

Too many job seekers lack 'motivation': report



By Scott Dunn, Sun Times, Owen Sound
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GREY-BRUCE - A new regional survey of employers suggests one of the top reasons they can't fill positions is because too many candidates lack "motivation, attitude and interpersonal abilities."

The EmployerOne Survey identified that shortfall more often than a lack of skills among the top reasons why they were having a hard time filling jobs.

"Employers continue to say the same thing – both the Skills Gap Study and EmployerOne Survey indicate employee work ethic and soft skills are critical to business, yet job applicants are not meeting employer expectations," Gemma Mendez-Smith said in a news release.

She's the executive director of the Four County Labour Market Planning Board, which surveyed employers in the counties of Bruce, Grey, Huron and Perth.

She said her not-for-profit workforce development corporation's skills gap study also heard from employers in 2013 that a "stronger work ethic" was needed from job applicants.

In the latest survey, of the 160 surveyed businesses which hired in 2014, 85 found some positions hard to fill. At least some respondents gave more than one reason for that difficulty.

Their top reason was "Not enough applicants," cited in 70 responses. "Not meeting motivation, attitude or interpersonal abilities" was cited second most, in 63 responses. Next came "Not meeting skills" 62 responses, "Not meeting qualifications (education/credentials), 57, "Not meeting work experience," 51.

Mendez-Smith said in an interview they've had "quite a bit of validation from employers" on the lack of motivation and so-called soft-skills, a reference to showing up for work on time, not using cellphones at work inappropriately and speaking with supervisors and peers appropriately, she said.

"They've gone so far as to hire people. And a significant number of people, maybe after a week or after a month of working, just don't bother showing up. Or they leave at lunchtime and they don't bother showing up," she said.

"So while it is provocative, it seems to be a trending scene among employers."

Mendez-Smith couldn't account for why, but she said she believes the labour market board should help lead a community discussion to address this issue because its getting worse.

The report briefly acknowledges all jobs may not be desirable, either. "Short-term precarious employment may not be conducive to enhancing employee work ethic and soft skill development."

Asked about that, Mendez-Smith suggested precarious employment, meaning part-time or seasonal jobs, for example, may be viewed as "almost not a full guarantee of work" and so job seekers may lack commitment and motivation to them.

"We're not sure where that attitude (lack of motivation) is coming from. Is it because the employees don't see a commitment from employers?" It plays a part, she thinks, but she's not sure how big a part because some employers "do offer benefits, they offer a lot of incentives to help people remain on the job and that's still not happening."

Mendez-Smith also said transportation costs just to get to work limit some people's commitment to a minimum-wage job.

The report says there were 2,956 jobs created in 2014 by 160 survey respondents: 866 permanent, full-time; 180 permanent, part-time; 1,212 temporary full-time; 617 temporary part-time; and 81 independent contractor positions.

Employers identified the "top three employee competencies" they seek: 1) work ethic, dedication and dependability; 2) customer service; 3) teamwork and interpersonal skills.

In Bruce County, the percentage of employers which described the availability of qualified workers as "Excellent" was 4.1%, "Good," 34.7%, "Fair," 38.8% and "Poor," 22.4%. Grey County employer responses were: "Excellent" 3%, "Good," 28.4%, "Fair" 44.8% and "Poor," 23.9%.

Ross Adams matches jobs with candidates for them as a job developer at YMCA Community and Employment Services in Owen Sound. Lack of motivation is one of the problems he encounters among some job seekers.

"The motivation and attitude, those things are definitely issues that we're seeing," Adams said from his office at 1450 1st Ave. W.

"At the same time . . . sometimes employers will advertise entry-level positions which also come at minimum wage. It makes it hard for a person getting started, or a young person getting going to live on that kind of a wage and to see that there's a future there.

"Because sometimes they end up being stuck in that position and they may be told this is a really important position but they're not necessarily remunerated or reimbursed."

A greater proportion of part-time jobs or working on a call-in basis than they used to be, he said. That means people have to hold two or three part-time jobs, "and so their motivation to any one of them is going to be somewhat less than it could be . . ."

Fewer people grow up learning how to fix things themselves, given most of what we own is thrown out when broken, he suggested. At the same time, the bar has be raised on entry-level positions to require skills to run a machine in a factory, rather than doing manual labour.

"There used to be a job for more people in the labouring field. But those jobs are gone now. Automation has taken a lot away."

