



WORKFORCE & TRAINING SURVEY 2020

Mission Statement

The Nova Scotia Boatbuilders Association was formed in 1998 to
*“Create and foster an environment that promotes profitable and
sustained export-oriented growth for its members.”*

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Summary of Results:

The boatbuilding and boat repair and refit industry in Nova Scotia primarily consists of small companies with about 10 full-time employees and no part-time employees, although there is significant variation in company size. Most companies reported that they have about the number of employees they expected, although some have fewer workers than expected due to COVID-19 or issues with accessing qualified and reliable workers.

Companies are more likely to have a certified Boat Builder than a certified Marine Service Technician or an apprentice in either trade. Even for certified Boat Builders, the numbers are relatively small with a single certified Boat Builder being the most common for companies. There appears to be room to increase the number of certified people in the industry as well as the number of apprentices. Certification and apprenticeship are currently being explored through an apprenticeship program review the NSBA is doing with the NS Apprenticeship Agency.

The biggest workforce challenge which was shared by the majority of respondents was not being able to find people with the needed skills. After that, the biggest issues related to employee reliability and productivity. Some government support programs are believed to be negatively impacting companies' ability to find and keep workers.

Overall, the data about workforce challenges reflect what we've been hearing from our industry in recent years: there are issues with not only the quantity of workers, but the quality. Through its work to expand the workforce available to our industry, the NSBA hopes to give employers more choice about who they hire.

On a more positive note, most respondents felt their business has people with the right skills to address these workforce challenges. The NSBA may be able to do more to help those companies who don't have adequate internal capacity to address workforce issues through strategies such as sharing tools and resources and connecting companies with third-party supports such as government services.

Wages range from \$14-23/hour for newly hired, shop floor workers and \$17-30/hour for skilled and experienced shop floor workers. Office support wages ranged from \$16-24/hour. Most companies also offer group health and dental benefits to employees, although the survey did not ask how benefit premiums were paid. A smaller number of companies offer other benefits including paid sick leave, matched retirement/pension plans, a bonus system, paying all holidays regardless of whether they are statutory, and profit sharing.

When asked how many and what type of workers companies would hire in the next twelve months if they could find people with the right skills, the two biggest areas of need were composites fabricators / FRP laminators and welders. Diesel/marine mechanics were also in

significant demand. In total, respondents identified a need for at least 70 workers in specific jobs. This indicates a significant labour market challenge for our industry.

In terms of future certification, a number of companies expressed interest in Boat Builder and Marine Service Technician certification for employees, either as Trade Qualifier candidates or through apprenticeship pathways. The survey did not ask how many people each company might have interested in certification, only which companies might have people for certification.

Most companies are willing and able to hire workers who are not current Canadian citizens or permanent residents; those who said they are “willing but would need supports” listed help with the paperwork and applications or help understanding the process as specific supports that would be beneficial.

Almost all respondents reported they are willing and able to hire unskilled workers and train them to meet their business needs. Those who needed help mentioned financial support to send workers to training programs.

A broad spectrum of training needs was identified as being useful for companies. Overall, various technical topics were of interest to most companies while business and administrative skills were not identified as being needed by most companies.

In terms of training delivery method, the top choice of about half of respondents was online self-study. About half also expressed interest in some form of in-person training. Other online or self-study options were of less interest to respondents, but still potentially useful for some.

Respondents prefer shorter training sessions from 2 hours to a full day – and the shorter, the better. Anything longer was seen as increasingly problematic as the duration increased with the notable exception of multi-year apprenticeships, which were broadly supported.

As for training frequency, most companies said they will participate whenever the training has value for their company. Where frequency was specified, nobody wanted training weekly or biweekly; interested started at monthly or greater spacing.

Companies indicated a fair bit of flexibility about start times for shorter sessions, but late morning was less popular than early morning or lunchtime / early afternoon. Starting sessions after 2:00 was not broadly supported. In the “Other” comments, some indicated preferences for certain times of year, and some said weekends may be an option depending on the training.

Methodology:

The NSBA Workforce and Training Survey was developed using SurveyMonkey. A SurveyMonkey web link collector was distributed using MailChimp to pre-populated mailing lists – one for NSBA members, one for all identified boatbuilding and boat repair and refit companies (excluding companies that specialize in marine sales and service).

NSBA Members: The SurveyMonkey web link was included in the August 2020 NSBA eNews that was sent on August 19, 2020, to 191 recipients including all Members and Associate Members. The eNews email was opened by 38.7% of recipients; 0% of these recipients clicked the SurveyMonkey web link.

Nova Scotia boatbuilding and boat repair and service companies: A second email exclusively about the Workforce and Training Survey was sent through MailChimp on August 21, 2020, to 62 companies in Nova Scotia. The message was successfully delivered to 60 companies (96.8%) with 2 bounces; it was opened by 42 (70%) of the recipients and 8 (13.3%) of the recipients clicked the SurveyMonkey web link.

In early September, one of the NSBA's team members sent follow-up emails to those companies on the second mailing list who hadn't completed the survey. Companies were invited to schedule calls with the NSBA to go through the survey over the phone. Some companies completed the survey online after receiving this email while others scheduled phone calls to go through it and the NSBA's team member entered their responses in SurveyMonkey while on the phone with the company representative.

In total, 29 of the 62 identified boatbuilding and boat repair and service companies in Nova Scotia completed the survey, representing 47% of the total survey population.

To create estimates for the industry overall including companies that did not complete the survey directly, the median company size was multiplied by the number of companies that hadn't completed the survey.

