

Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce

Job Skills Survey 2004

**Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce Workforce
Development: Research Sub-Committee
(Job Skills Action Team)**

September 2004

Prepared by:

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The Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce Workforce Development Committee is committed to the leadership of the continued workforce development initiative in the Itasca County area. Establishing effective collaborative partnerships and developing measurable outcomes and timelines for workforce development is primary to this initiative. For additional information, please call the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce at 218-326-6619.

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Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce Workforce Development

Committee

Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce Staff

Blandin Foundation

Minnesota Power

Itasca Development Corporation

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Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce Job Skills Survey 2004

**Goal: Align the skills of the area's workforce
with the needs of regional employers**

Introduction

This report presents the results of the 2004 survey that was completed by the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce Research Committee. It includes raw response data from 37 survey questions, written comments, suggestions provided to three questions, and significant findings drawn from each of the survey questions.

The Research Committee is a subcommittee of the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce Education and Workforce Development Committee. It was formed in 2003 and was financially supported by Quickstart funding from the Blandin Foundation. The mission of the committee was to conduct research and locate workforce development data that would provide baseline information from which Itasca County area workforce development issues could be addressed. During 2003, the Chamber's Education and Workforce Development Committee merged with the Itasca Development Corporation/Jobs 2020 Job Skills Task Force to expand the committee base and align missions. The combined Research Committee mission included:

1. Research existing data and information regarding the local labor and employment market
2. Analyze data to determine needed information, and engage in collection and retrieval of data as needed
3. Conduct a workforce survey of employers, workers and students

Following preliminary research and review of existing information, the Research Committee concluded that satisfactory up-to-date local data necessary for the Committee's mission was not available through local, regional or state economic development entities. The existing information that was found was either northeast Minnesota regional data or was data compiled in the previous two years and was not adequately specific in geographic (Itasca County area) terms. To effectively meet the needs, the Research Committee decided to conduct an area-specific job skills survey to provide timely local data.

A comprehensive, complete listing of employers in the survey target boundary area was not available, hence the Committee developed its own local listing of employers within a 26 zip code boundary both in and near Itasca County, Minnesota in January 2004. Information for the employer listing was garnished from the newly updated ISEEK.org website.

Various resources provided information or participated in designing the Job Skills Survey 2004, including:

- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, DEED
- Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
- University of Minnesota Extension Service
- “Mail and Internet Surveys” 2nd Edition by Donald Dillman
- Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC)
- SurveyGold software
- ISEEK.org
- Itasca Development Corporation (IDC)

Communication, coordination, and cooperation with numerous stakeholder groups were integral in conducting a successful study. Major actions taken to accomplish this with identified stakeholder groups included the following:

- Education community (held March 2004, with follow up meetings in June 2004)
- Business community (held via Grand Rapids Chamber Luncheon meeting, June 2004; included a call for stakeholder action)
- Written reports were distributed to:
 - Itasca Development Corporation
 - KOOTASCA Community Action
 - Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency
 - Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training
 - Itasca Community College
 - Blandin Foundation
 - University of Minnesota
 - MN Building Talents Program
 - College Costs Program
 - Area School Districts
 - Quad County Projects
 - Area Libraries
 - Children First
 - Action Through Churches Together
 - Chambers of Commerce and business associations in the Itasca County area
 - Itasca County area city governments and mayors
 - Grand Rapids Economic Development Authority
 - Action Through Churches Together

The Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce Job Skills Survey 2004 endeavored to obtain information from all employers in Itasca County; the survey was designed and executed with that intent. Responses were anonymous, although responders who sought more information or desired specific return contact were provided with the opportunity and means to so indicate. With an 18% return rate, the survey response was considered to be reasonably within a normal range.

