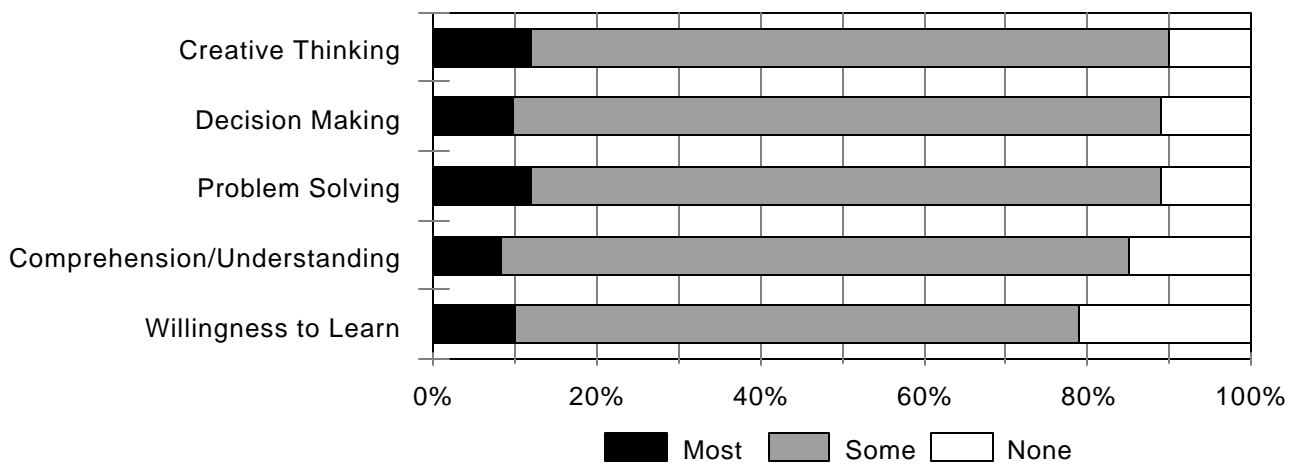

Personal quality skills are important characteristics of employees, and employers were asked to rate employees' need for improvement in this area. Figure 6 finds that a large majority (almost 95%) of the employers feel that some of the employees need improvement in work attitudes and habits. Over 70% feel that some of their employees need improvement in all other personal skill areas, with the exception of minority relations on which about 67% of respondents feel at least some of their employees need improvement.

Figure 6. Employees in Need of Personal Quality Skills Improvement

The final skills area assessed is technical skills. Again, employers were asked to indicate the extent to which their employees need improvement on several technical skills, including typing/key boarding, computer literacy, technical/electrical, business/management, machine operation, mechanical, skilled trades/crafts, sales, and governmental regulation compliance. Figures 7a. and 7b. show results on employees in need of technical skills. The figures show that the technical skill areas of most concern are business management, software competency, technical language and technical/electrical, with over 80% of respondents indicating that at least some of their employees are in need

Figure 7a. Employees in Need of Technical Skills Improvement
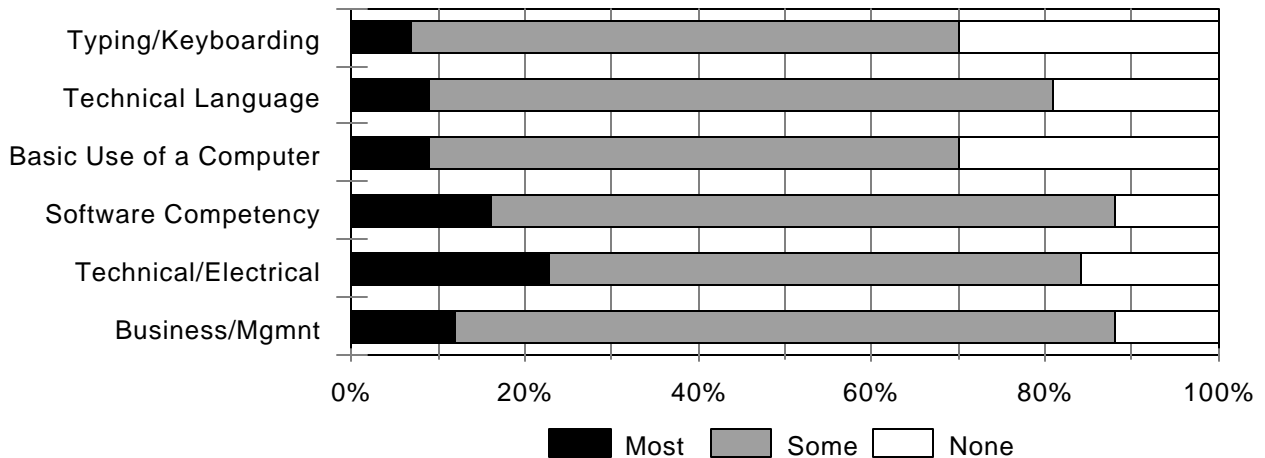
of improvement.

On the four general skill areas mentioned above (basic skills, thinking skills, personal qualities, and technical skills), employers were asked to assess the skill levels of