- Estimate of additional full-time employees: $33 \times 10 = 330$
- Total estimated full-time employees in the industry: 754 reported + 330 estimated = 1,084
- Estimate of additional part-time employees: $33 \times 0 = 0$
- Total estimated part-time employees in the industry: 25 reported + 0 estimated = 25

For the question on wages, a number of respondents offered wage ranges, suggesting that it depends on specific skills and experience. Where ranges were given, we used the mid-point in the range to chart the results.

All additional comments in the results are copied directly from survey responses.

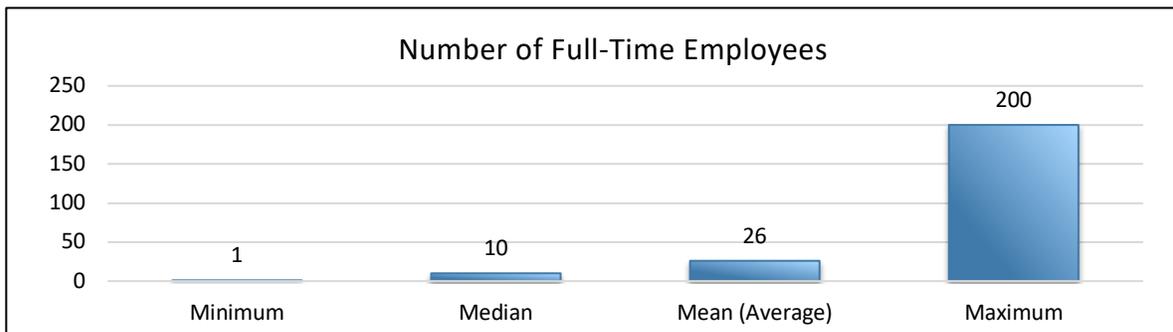
Detailed Results:**Section 1: Workforce Numbers**

1. Approximately how many full-time employees do you currently have?

Responses: 29 of 29

Total full-time employees reported: 754

Estimated full-time employees for sector (see *Methodology*): 1,084



2. If this is significantly different than what you expected to have at this time, please describe what you had expected and why you think it is different.

Responses: 16 of 29

Most respondents left this question blank (13) or said the number is as expected (7). Other comments included the following:

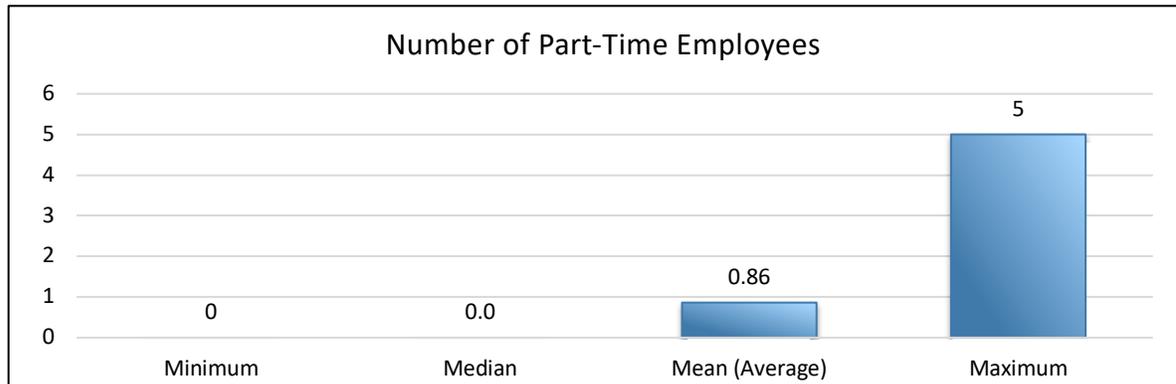
- Can't find reliable, responsible skilled labour
- Significantly less due to Covid-19 limiting our international customers from travelling here. We would normally have 8 full-time employees (*note: respondent currently has 5 full-time employees*)
- It's what I expected, as these boats were in progress pre Covid-19
- Yes because of Covid I have had to downsize my workload which in turn downsizes the number of employees
- At this point, we have returned to a normal amount of employment. Therefore, we are where we expected to be before COVID19
- Holding pretty steady right now. May have to add a few people in the next 6-12 months.
- It is not significantly different than what was expected.
- Pretty accurate. Will be hiring more once work picks up in the fall.
- Expected to have full time laborer. Very hard to find skill set and ability required. I have one financial person who is paid weekly other than that I do all repairs myself.

3. Approximately how many part-time employees do you currently have? (29 of 29)

Responses: 29 of 29

Total part-time employees reported: 25

Estimated part-time employees for sector (see *Methodology*): 25



4. If this is significantly different than what you expected to have at this time, please describe what you had expected and why you think it is different.

Responses: 12 of 29

Most respondents left this question blank (17) or said the number is as expected (9). Other comments included the following:

- Part time employee is a summer student
- Normally we would have six part-time employees. Again due to Covid-19 and the decrease in international customers this year we have reduced staffing levels. (*note: respondent currently has 3 part-time employees*)
- I expected to have a student with an interest in boats. Seems like the only interests here are in money

5. How many of the following do you currently have?

Responses:

Certified Boatbuilders: 27 of 29

Certified Marine Service Technicians: 26 of 29

Apprentice Boatbuilders: 25 of 29

Apprentice Marine Service Technicians: 23 of 29

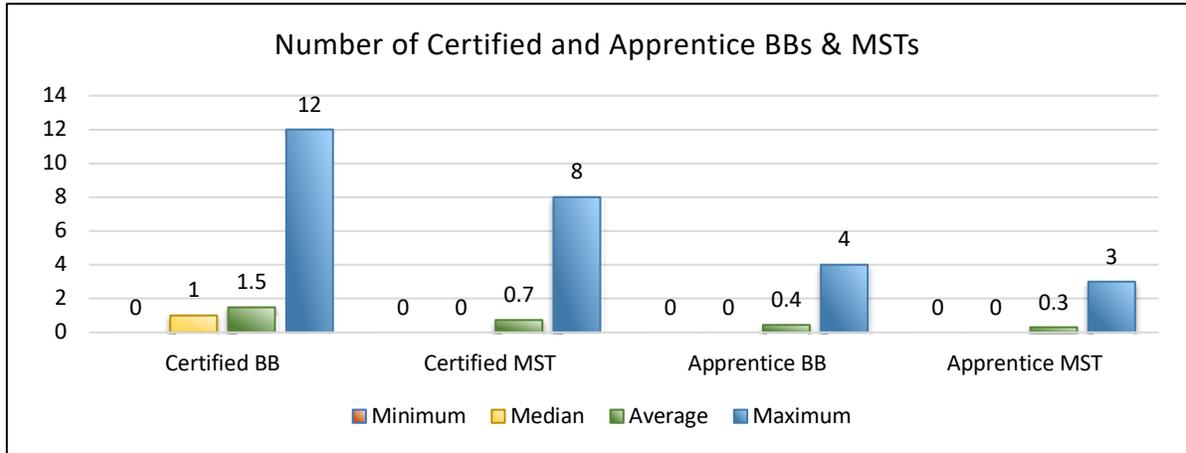
Total reported:

Certified Boatbuilders: 40

Certified Marine Service Technicians: 19

Apprentice Boatbuilders: 11

Apprentice Marine Service Technicians: 7

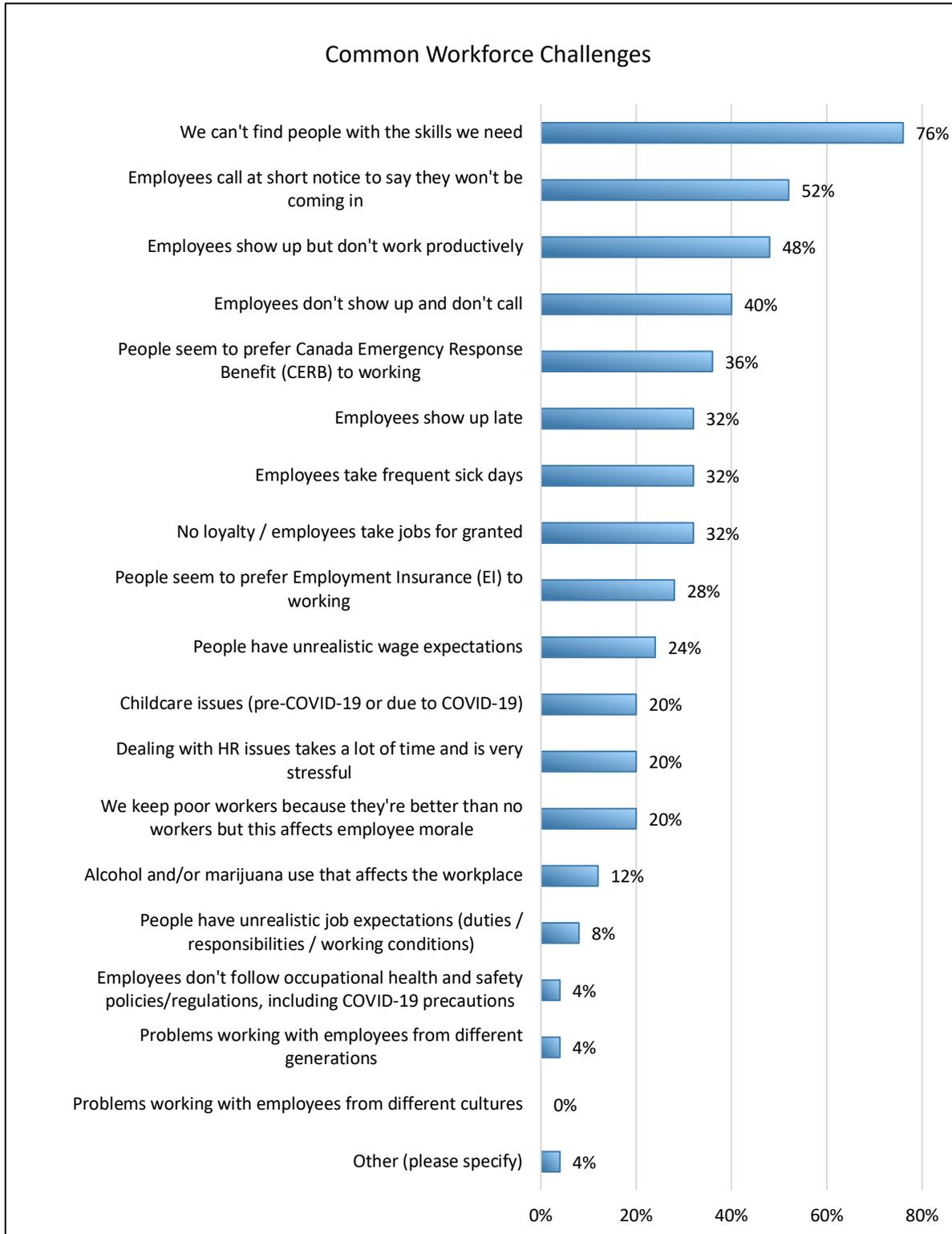


Section 2: Workforce Challenges & Compensation

6. Which of the following workforce challenges do you commonly experience at your business?

Responses: 25 of 29

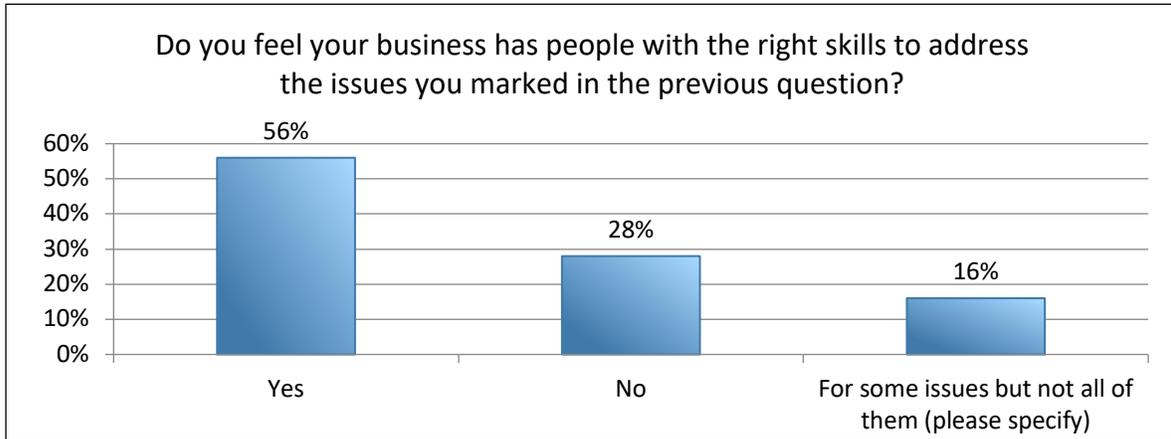
See chart on next page.



Other – comment: Loyalty - some are loyal and some aren't.

7. Do you feel your business has people with the right skills to address the issues you marked in the previous question?

Responses: 25 of 29



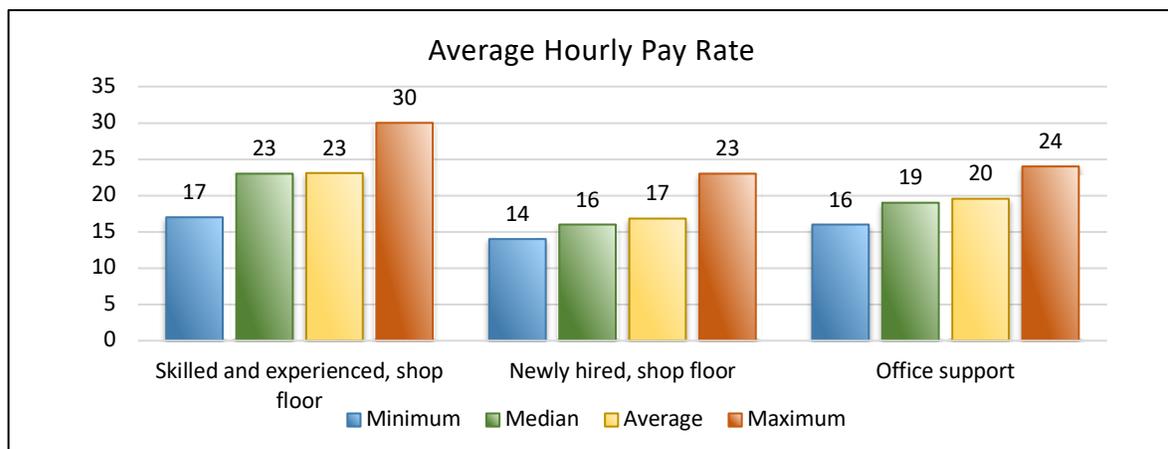
Issues specified:

- Looking for someone to do the job that the owner is doing (office and shop floor)
- need experience people
- We have an HR specialist but this individual will need help in some circumstance.
- I need more qualified and skilled employees. That want to work

8. What's the average hourly pay rate for your employees who are:

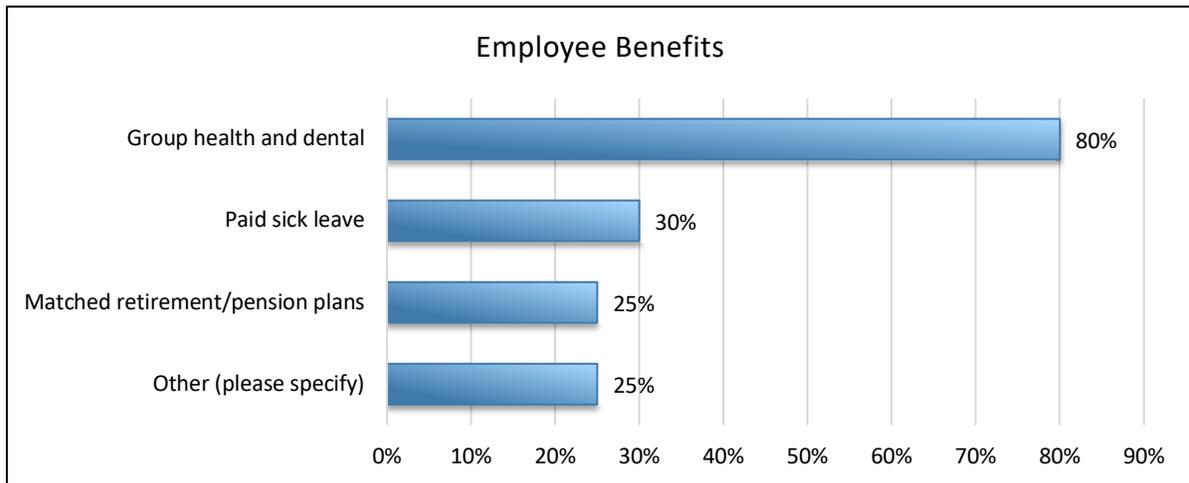
- Skilled and experience, shop floor
- Newly hired, shop floor
- Office support

Responses: 27 of 29



9. Does your company offer employee benefits, ex. group health, paid sick leave, matched retirement plans?

Responses: 20 of 29



Other

- Bonus system
- All holidays are paid statutory or not
- Group health - no dental
- Profit Sharing Plans
- Medical but no dental. Pension plan (company matches 2% of contributions)

Section 3: Workforce Planning

10. If you could find people with the right skills, how many workers would you hire in the next 12 months and for what types of jobs?