Statistical Report

Survey Mailing Statistics

One goal of the survey project was to include information from as many businesses as possible within the Itasca County area. This area was defined as: all of Itasca County, plus specific areas outside of Itasca County that in a practical sense are closely tied to the Itasca County businesses community with respect to employment. Basic data about the survey follows:

Date survey mailed: January 3, 2004
Number of surveys mailed: 2,300
Total number of surveys returned: 432
Approximate return rate: 18%
Total number of “usable” returned surveys: 410
Number of zip codes mailed represented: 26
Number of zip codes represented in returns: 23
Surveys were mailed to zip codes:

55709	55764	56637
55716	55769	56639
55721	55775	56655
55722	55784	56657
55736	55786	56659
55742	55793	56672
55744	56628	56680
55748	56631	56681
55753	56636	

Raw Responses to Survey Questions

The survey contained 40 questions developed by the Research Committee. The questions were categorized in groups according to the primary type of information that was being solicited. To facilitate completion of the survey and ease of responding, each survey packet included an introductory cover letter and a postage-paid reply envelope. See Appendix A. Survey responses were tabulated as received by staff of the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce using SurveyGold, a commercially available survey data analysis program. All except three of the questions provided for multiple-choice response, that is, a choice of answers was provided and the respondent selected one response or, for a limited number of questions, there was provision for more than one response. Questions 38, 39, and 40 regarding future trends required the respondent to submit a written response.

This section presents raw statistical results of the responses to each question on the survey form. Where percentages have been calculated, they have been based upon the number of responses to each question, except in cases where multiple responses were clearly solicited for specific questions.

Employer Information

Question #1: What is your business zip code? (Select one-main headquarter only)

			<u>Post Office</u>
241	59.21%	55744	Grand Rapids
29	7.13%	56636	Deer River
14	3.44%	55769	Nashwauk
14	3.44%	56628	Bigfork
14	3.44%	56672	Boy River
13	3.19%	56655	Longville
12	2.95%	55721	Cohasset
11	2.70%	55736	Wawina
11	2.70%	55748	Hill City
9	2.21%	55709	Bovey
7	1.72%	55722	Coleraine
6	1.47%	56657	Marcell
5	1.23%	56639	Effie
4	0.98%	55775	Pengilly
4	0.98%	55793	Warba
3	0.74%	55716	Calumet
3	0.74%	55753	Keewatin
2	0.49%	56637	Jessie Lake
1	0.25%	55742	Goodland
1	0.25%	55764	Marble
1	0.25%	56659	Max
1	0.25%	56680	Spring Lake
1	0.25%	56681	Squaw Lake

Question #2: What is your primary business season?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
All Year	291	62.45%
Summer	94	20.17%
Fall	33	7.08%
Winter	18	3.86%
Spring	30	6.44%

Question #3: Select your main business type

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Retail trade	101	23.99%
Health Care	46	10.93%
Construction	29	6.89%
Recreation/entertainment	23	5.46%
Manufacturing	20	4.75%
Finance	17	4.04%
Food service	17	4.04%
Insurance	12	2.85%
Public administration	12	2.85%
Wholesale trade	11	2.61%
Information	10	2.38%
Fishing and/or hunting	9	2.14%
Accommodation	9	2.14%
Social administration	8	1.90%
Transportation and/or warehousing	8	1.90%
Forestry	8	1.90%
Rental and leasing	8	1.90%
Education services	7	1.66%
Real estate	6	1.43%
Agriculture	5	1.18%
Utilities	5	1.18%
Arts	5	1.18%
Mining	3	0.71%
Administrative	2	0.48%
Waste services	1	0.24%
Management of companies and entrepreneurs	1	0.24%
Other (unspecified)	38	9.03%

Question #4: What was your average yearly FULL TIME employment for 2002?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
0 - 4 employees	228	56.44%
5 - 9 employees	81	20.05%
10 - 19 employees	40	9.90%
20 - 49 employees	30	7.43%
50 - 99 employees	12	2.97%
100 - 249 employees	8	1.98%
250 - 499 employees	4	0.99%
500+ employees	1	0.25%

Question #5: What was your average yearly PART TIME employment for 2002?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
0 - 4 employees	293	72.35%

5 - 9 employees	50	12.35%
10 - 19 employees	27	6.67%
20 - 49 employees	19	4.69%
50 - 99 employees	13	3.21%
100 - 249 employees	3	0.74%
250 - 499 employees	0	
500+ employees	0	