Figure 7b. Employees in Need of Technical Skills Improvement

Figure 8. New Employees Compared to the New Employees of Five Years Ago
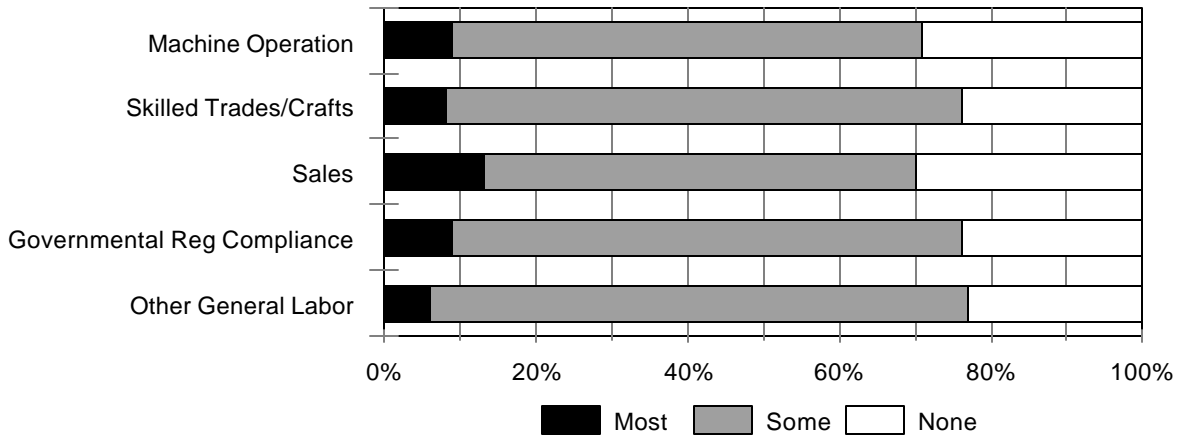
newly hired employees compared to skill levels of newly hired employees five years ago.
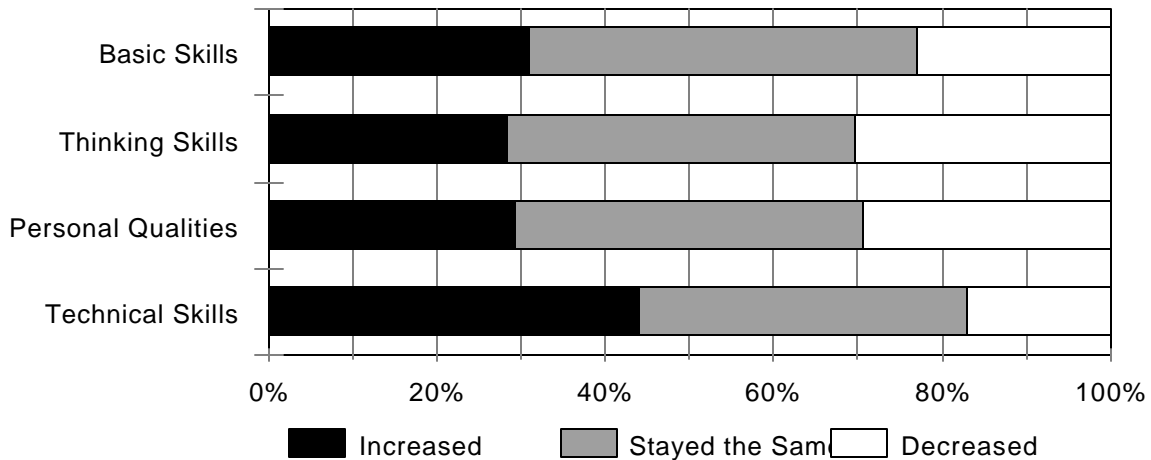

Figure 8 shows that employers tend to favorably rate today's new hires compared to new hires five years ago. The skill in which the most improvement seems to have occurred is technical skills, as about 43% of the employers indicate that technical skills have increased. The percentage of employers that report an increase in basic skills is also greater than the percentage that report a decrease in these skills. A net change in personal qualities skills is not apparent as about 29% report a decrease, and another 29% report an increase in these skills. However, the one skill area in which skill levels of new employees has reportedly decreased somewhat is thinking skills. Approximately 30% indicate that personal qualities skills have decreased, while only about 27% indicate they have increased.

In an effort to further discern employer satisfaction with new hires, respondents were

asked to indicate how well the qualifications of newly hired employees meet the needs of the organization. Figure 9 shows that, in large, satisfaction with new hires is adequate. It is particularly high for professional and managerial positions with over 50% indicating that new hires in these two categories are meeting the needs very well. With the exception of one category, general labor, about 10% or less describe new hires as not being well

Figure 9. New Hires Meet Needs of Organization
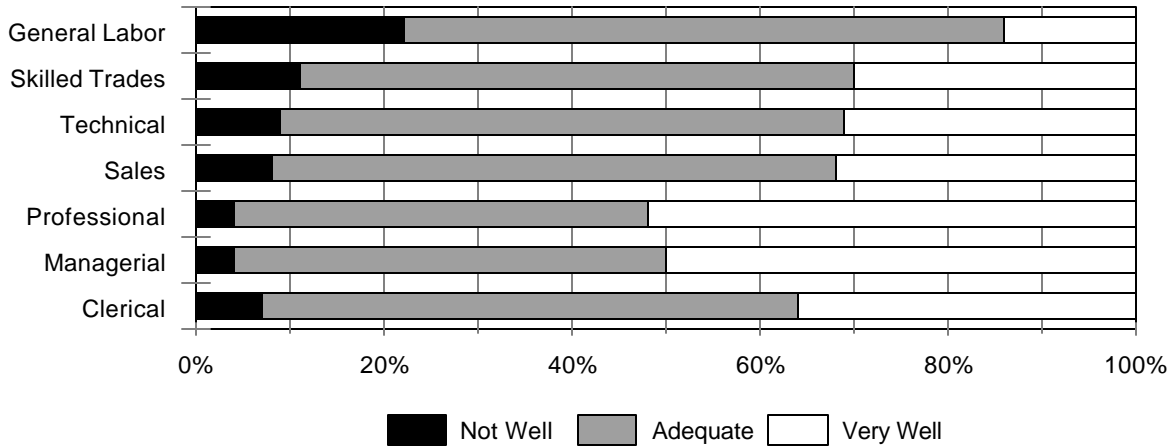
qualified. About 22% indicate that new hires in general labor are not well qualified.

Training and Skill Requirements

A series of questions dealt with the required training and educational standards of the employers. Employers were asked "how difficult is it to hire full time skilled employees today compared to two or three years ago?" The response categories included much more difficult, slightly more difficult, about the same, slightly less difficult, and much less difficult. Figure 10 shows that about half of the respondents (48%) find it is much more difficult to hire full time skilled employees now compared to two or three years ago. About 35% find it slightly more difficult, and 15% believe the ability to hire full time skilled employees is about the same as it was two or three years ago.