Responses: 28 of 29

Some respondents offered a range for how many people they would like to hire in a specific job; the low and high numbers are captured in separate columns. Some respondents did not provide specific numbers of people but listed job types; those are noted at the end of the list.

Grouped Responses	Low	High
Composites fabricators / FRP laminators	22	26
Welders	17	19
Diesel mechanics / marine mechanics	9	9
Industrial janitor	1	1
Engineer	1	1
Carpenters / finish carpenters	3	4
Foreman / manager	2	2

Marine Service Technician	3.5	3.5
Marine electrical	1	1
Marine bodywork	2	2
Bookkeeper	1	1
Propeller technician	1	1
Machinist	1	1
NACE Painter	1	1
Shipwrights	2	3
Apprentice	1	1
Boat repair labourers	2	2
Unknown / unspecified #:		
<i>"many fibreglassers"</i>		
<i>welders</i>		
<i>mechanical people</i>		
<i>carpenters</i>		

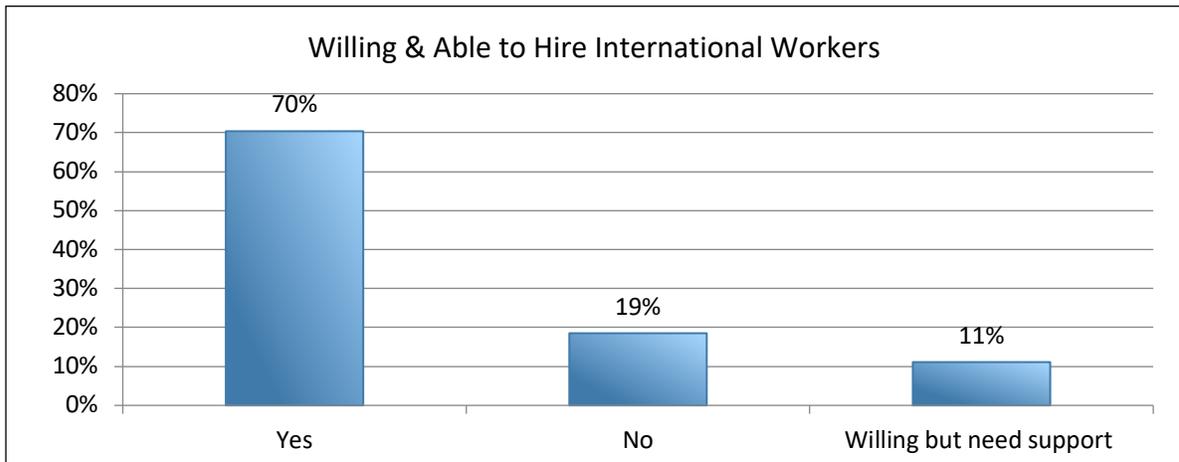
11. Do you have employees interested in certification in the Boat Builder and/or Marine Service Technician trades, either as Trade Qualification candidates or through an Apprenticeship pathway?

Responses: 12 of 29



12. Are you willing and able to hire workers who are not current Canadian citizens/residents?

Responses: 27 of 29



Support needed:

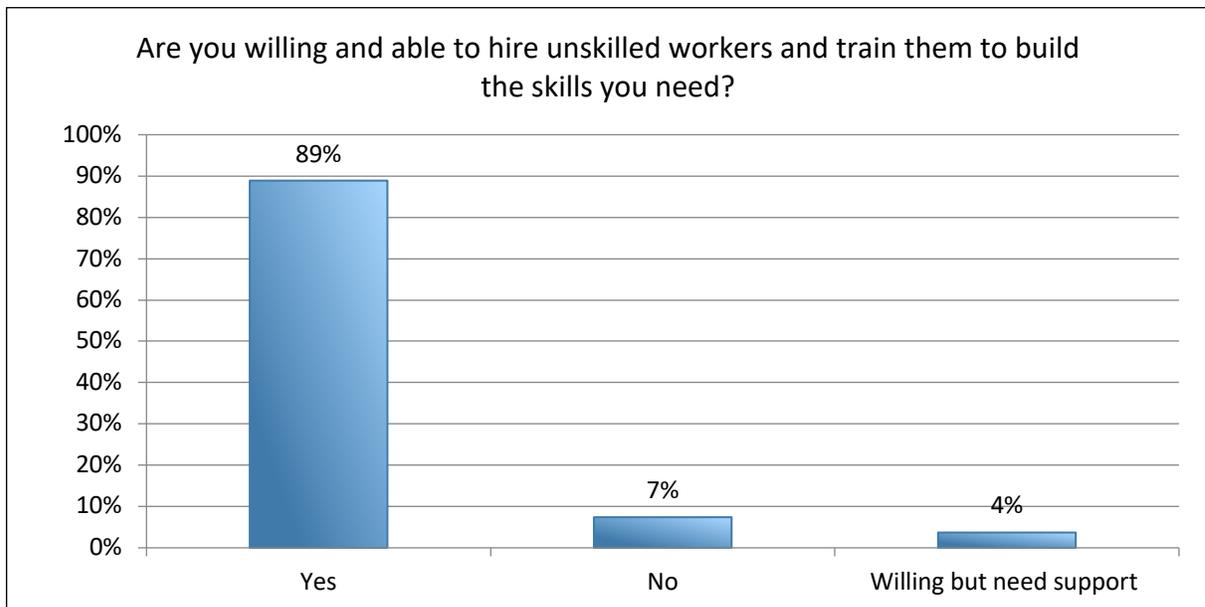
- Yes but would need help with paperwork or applications
- Just to understand the process
- Have some experience in this field. Assistance would make the process easier.