Question #6: What percentage of your 2002 average yearly employment was considered seasonal employees?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
0 - 25%	334	82.47%
26 - 50%	23	5.68%
51 - 99%	18	4.44%
All	30	7.41%

Question #7: Of your 2002 average yearly employment, what percentage was represented by a union?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Less than 25%	350	87.72%
Less than 50%	7	1.75%
Less than 75%	5	1.25%
Less than 100%	32	8.02%
100%	5	1.25%

Question #8: What is the primary market for your product or service?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Itasca County area	211	49.53%
Regional (northern Minnesota)	116	27.23%
Statewide	36	8.45%
Midwest	27	6.34%
National	27	6.34%
International	6	1.41%
Other	3	0.70%

Question #9: Does your employment vary by 10 % in any season?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
No	294	72.24%

Yes 113 27.76%

Question #10: What unions are represented at your business?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
No union representation	350	86.00%
AFSCME	17	4.18%
Building trades	5	1.23%
Retail clerks	4	0.98%
Teamsters	4	0.98%
IBEW	3	0.74%
USWA	2	0.49%
Other	22	5.41%

Wages and Benefits: Entry Level

Question #11: Excluding benefits, what is the starting wage for an entry-level position within your business?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Less than or equal to \$5.15 per hour	12	2.96%
\$5.16 - \$9.99 per hour	263	64.94%
\$10.00 - \$14.99 per hour	107	26.42%
\$15.00 - \$19.00 per hour	18	4.44%
\$20.00 - \$30.00 per hour	4	0.99%
More than \$30.00 per hour	1	0.25%

Question #12: Which employee benefits are offered at your business?

(Respondents could select all benefits that applied to their business)

<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	
253	61.71%	Paid Time Off. For example: vacation, sick leave, flextime, funeral, jury duty
188	45.85%	Health Insurance: For example: medical, dental, prescription, mental health, substance abuse, vision, flexible spending accounts
184	44.88%	Retirement. For example: employer contributed, employee contributed, 401K, profit sharing
164	40.00%	Education and Training. For example: in-house training, post-secondary, continuing education
126	30.73%	Fringe Benefits. For example: piece rates, stock options/matching, bonuses, community discounts, wellness programs, use of facilities, legal services, transportation, job sharing, relocation, parking, employee counseling services
111	27.07%	Disability Insurance. For example: short-term, long-term, life insurance, accidental death & dismemberment
74	18.05%	Family Benefits. For example: maternity, paternity, childcare, eldercare
7	1.71%	Retirement. For example: employer contributed, employee contributed, 401(k), profit sharing
113	27.56%	No benefits offered

Hiring and Training Employees: Entry Level

Question #13: What percentage of your 2002 average yearly employment was considered entry-level?

<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
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0 - 24%	301	74.14%
25 - 49%	49	12.07%
50 - 74%	29	7.14%
75 - 100%	27	6.65%

Question #14: For the majority of your entry-level employees, what minimum educational level is preferred?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
High school diploma or equivalent	213	50.12%
Two year technical (vocational) school	80	18.82%
Four year degree	23	5.41%
Certificate	16	3.77%
Advanced degree (more than 4 year degree)	1	0.24%
No preference	92	21.65%

Question #15: For FUTURE entry-level employees, what minimum educational level will be preferred?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
High school diploma or equivalent	197	45.50%
Two year technical (vocational) school	96	22.17%
Four year degree	31	7.16%
Certificate	21	4.85%
Advanced degree (more than 4 year degree)	2	0.46%
No preference	86	19.86%

Question #16: For the majority of your entry-level employees, what minimum experience level is preferred?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
No experience	96	28.12%
1 - 3 years experience	208	50.86%
4 - 10 years experience	20	4.89%
Greater than 10 years experience	2	0.49%
No preference	64	15.65%

Question #17: For FUTURE entry-level employees, what minimum experience level will be preferred?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
No experience	96	23.53%
1 - 3 years experience	220	53.92%
4 - 10 years experience	26	6.37%