Next, the survey asked the employers to rate the potential for finding good skilled employees in Boone County over the next two to three years. About 47% believe the potential will remain about the same (see Figure 11), and nearly the same percentage (48%) anticipate a decline in the potential for finding good skilled employees. Only about 5% anticipate an increase in the potential for finding good skilled employees in the Boone County area over the next two to three years.

Respondents were also asked to rate the difficulty in finding full time *unskilled* employees today compared to

Figure 10. Ease in Hiring Full Time Skilled Employees Compared to Two or Three Years Ago

Much less difficult
.9%

Slightly less diffic
.9%

About the same
14.7%

Much more difficult
48.3%

Slightly more diffic
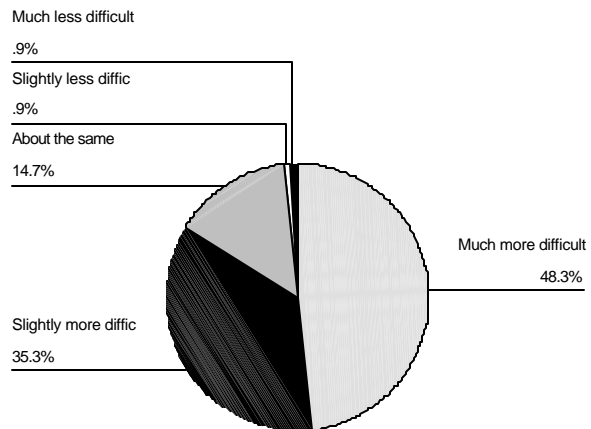35.3%

Figure 11. Potential for Finding Good Skilled Employees in the Boone County Area Next Two to Three Years

Declining
48.3%

Improving
5.2%

Staying the same
46.6%
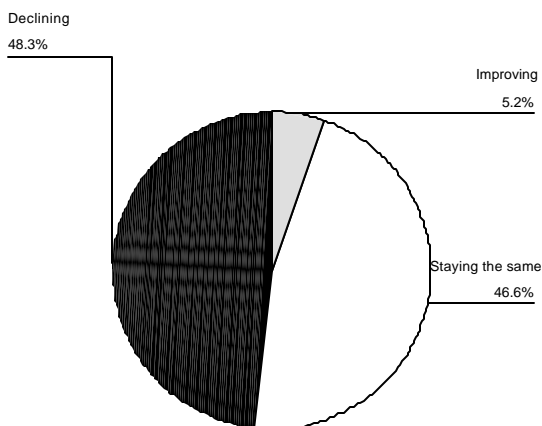
Figure 12. Ease in Hiring Unskilled Full Time Employees Compared to Two or Three Years Ago

Much less difficult
.9%

Slightly less diffic
1.8%

About the same
27.3%

Much more difficult
40.9%

Slightly more diffic
29.1%
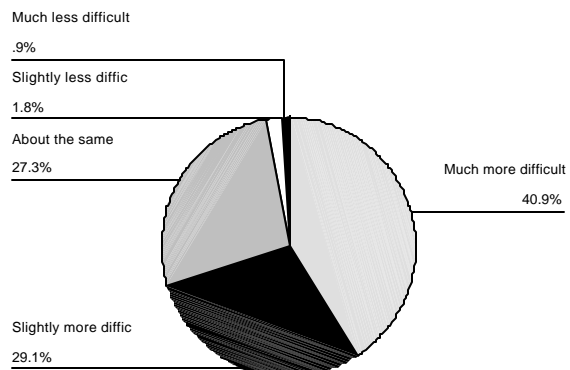
two to three years ago. Figure 12 shows that about 41% report that it is much more difficult to hire unskilled full time employees compared to two or three years ago, while 29% feel that it is slightly more difficult. About 27% believe the ability to hire is about the same.

Figure 13 shows that when asked to rate the potential to find good unskilled employees in the Boone County area over the next two to three years, the same percentage of respondents (48%) believe that it will remain the same and that it will become more difficult to hire good unskilled employees in the next two to three years. Very few (about 4%) anticipate that the potential to find such employees will improve over that time period.

**Figure 13**. **Potential for Finding Good Unskilled Employees in the Boone County Area Next Two to Three Years**

Declining 48.1%

Improving 3.8%

Staying the same 48.1%
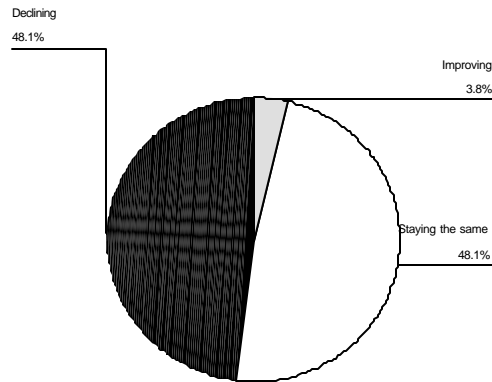
To identify areas in which training will be needed over the next two to three years to help organizations adapt to technological change, employers were asked whether they anticipate that their employees will need additional training in particular skills. The skills