13. Are you willing and able to hire unskilled workers and train them to build the skills you need?

Responses: 27 of 29

Support needed:

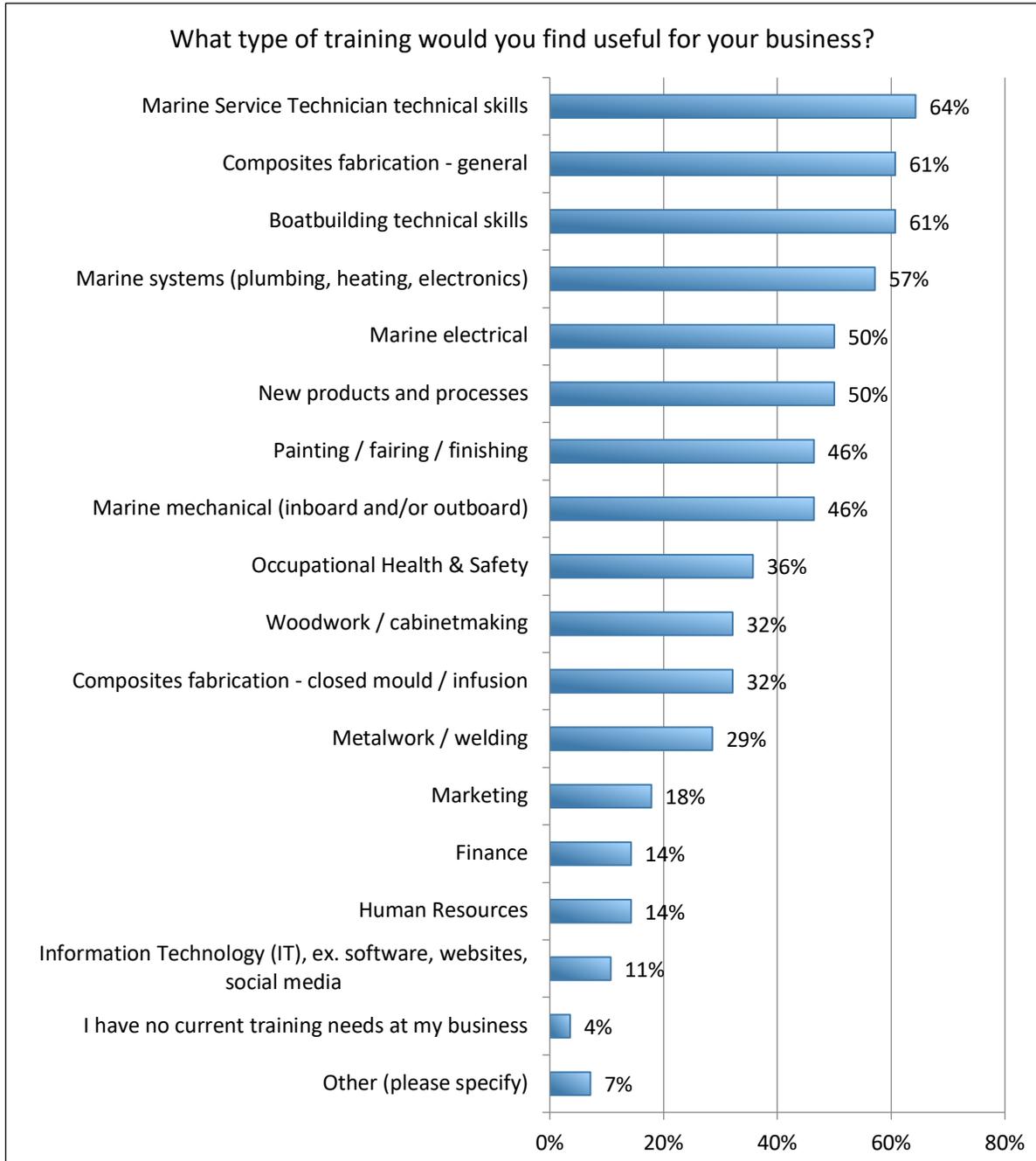
- Financial support to send workers to training programs.