Greater than 10 years experience	2	0.49%
No preference	64	15.69%

Question #18: How difficult is it for your company to find well-prepared candidates for your entry-level positions?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Not difficult	113	27.90%
Moderately difficult	220	54.32%
Extremely difficult	72	17.78%

Question #19: If it has been difficult to find well-prepared candidates for your entry-level positions, what has led to this difficulty?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Attitudes/work ethics have declined	173	34.95%
Lack of skills	114	23.03%
Lack of training and/or education	100	20.20%
Fewer people applying	75	15.15%
Other	33	6.67%

Question #20: Does your company offer military preference in hiring?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
No	353	88.25%
Yes	47	11.75%

Question #21: What skills have you found LACKING in your entry-level employees?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Thinking skills	202	16.21%
Work efficiency skills	195	15.65%
Personal qualities	173	13.88%
Interpersonal skills	128	10.27%
Entrepreneurial skills	115	9.23%
Basic Skills	108	8.67%
Managerial skills	83	6.66%
Computer skills	60	4.82%

Information management skills	54	4.33%
Technological application skills	48	3.85%
Mechanical skills	34	2.73%
Systems application skills	21	1.69%
Physical skills	14	1.12%
Science skills	11	0.88%

Skills definitions:

- Basic Skills: reading, writing, arithmetic, listening, and speaking
- Thinking Skills: creative thinking, decision-making, problem solving, knowing how to learn
- Personal Qualities: responsibility, self-esteem, self-management, integrity, honesty, trustworthy
- Managerial Skills: manage resources, manages time, money, materials, staff
- Interpersonal Skills: teamwork, teaching others, serving others, leading work teams, negotiating with others, working with different cultures, flexible, self confidence, people oriented, personable, patient, customer service skills
- Information Management Skills: acquire and evaluate data, organize and maintain information, interpret and communicate data, creativity, resource management
- System Application Skills: work within social, technological, organizational systems, monitor and correct system performance, design and improve system performance
- Technological Application Skills: select equipment, apply technology, maintain and troubleshoot technology
- Science Skills: research, effective analysis
- Entrepreneurial Skills: understands time vs. money concepts, thinks proactively for the benefit of the company, grasps work duties with end result in mind.
- Physical Skills: manual dexterity, physical strength, hand-eye coordination
- Mechanical skills: ability to operate equipment and machinery
- Work Efficiency Skills: multi tasking, accuracy, self-starter, learns quickly, detail-oriented, quick to assess new situations, good memory, comparison skills
- Computer Skills: word processing, database, computer presentation, spreadsheets

Question #22: Where do you prefer to hire candidates based on their skill level?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Within the service area including Itasca, Aitkin, and Cass Counties	382	96.22%
Outside of the service area	15	3.78%

Question #23: In 2010 and beyond, what types of positions will you need to fill the most? (Allowed to select all that apply)

<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
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*Job Skills Survey 2004
Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce WFD*

Sales and related	123	30.00%
Office and administrative support	90	21.95%
Business and financial	63	15.37%
Management	55	13.41%
Installation, maintenance, and repair	50	12.20%
Healthcare support	41	10.00%
Computer and mathematical	36	8.78%
Construction and extraction	36	8.78%
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	34	8.29%
Production	33	8.05%
Healthcare practitioners and technical	31	7.56%
Food preparation and serving related	25	6.10%
Transportation and material moving	22	5.37%
Community and social services	21	5.12%
Arts, design, entertainment, sports and media	19	4.63%
Personal care and service	19	4.63%
Education, training, and library	15	3.66%
Architecture and engineering	14	3.41%
Farming, fishing, and forestry	13	3.17%
Legal	4	0.98%
Life, physical, and social science	4	0.98%
Protective service	2	0.49%
Other	6	1.46%

Education Requirements and Qualifications

Question #24: Do you employ high school students?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
No	228	56.02%
Yes	179	43.98%

Question #25: Do you employ college students?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
No	159	38.97%