Figure 14. Employees Will Need More Basic Skills Training
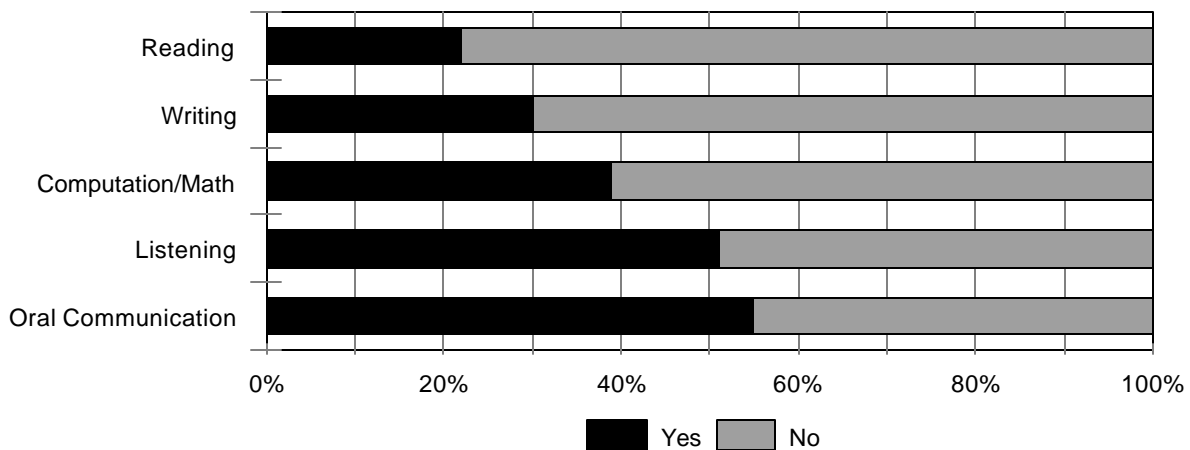
correspond to those mentioned earlier under the categories of basic skills, thinking skills, personal qualities skills, and technical skills.

Figure 14 shows results for basic skills. Communication and listening are the two basic skills in which employers anticipate the greatest need for improvement over the next two to three years to help the organization adapt to technological change. Over 50% of employers see a need for additional training in these two skills. Almost 40% also anticipate a need for additional training in math skills.

Figure 15 shows employers' anticipated need for additional employee training in

Figure 15. Employees Will Need More Thinking Skills Training

Yes ■ No ▨
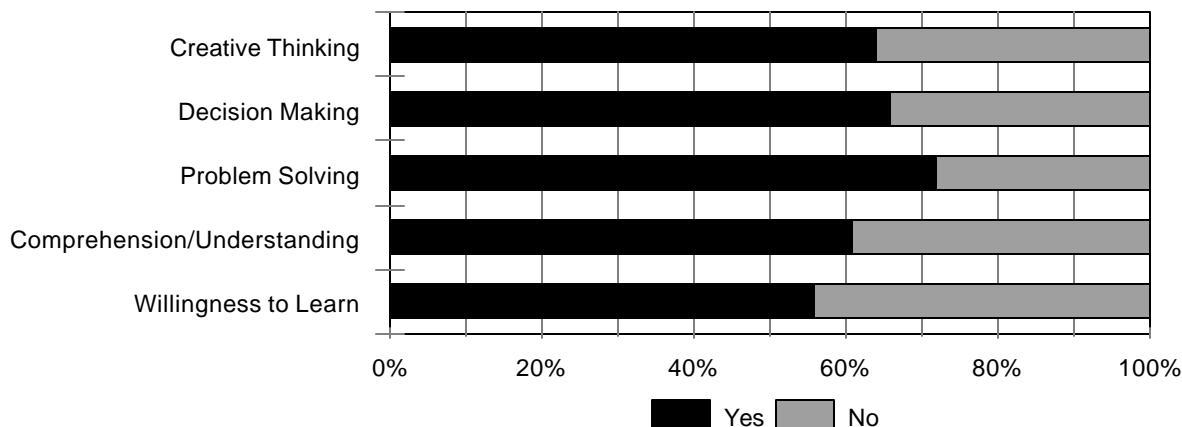
Figure 16. Employees Will Need More Personal Quality Skills Training

Yes ■ No ▨
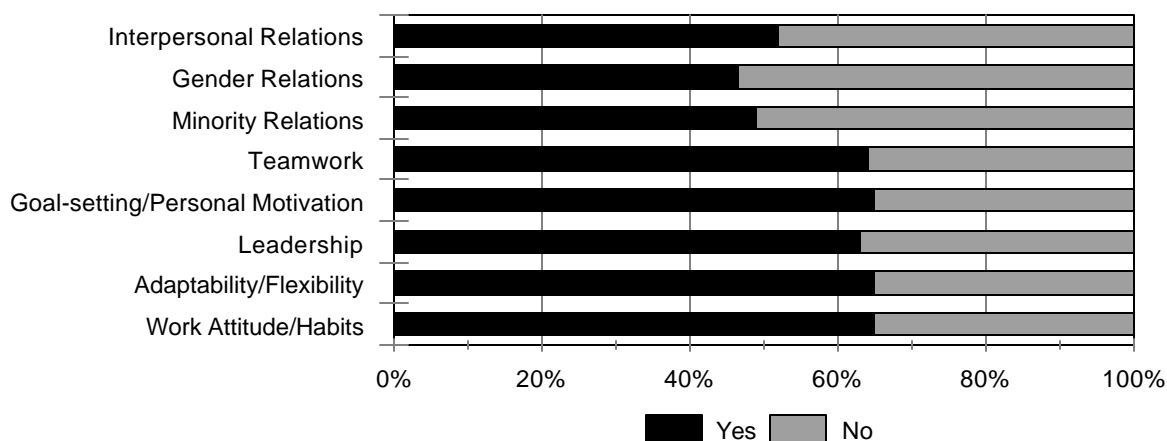
thinking skills to help the organization adapt to any technological changes. Employers who anticipate a need for additional training over the next two to three years outnumber those employers who do not anticipate a need for additional training on every thinking skill listed. There is a particular concern for training in problem solving skills, as about 73% indicate the need for additional training.

Turning to findings in Figure 16, those personal quality skills in which the over 60% of employers anticipate a need for training include: work attitudes/habits, adaptability/flexibility, leadership, personal motivation, teamwork, and interpersonal relations.