Nonetheless, some younger people "do seem to have more of a sense of entitlement," he said.

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Mush Morant · a day ago

Part of the blame for this must be placed on the education system and the low standards of

behaviour and achievement our society has come to accept in this day and age.

When students can pass courses without doing all of the assigned work and the courses are dumbed-down to a ridiculous point to start with, it is no wonder many young people lack a work ethic and the basic skills required to qualify for many forms of employment. The entire absence of technical training (i.e. shops) in many of our high schools today is also a major problem in this regard.

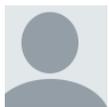
Additionally, many people (particularly millennials) seem to have an inflated opinion of their value to prospective employers and can't conceive that their work should only be worth minimum wage, or slightly more, to start.

The advent of smart phones and texting has prevented many youngsters from learning proper interpersonal and language skills and has made a very abbreviated and lazy form of the English language (if it can indeed be regarded as such) seem acceptable as a means of communication in the world as a whole which, of course, it is not in most occupational circumstances.

Also significant is the fact that this (Grey-Bruce) area has not sufficiently prepared itself mentally or

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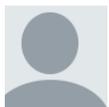


Tina Rupert • a day ago

vpi organized and hosted a community job fair on behalf of Advanced Medical Marijuana Canada Ltd., a new business in the Kincardine area. The job fair was a great success; over 600 job seekers attended. The fair took place at the Best Western Plus Governor's Inn.

AMMCan is looking to hire around 25 employees to work in their plant at the Bruce Energy Centre. Only candidates selected for further screening or an interview will be contacted.

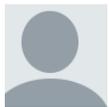
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RocketGal • a day ago

Minimum wage jobs offer 14 to 18 hours per week. And getting a 2nd job means your employers have to be sympathetic when you want to work out a scheduling conflict. Employers won't do that ... so employees move on.

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SamNElla • a day ago

And "education inflation" has absolutely NOTHING to do with not being able to "fill positions". Any job postings I've come across recently (in the past 5 years) states VERY clearly that employers are ONLY looking for employees who have either a college or university diploma/degree...in ANYTHING. Years of experience and job related "upgrading" courses don't count because a 2+ year college course wasn't taken. Perhaps it's time for employers to look at hiring more "mature" employees (let's say over the age of 30) with related job experience if they're not happy with the "employee pool" that they (companies/employers) have set up for themselves. I'm talking about broadening their horizons, NOT lowering their expectations.

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Bill_Moses · a day ago

By just reinforcing existing biases, this article isn't helping the situation. Of course employers want the perfect employee, kind of like a robot that can be programmed to behave exactly in a way to suit the employer's purpose.

I do recognize that dealing with employees can be extremely frustrating.

However, either employers will have to accept less than perfect workers or the less than perfect workers will have to be taught how to be better workers.

It is society's responsibility to create an environment that allows a person to become the best they can be first and then for employers to work with the result.

Of course if an employer has 100 people digging a ditch, he can say the hell with that and buy a backhoe, then pick the best person from the one hundred to run the backhoe. Has that kind of thing been going on too long thus causing present day problems?

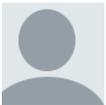
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RocketGal → Bill_Moses · a day ago

Employers want everything under the sun, but pay minimum wage.

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golson molson · 2 days ago

I call bull shit to this report. 600 people showed up to VPI's Job placement open house for 20 positions at AMMCan in Kincardine.

It was a disgusting mad house and has VPI followed up with anyone?.....Nooooooo.

People are simply frustrated.

VPI should be embarrassed for their lack of foresight.

People want decent jobs.

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Gemma Mendez-Smith → golson molson · a day ago

There is value in this report and we need to pay attention to what employers are saying. Finding a decent job will also mean meeting the skill needs of those hiring. Job Fairs are hosted on behalf of employers who then follow their own hiring practice.

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Ratzshite Crustyguy → golson molson · a day ago

it would be nice if companies did do follow up to help people understand what they need to improve in their interview skills. These are younger job seekers so they need to learn as they go and by a company not bothering to do a follow up they should consider they are part of the 'sense of entitlement' problem too. Far too easy to throw out the age old 'kids today are lazy' stories.

BUT cellphones are a problem and are out of control for some people, they are cellphone junkies. Sometimes I'd like to shove the cellphones through their ear so they can work and

talk at the same time.

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