Yes 249 61.03%

Question #26: In what capacity are you affiliated with local school districts or Itasca Community College? *(More than one answer per respondent is possible)*

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Funding school programs/ activities/events	51	12.43%
Guest speaking	47	11.46%
Internships	46	11.22%
Scholarships	35	8.54%
Career fairs	34	8.29%
Job shadowing	31	7.56%
Work-study	28	6.83%
Mentoring	18	4.39%
Cooperative education	15	3.66%
Reading to students	5	1.22%
Other	27	6.59%
Not affiliated	218	53.17%
Not affiliated but would like someone to contact me	17	4.15%

Question #27: From which type of post-secondary institution do you recruit entry-level employees?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Technical colleges	79	19.27%
Community colleges	76	18.54%
Four year universities	37	9.02%
Private colleges	23	5.61%
Do not recruit from post secondary institutions	260	63.41%

Question #28: In what areas are training/education programs needed that would raise the skill level of your future and current workforce?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Business service programs	134	32.52%
Engineering, construction, and manufacturing programs	56	13.59%
Health services programs	47	11.17%
Human services programs	35	8.50%
Arts and communications programs	34	8.25%
Agriculture and natural resources programs	17	4.13%
Other	89	21.60%

School District Workplace Preparation

Questions #29 - #37: Based on your current employee group, how would you rate your employees preparedness for the workplace from the following schools. *(Data about responses to this question is not provided in this summary, it is only being made available to authorized school district personnel.)*

- Grand Rapids Schools
- Bigfork Schools
- Deer River Schools
- Hill City Schools
- Remer/Longville Schools
- Greenway Schools
- Floodwood Schools
- Nashwauk Schools
- Itasca Community College

Future Trends

Question #38: What secondary industries would be of value to your existing business in years to come? *(This question required written responses)*

Jobs and Industries

- Any and All - 7
- Real Estate
- Digital Printing (Bang in Brainerd)
- Computer Entities-3
- Forestry related
- Forest industries-expand minimal impact of products i.e.: Goods from the Woods
- Volume added wood products i.e.: flooring, wall coverings, post/beam components, fixtures, pre-sized construction, furniture, parts, composites, fiber, biomass
- Secondary Forestry
- Non timber/non industrial use of forests
- Optical labs or warehouses
- Bookkeepers
- Packaging-contracting manufacturing
- Pharmaceutical industry (benefits or healthcare resources)

- Physical therapy
- Auto repair and alignment
- Building trades
- Sawmills
- Trucking-2
- Shipping-2
- Catalog order company that ship via UPS
- Chiropractic assistant
- X-ray tech
- GIS consultants
- Computer programming consultants
- Construction-2
- Communications
- Crane
- Erectors
- Electrical
- Accounting

- Entrepreneurs and cottage industries
- Home based businesses
- Equipment sales and service
- Nursing
- Radiology
- Management
- Surgical technicians
- Transcriptionists
- Medical technicians
- High tech manufacturing
- Laser producing production jobs like the power plant
- Logging
- Low cost freight company
- Niche market agriculture/ wood products

- Business and financial companies that do more than want to pad their own pockets at the cost of the business owner
- Manufacturer-2 like ASV Inc.
- Manufacturing parts locally
- Marketing
- Mining
- Decorating businesses
- Travel industry
- Advertising industry
- More headquarter offices to buy our services
- Would like to see a balance between the number of base manufacturing and service industries

Skills and Services

- Added Technology
- Transportation
- Basic cash register skills
- Better internet service
- Better computer tech support-2
- BSC

- Communication skills -3
- Computer skills-2
- Data entry, EXCEL & Windows software users
- Welding, measuring skills

- The general growth of the community increases our deliveries, stabilizes our workforce, mail volume has decreased so personnel are required to do more with less.

Benefits and Wages, Misc.