The final skills area assessed is technical skills in Figure 17a. and 17b. As one might expect in the computer age, a substantial percentage of employers (about 74%) anticipate a need for additional training in software competency to help the organization adapt to technological changes. Other areas of technical expertise in which a majority of

Figure 17a. Employees Will Need More Technical Skills Training
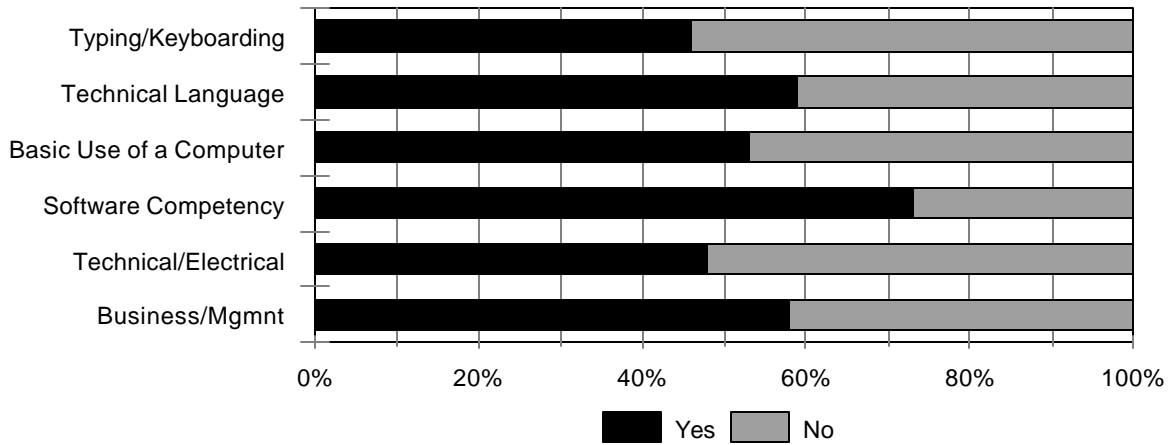
Figure 17b. Employees Will Need More Technical Skills Training
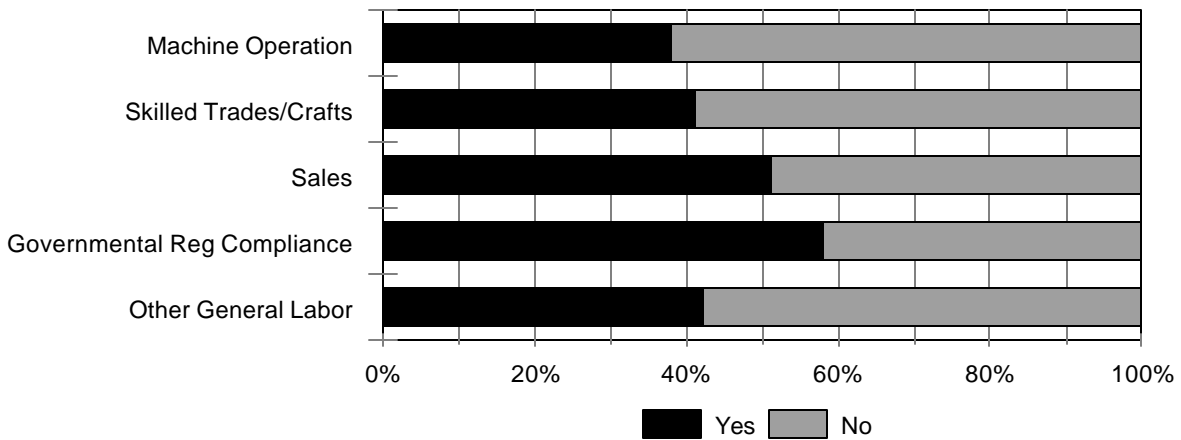
employers anticipate a need for additional training include: government regulation compliance, sales, basic use of a computer, and technical (technicians)/electrical. Turning to specific training needs, employers were asked the extent to which training for various types of software packages and operating systems needs to be implemented in their organization. Results for each item reported in Figure 18 pertain to only those respondents whose organization uses the respective type of software or operating system. The area in which employers perceive the greatest organizational need for training is presentations software, as about 77% of those that use presentations software packages in their organizations indicated that at least some training is needed in order to fully use the software's capability. With the exception of CAM (computer aided manufacturing software) over 50% of all respondents feel that at least some training would be necessary among their employees to use the software's full capability on software and operating

Figure 18. Need for Computer Training

| | Need Much Training | Need Some Training | Need No Training |
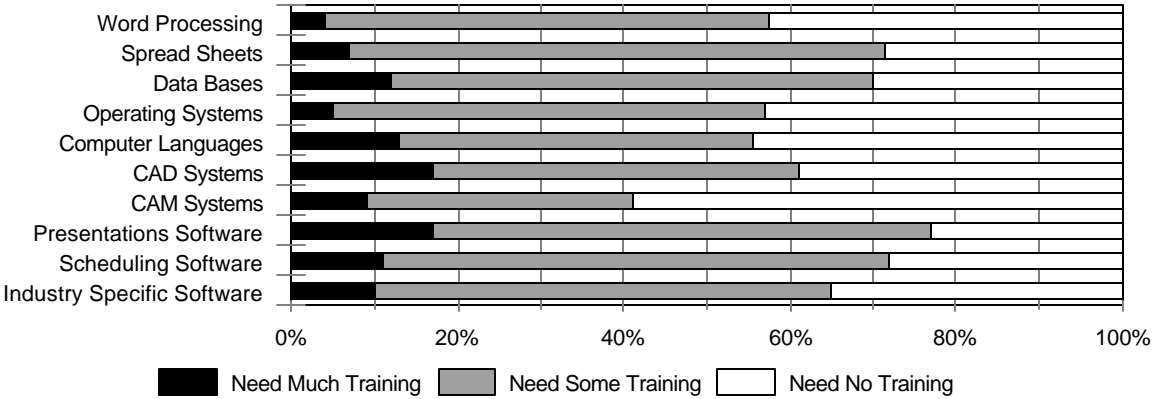
system items in the list of Figure 18. Training is least necessary on CAM software, where only 42% who use this type of software indicated that some training is needed in their organization. The other applications in which half or more of the employers perceive a need for some employee training include spreadsheets (61%), databases (59%), presentations software (57%), scheduling software (54%), and operating systems (54%).