Section 4: Training Needs & Preferences

14. What type of training would you find useful for your business?

Responses: 28 of 29

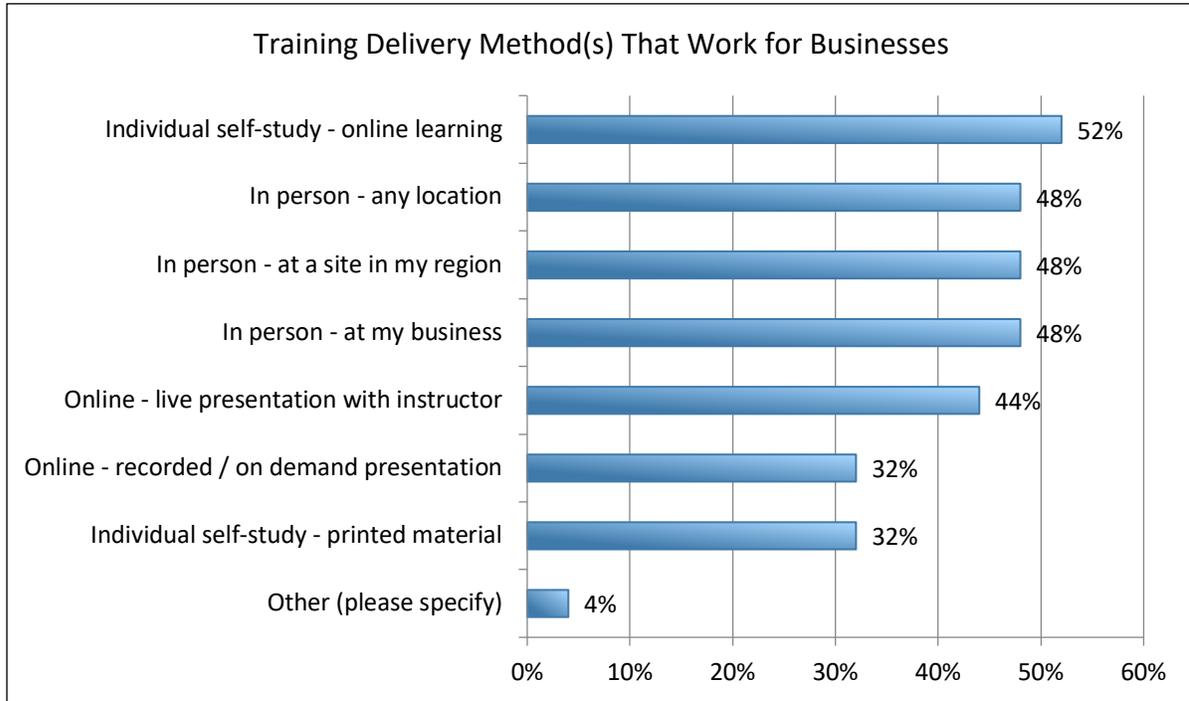


Other

- We outsource for marine electrical. Most everything else is done in house.
- Any training would be useful