- Businesses that bring families to the area
- Higher paying jobs
- Light industry -2
- Living wage jobs that bring younger families to this community so it

- doesn't become a retirement/weekend retreat with big box store chains
- Digital television
- Healthcare products

- Industries that pay a good wage with benefits
- Businesses with employee ownership options

Education

- Emphasis to support the educational environment
- Arrowhead University Center (BSU/ICC)
- Adult educators/trainers

- Post secondary institutions for staff development
- Computer training-2

- Training for technological advances in electrical utilities
- Customer service training

- HCC
- ICC
- Technical school
- Trade school

- UMD
- We are a charitable gaming operation and

- would not need any special education
- Youth center
- Ministry training school

Facilities, Housing, and Tourism

- Park & Recreation Facilities
- Tourist attractions-2
- Tourism-3
- Restaurants for our guests-2
- Retail that interests tourists
- Conference/meeting facilities
- Good quality entertainment
- More tourist related businesses/activities
- Wedding reception facilities

- New development, residential & commercial subdivisions
- New hospital and healthcare campus
- Pain clinics
- Portable toilets
- Promotion of tourism
- New zoning laws affecting resorts has an adverse affect on future resort expansions. It is extremely hard to get permitting etc. to expand or renovate existing resorts
- Resorts
- Service industries

- Housing
- Retail
- Healthcare rehab unit
- Resort, wildlife viewing, camping (RV's), retirement communities
- Promote snowmobiling
- Promote ATV trails
- We look to the hospitality industry to model/transform our services to better serve area residents
- Attract tourists: snowmobiling, ice fishing etc.

Question #39: What new jobs do you anticipate will be created or needed in your future business? (This question required written responses)

Job Types

- Managerial - 4
- Sales - 3
- Welder 3-5 years
- Care giver jobs with new sub-acute facility 50-50
- None 0-2 years
- Rehab technician
- Administrative and general office staff - 2
- Advanced computer graphics and programming
- Advanced graphics design

- Advanced sales and account management
- Mechanical/technical hands on people as technology advances and changes
- Automotive techs - 2
- Basic retail
- Bookkeeper
- Business development specialist
- Writers, people with both imagination,

- knowledge of business and drive!!
- Carpenters helper and skilled carpenter
- Cashier
- Utility
- Customer service
- Children's leader or pastor
- Clerical - 2
- Customer relations
- Service/computer knowledge required

- Coding ICD9, CPT, surgical
- Computer marketing and organizational skills
- Computer person
- Computer related information management
- Theatre lighting
- Sound recording/enhancement
- Costume making
- Equipment operators
- Construction labor
- Engineers and engineering techs
- Cooks and waitresses
- Customer service/sales/loan officer
- Dental assistant
- Dental hygienist
- Dental support staff
- Design (graphics)

Education and Skills

- Additional masters level educators for expanding enrollment in several disciplines
- Computer skills - 2

Education and Skills

- As our business expands, we will require more employment
- Currently in reduction process due to declining enrollment
- Don't foresee new jobs at this office at this time.

Question #40: What can area educational institutions do to meet your future employment needs? *(This question required written responses; the responses have been grouped into general categories for convenience but, in some cases, the responses also have relevance in one or more other categories)*

Work Ethics

- Teach work ethics
- All we really need is cleaning and maintenance workers. We start at \$10.50 per hour for PT (mostly Sat.), seasonal work. No one wants to work—no one takes the work seriously and it seems young people just have a very low work ethic. You tell me what would help to improve that!
- Improved work ethics
- Encourage good work ethic. Although I realize this should be taught at home-it most likely is not.
- I am sure where “work ethics” slid or how institutions can teach these, but it is one area that needs work. The level of commitment and loyalty (pride) needs to rise.
- I believe the schools are doing a good job generally. I think there should be a little more ethic types of training to prepare for the workplace.
- Instill a higher work ethic, values, and self-responsibility.
- Interview/interpersonal skills, ethics
- It appears that most entry-level staff lacks good work ethics. Younger staff