On the issue of labor force skills, respondents were asked whether they would rate the Boone County area's labor force as a strength or weakness of its business environment. Figure 19 shows that a combined percentage of 40% felt it to be somewhat of a strength or very much a strength. About the same percentage (40.9%) rated the

Boone County area's labor force as somewhat of a weakness or very much a weakness, while about 20% responded that the area's labor force is neither a strength nor a weakness of its business environment.

Figure 19. Area's Labor Force as a Strength of Boone County's Business Environment

Very much strength 10.0%

Very much weakness 13.6%

Somewhat strength 30.0%

Somewhat weakness 27.3%

Neither(neutral) 19.1%
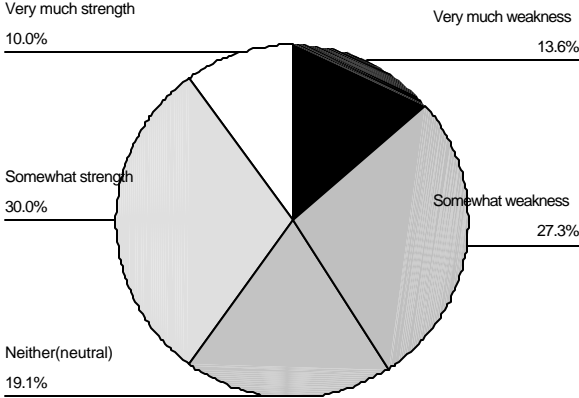
Public Education and the Business Environment

The public education system is a crucial provider of skills that businesses and organizations seek in a workforce. To determine the extent to which Boone County employers rely on public education to provide important background skills for their own business/organization, the survey asked employers to assess the importance of the public education system in a community to their firm's decision to expand or invest in the area. Figure 20 shows that most employers consider the quality of the public education system to be an important factor in local expansion and investment decisions. Only about 25% indicated that the community's public education system is unimportant in such decisions.

As a follow-up, employers were asked, "Would you rate public education as a strength or weakness of the Boone County area's business environment?" Figure 21 shows that a combined percentage of about 73% consider the local public education system to be somewhat of a strength or very much a strength of the local business environment. A combined total only slightly greater than 10% consider the public education system to be somewhat of a weakness or very much a weakness. Clearly, respondents hold a very favorable view of the public education that exists in Boone County.

Figure 20. Importance of Public Education for Organization Expansion and Investment

Very Important
46.2%

Unimportant
24.5%

Somewhat Important
29.2%
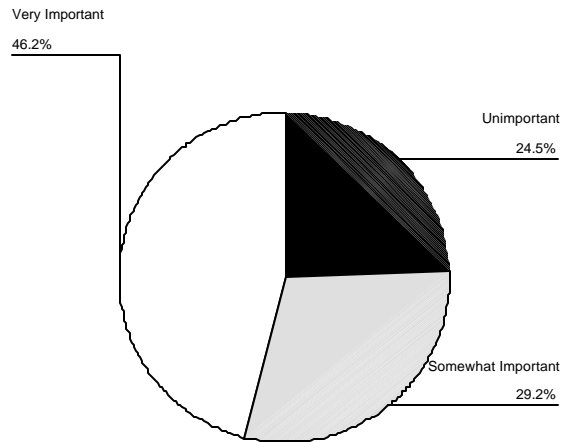
Figure 21. Public Education in Boone County as a Strength of the Local Business Environment

Very much strength
41.6%

Very much weakness
2.7%

Somewhat weakness
8.8%

Neither(neutral)
15.9%

Somewhat strength
31.0%
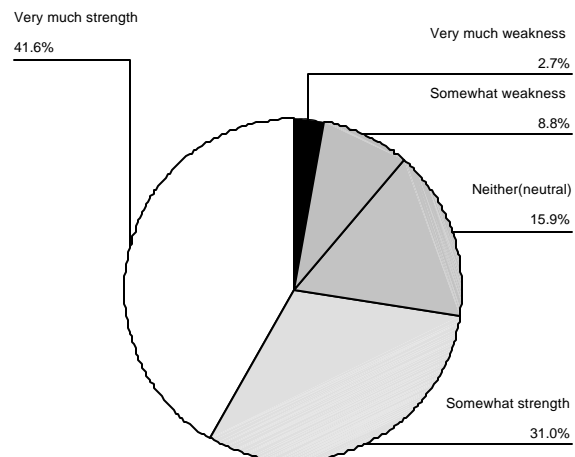
Wage and Benefit Levels

Employers were asked to provide wage and benefit information for the various occupational categories found in Table 2. In terms of average hourly wages, engineers ($22.88), business/management professionals ($21.30), and "other professional" ($20.58) command the highest compensation. The lowest hourly wages tend to be found among uskilled labor ($8.77), customer service staff ($9.76), and clerical ($10.21) positions. The percentage of employers providing vacation benefits across the occupational categories ranges from 86% for truck drivers and heavy equipment operators to 99% for business/management professionals. The percentage providing health care coverage is also high, ranging from 81% for licensed care providers to 97% for sales operatives. Finally, the percentage of employers providing retirement benefits across the occupational categories ranges from 72% for customer service positions to 93% for truck drivers and heavy equipment operators.

Table 2. Wage and Benefit Levels by Occupational Category

Position	Average Hourly Wage ($/hour)	Range of Hourly Wage Rate ($/hour)	Vacation Benefits (%)	Health Care Coverage (%)	Retirement Benefits (%)
Clerical	$10.21	$6.00 – $22.50	96%	94%	88%
Computer Support Staff	$13.21	$6.00 – $25.00	95%	92%	85%
Sales Operatives	$17.56	$7.22 – $60.00	98%	97%	87%
Business/Management	$21.30	$6.25 – $44.46	99%	94%	89%
Chemical Process/Lab Technicians	$13.10	$8.00 – $21.64	94%	94%	82%
Licensed Care Providers	$14.13	$8.00 – $20.00	94%	81%	81%
Designer/Draftsmen	$16.26	$9.50 – $30.00	87%	93%	80%
Engineers	$22.88	$10.00 – $37.50	95%	95%	85%
Skilled Trades/Crafts	$14.80	$6.68 – $29.49	89%	87%	91%
Truck Drivers and Heavy Equipment Operators	$12.77	$8.00 – $25.00	86%	86%	93%
Unskilled Labor	$8.77	$5.50 – $19.00	88%	88%	78%
Customer Service Staff	$9.76	$5.75 – $20.20	93%	90%	72%
Other Advanced Professionals	$20.58	$9.00 – $54.33	91%	94%	84%