15. What method(s) of delivery work(s) for your business?

Responses: 25 of 29

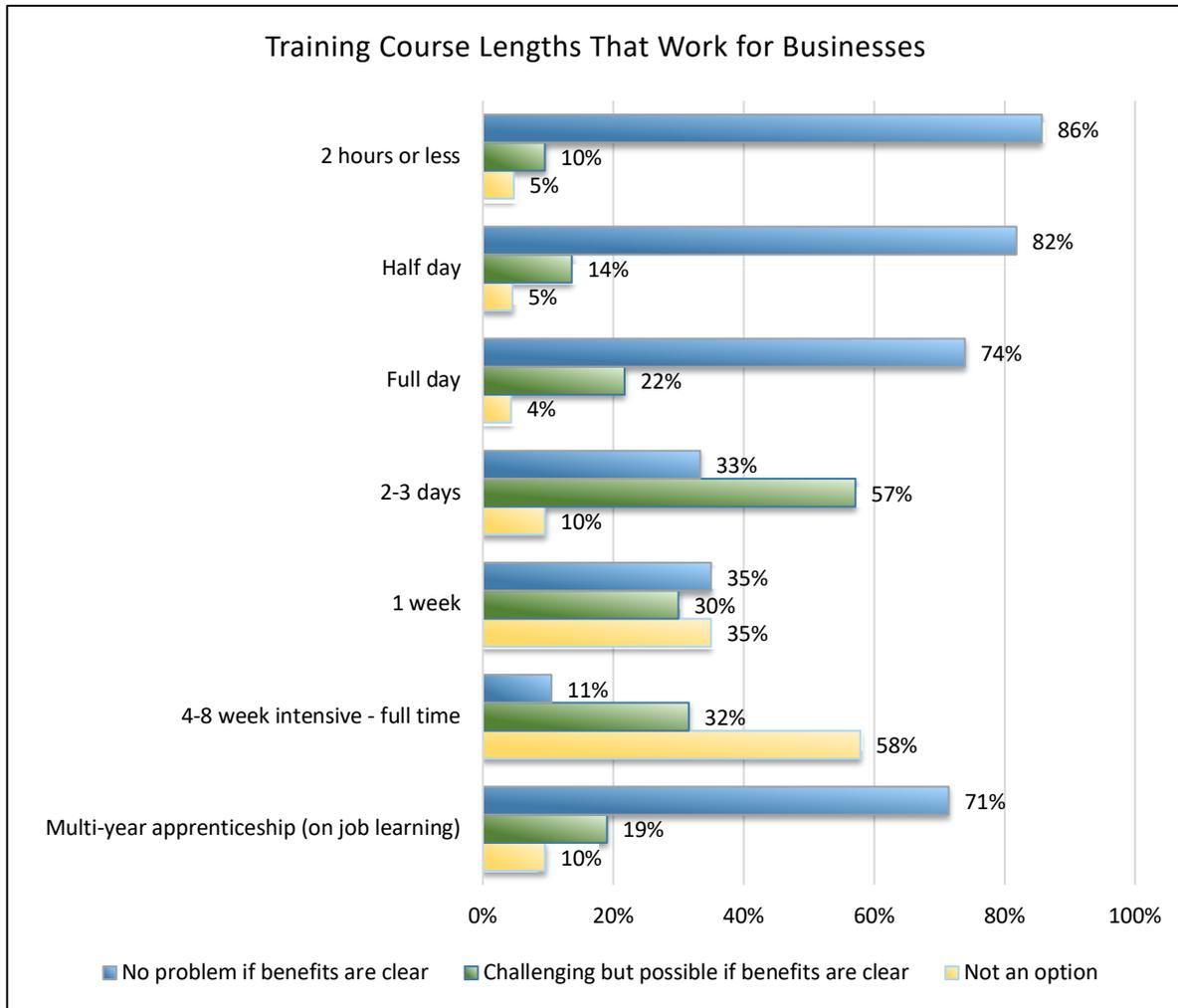


Other

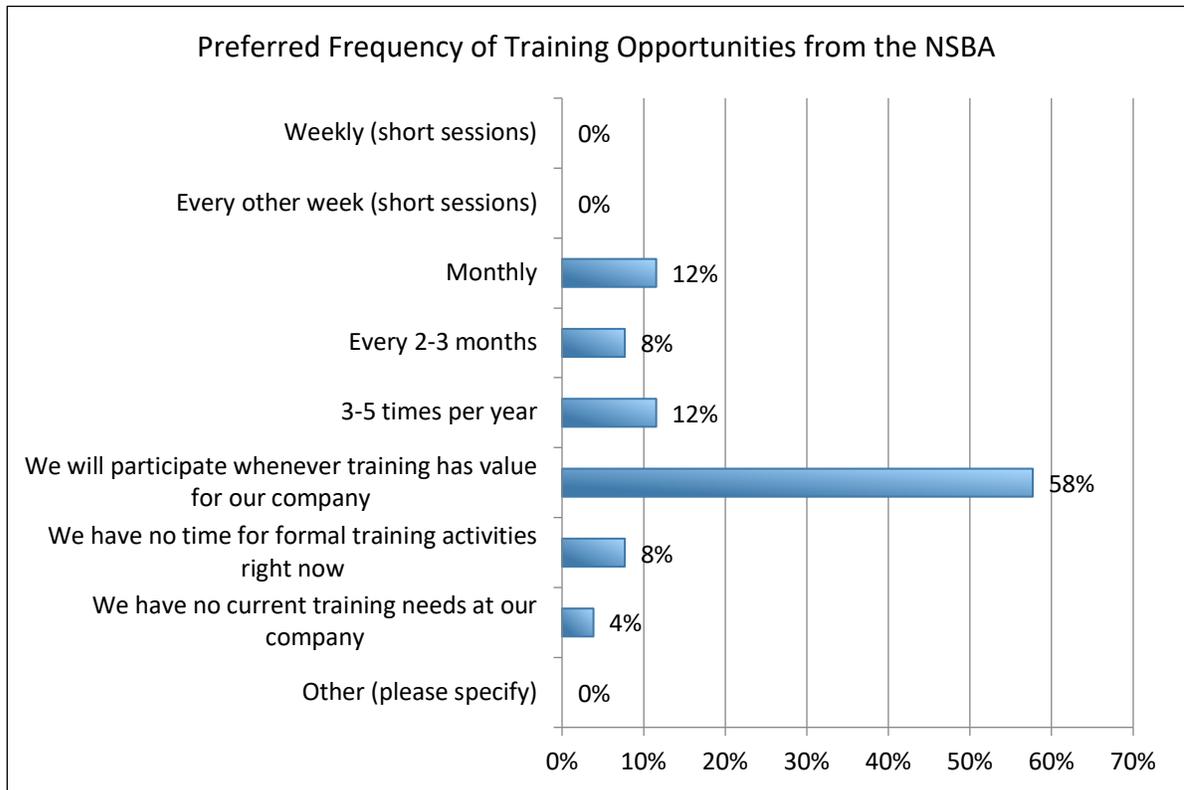
- Unfortunately, I had to check all boxes as it generally comes down to price of the course and how many people need the skill.

16. Recognizing that some topics require more time to learn than others, what length training courses work for your business?

Responses: 26 of 29

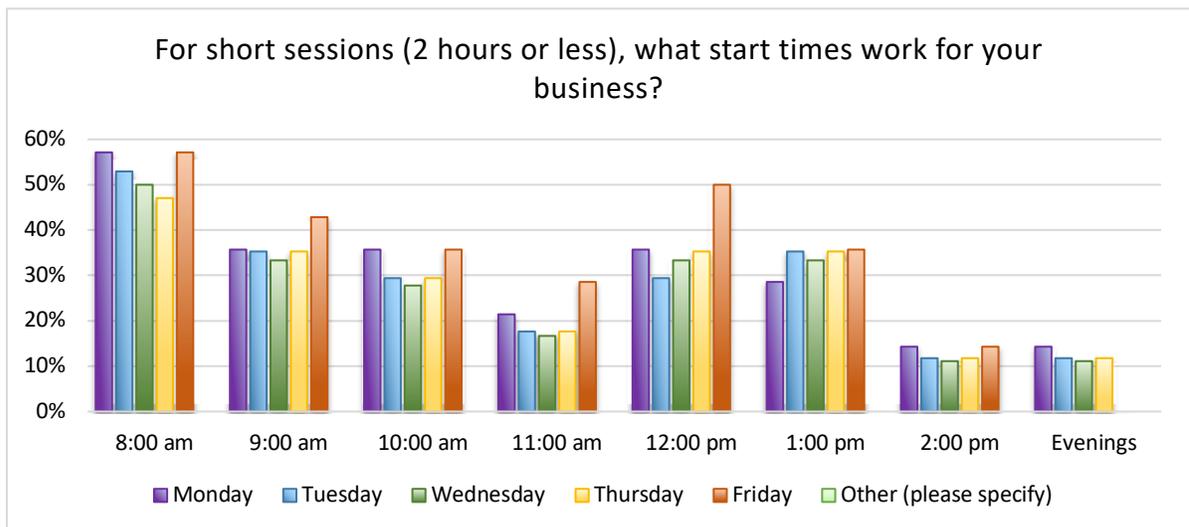


17. Recognizing that different topics will be of interest to different companies, how frequently do you want NSBA to offer training?
Responses: 26 of 29



18. For short sessions (2 hours or less), what start times work for your business?

Responses: 20 of 29



Other

- This question requires discussion with all involved.
- Lunch and learn were always good sessions.
- when ever

- Any time would work flexibility helps a lot
- Anytime outside of May through November
- Weekend trains also works. However, we find that evenings are difficult to get personnel to volunteer for. This being said, depending on the training, there may be takers.
- Weekends an option