Residential Location of Boone County Employees

Respondents were asked to provide a list of the residential zip codes represented among their employees and the number of employees residing in each particular zip code. From this data, a map identifying the residential location of Boone County employees was constructed. Map 1 shows the residential location of Boone County employees. The zip codes containing the lowest percentage of Boone County employees (0% to 1.0%) are represented in the lightest shade of red. These zip codes tend to be the more remote zip codes in the study area in proximity to Columbia. As one might expect, those zip codes with the highest percentage (17.1% to 26.0%) of Boone County employees cluster around Columbia. The three zip codes with the highest percentage of employees are the Columbia zip codes of 65201 (17.5%), 65202 (25.5%), and 65203 (26.1%). It is also interesting to note that the percentage of Boone County employees residing in any single zip code jumps markedly from the 1.1% – 4.0% category to the 17.1% – 26% category. No zip code contains 4.1% to 17.0%.

Appendix

Survey Instrument for Employers Survey

Please fill in the blank or circle the appropriate response.

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

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

Q3.   If you have *Part Time* employees, on average, how many hours a week do your part time employees work?
            Average Hours a week for Part Time employees _____
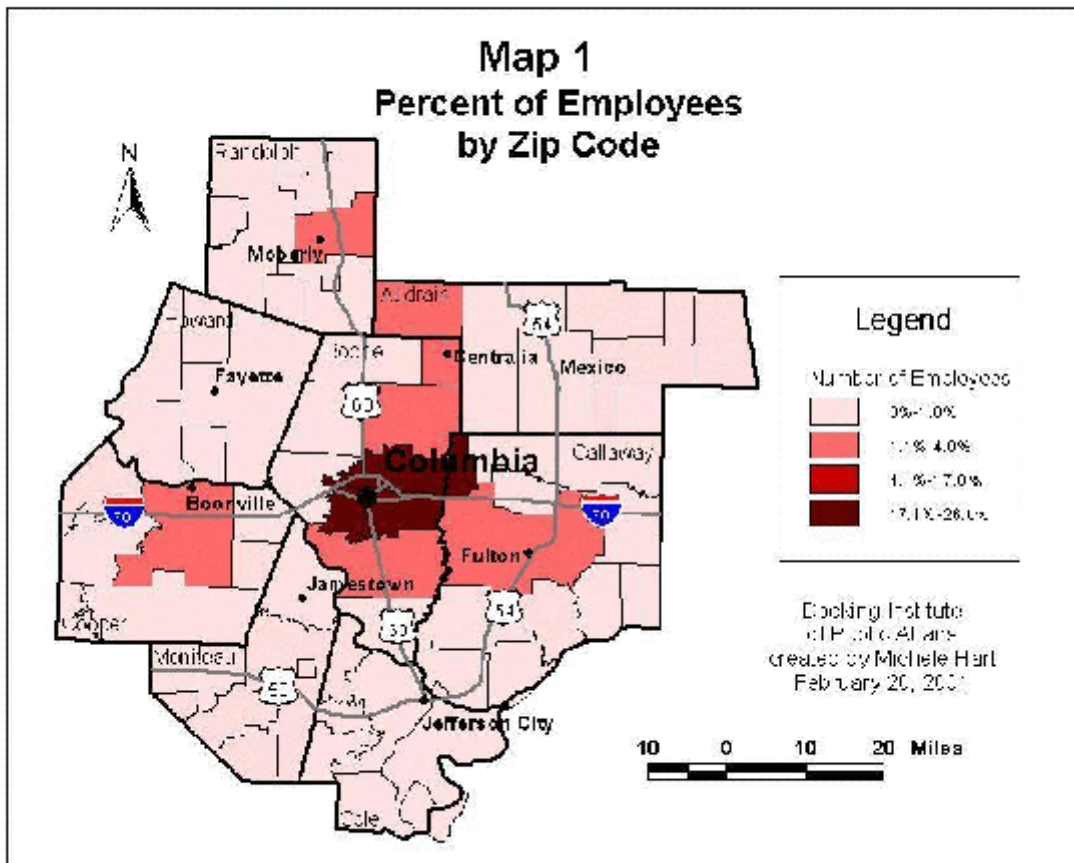
Q4. About how many employees of each type does your organization employ? If your business employs no workers in a particular category, pleas

e indicate so by writing 0.

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

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

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

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

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

Basic Skills

_____   Reading
_____   Writing
_____   Computation/Math
_____   Listening
_____   Oral Communication

Thinking Skills

_____   Creative Thinking
_____   Decision Making
_____   Problem Solving
_____   Comprehension/Understanding
_____   Willingness to Learn

Personal Qualities

_____   Interpersonal Relations
_____   Gender Relations
_____   Minority Relations
_____   Teamwork
_____   Goal-setting/Personal Motivation
_____   Leadership
_____   Adaptability/Flexibility
_____   Work Attitude/Habits

Technical Skills

_____   Typing/Key Boarding
_____   Technical Language
_____   Basic Use of a Computer
_____   Software Competency
_____   Technical/Electrical
_____   Business/Management
_____   Machine Operation
_____   Skilled Trades/Crafts
_____   Sales
_____   Governmental Regulation Compliance
_____   Other General Labor

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

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

Q8.   What are your minimum educational and training standards for most jobs in your business?
        (Please circle the number that corresponds to your answer)

        1.   Less than high school degree
        2.   High school degree
        3.   Some technical training
        4.   Some Technical Training
        5.   Technical Training Certification
        6.   Some college
        7.   College degree

Q9.   How do the skill levels of newly hired employees today compare to the skill levels of newly hired employees
        five years ago? (Please circle the number that corresponds to your answer)

		Increased	Stayed the Same	Decreased	Don't Know
Ö	Basic Skills.............	1	2	3	9
Ö	Thinking Skills.......	1	2	3	9
Ö	Personal Qualities...	1	2	3	9
Ö	Technical Skills......	1	2	3	9

Q10.   For each of the following types of workers, how well do the qualifications of newly hired employees meet the
        needs of your business? (Circle your answer. Leave blank if your business does not employ that type of
        worker.)

	Not Well	Adequate	Very Well	Don't Know/ Not Applicable
a. Clerical.............	1	2	3	9
b. Managerial.......	1	2	3	9
c. Professional......	1	2	3	9
c. Sales.................	1	2	3	9
d. Technical..........	1	2	3	9
e. Skilled Trades...	1	2	3	9
f. General Labor...	1	2	3	9

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

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

Q12.   How would you rate your potential for finding good *skilled* employees in the Boone County area over the next
        two to three years? (Please circle the number that corresponds to your answer)

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

Q13.   How difficult is it to hire *full-time unskilled* employees today compared to two or three years ago? (Please circle the number that corresponds to your answer)

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

Q14.   How would you rate the potential for finding good *unskilled* employees in the Boone County area over the next two to three years?
(Please circle the number that corresponds to your answer)

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

Q15.   What have been the three most successful recruitment practices your organization has used to attract employees in an economy with such full employment?

    1. _____
    2. _____
    3. _____

Q16.   For the following skills, please indicate whether you anticipate that (1) your employees will need additional training to help your organization adapt to any technological changes in the next two to three years or (2) your employees will not need more training. Please mark your answer in the blank beside each skill.

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

Basic Skills
      _____   Reading
      _____   Writing
      _____   Computation/Math
      _____   Listening
      _____   Oral Communication

Thinking Skills
      _____   Creative Thinking
      _____   Decision Making
      _____   Problem Solving
      _____   Comprehension/Understanding
      _____   Willingness to Learn

Personal Qualities
      _____   Interpersonal Relations
      _____   Gender Relations
      _____   Minority Relations
      _____   Teamwork
      _____   Goal-setting/Personal Motivation
      _____   Leadership
      _____   Adaptability/Flexibility
      _____   Work Attitude/Habits

Technical Skills

_____ Typing/Key Boarding
_____ Technical Language
_____ Basic Use of a Computer
_____ Software Competency
_____ Technical/Electrical
_____ Business/Management
_____ Machine Operation
_____ Skilled Trades/Crafts
_____ Sales
_____ Governmental Regulation Compliance
_____ Other General Labor

Q17.   For the following types of computer software, please indicate whether your business...

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

_____a. Word Processing (WordPerfect, MS Word, WordStar, etc.)
_____b. Spread Sheets (Lotus, Quattro, Excel, etc.)
_____c. Data Bases (DBase, PCFile, Paradox, etc.)
_____d. Operating Systems (DOS, Windows, Unix, etc.)
_____e. Computer Languages (Pascal, C, etc.)
_____f. CAD systems, Geographic Information Systems and/or other sophisticated Management Information Packages
_____g. CAM (Computer Aided Manufacturing) systems
_____h. Presentations Software (PowerPoint, Corel Presentations, etc.)
_____i. Scheduling Software (Lotus Organizer, Microsoft Outlook, etc.)
_____j. Industry specific software

Q18.   Overall, would you rate the Boone County area's labor force as a strength or weakness of its business environment?   (Please circle the number that corresponds to your answer)

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

Q19.   Is your business a subsidiary of a larger corporation/ public organization; or is it a single local organization? (Please circle the number that corresponds to your answer)

1. Subsidiary organization
2. Single organization

Q20.   About how many years has your business or company been in the Boone County area (if it is less than 2 years, please indicate if it has been in existence about 1/2 year, 1 year, or 1 and 1/2 years)?
        Number of years_____

Q21. Please write in the average hourly wage scale (e.g. $7.75) for the following positions in your organization. Then, circle "yes" or "no" to indicate whether the position is accompanied by the particular benefits mentioned. If your organization employs no workers in a particular position, please indicate so by writing 0 in the average wage category.

Position	Average Hourly Wage	Vacation Benefits *(circle one)*	Health Care Coverage *(circle one)*	Retirement Benefits *(circle one)*
Clerical	$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Computer Support Staff	$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Sales Operatives	$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Business/Management	$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Chemical Process/Lab Technicians	$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Licensed Care Providers	$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Designer/Draftsmen	$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Engineers	$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Skilled Trades/Crafts	$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Truck Drivers and Heavy Equipment Operators	$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Unskilled Labor	$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Customer Service Staff	$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Other Advanced Professionals	$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No

Q22.   How important is public education in a community to your firm's decision to expand or invest in the area?
        (Please circle the number that corresponds to your answer)

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

Q23.   Would you rate public education as a strength or weakness of the Boone County area's business environment?
        (Please circle the number that corresponds to your answer)

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

Q24.   Zip code of your business? _____

Q25.   Is your business located within the city limits of a town, within one mile of city limits of a town, or more than one mile from the city limits of a town?
        (Please circle the number that corresponds to your answer)

                1. Within city limits
                2. Within one-mile of city limits
                3. More than one-mile from city limits

Q26. Finally, we are attempting to construct maps showing where Boone County employees live. In the table below, please indicate what zip codes of employee residence are represented among your organization's employees. So, for each zip code represented among your employees, write the zip code in the column on the left, and then write the number of employees from that zip code in the next column to the right (notice there are two columns in this table for zip codes and two corresponding columns for telling us the number of employees from each zip code). Your human resources department should be able to provide you with a list of employees' zip codes and the number of employees from each zip code.

EXAMPLE

Zip Code	Number of Employees from the Zip Code	Zip Code	Number of Employees from the Zip Code
65205	39	65110	4

Your Organization

Zip Code	Number of Employees from the Zip Code	Zip Code	Number of Employees from the Zip Code

Thank you from the Docking Institute and Regional Economic Development Incorporated.

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