- seems to have a feeling of “entitlement” rather than a spirit for hard work and growth in their professional life. I’m not positive what education institutions can provide other than some basic courses in old-fashioned work pride and loyalty. Times have changed and with that, so has our younger workers mentality about work.
- Morals and good work ethics
 - Motivation to work. Too many people are not willing to work.
 - Offer courses on work ethics (preparing for job responsibilities), interviewing/hiring process, interpersonal skills, and managerial skills
 - Self esteem, motivation, good work ethics, willingness to work and be productive
 - So much of the younger generation that we’ve dealt with has a “The world owes me” attitude. We see that people are less and less willing to work hard and apply themselves. If these simple qualities could be taught or conveyed to open eyes, we would all be a lot better off and a lot happier as employers and employees.
 - Soft skills training-grooming/hygiene, attendance, punctuality, work ethic!
 - Teach basic job skills including work ethics. Employees need to understand job descriptions and appropriate boundaries within the work place. Learn how to appreciate and work with authority figures and within own job description. Listening skills and good customer service.
 - Work ethic is another area. Someone who is not afraid of doing hard work.
 - Teach job ethics
 - Teach kids to work and how to be a valuable employee. Many do not have a concept of staying on task and doing quality work without having a supervisor watching over them.
- Teach life skills. Teamwork, customer service, punctuality, work ethics
 - Teach moral absolutes, including character qualities. There is a right and wrong-not situational ethics. Education based on God’s work the Bible, like originally public education started in the country. I personally know of a couple of Christian schools and several home schools who are doing an excellent job in this.
 - Teach the students a good work ethic. More mechanical skills. Too many young people feel that they should start at the top of their chosen fields. They feel that they are wise beyond their years and could run a business better than the company (sometimes they probably could)
 - Teach work ethics
 - Teach work ethics, provide real job experience
 - Teach ethics, responsibility. Improve written language/spelling programs
 - Teach them work ethics and to have them show responsibility for the work they are doing. Good work ethics are essential to a successful employer and employee.
 - The main employment problem here is showing up on time on scheduled days, staying and finishing a shift and working. Basic ethics in the younger people are not there. In health service, you cannot just walk out in the middle of a shift. Education in working efficiency skills would be a great help.
 - Willing to work, willing to learn
 - Work to instill honesty and integrity above all else.
 - Working more on basic work/business ethics would help all general local industries.

Work Skills, General and Basic (in addition to work ethics items reported above)

- At the high school level, I think people skills need improvements. My employees have been ok, but many people that apply have very poor skills.
- Basic math-% and basics. They know the algebra etc, but not good concept of simple math. (No ability to do this in

- the “head”) Also, simple problem solving skills.
- Basic math skills, grammar and personal people skills
 - Basic skills, vocational OTT opportunities, construction, plumbing, heating, electrical, desk clerks.
 - Basic skills: math, reading, and computer skills.
 - Demand excellence in learning. Students should demonstrate skills before graduation.
 - Educate skilled operators on equipment
 - Educate youth more on consumer finance basis-handling credit wisely, investing, teach time management and problem solving skills, decision making and teamwork
 - Emphasize life skills such as: pride in work one does, no matter how menial the task may be, trustworthy, being to work on time (no excuses), being able to work independently, once job is learned think of tasks to be done without direction.
 - Ensure that all students have adequate basic skills especially in writing, speaking and computer use.
 - Estimating skills
 - Give a good sound education. Promote thinking on their feet; promote professionalism and pride in work. Good people handling and co-worker skills.
 - Identify students who are vocationally skilled vs. academically adept. Direct them to technical schools, facilitate placement service. Stress personal habits i.e.: responsibility and dependability.
 - Improve computer skills
 - Increase standards for English, grammar and communication skills. In my opinion, too many kids are coming out of school not knowing how to read, write or speak well. Good communication is key to a successful business if it involves any.
 - Indicate that construction trade skills are very important to the future of the country.
 - Interpersonal and thinking skills and preparedness for change. There are some basic physical requirements that will not change.
 - More concentration on spelling skills
 - More social skills, more tech skills
 - More skilled personnel
 - Nothing I can think of. We are of retirement age and our employees have consisted mostly of my 7 children at various times. Now, more grandchildren for the most part I like to know the people I hire and have a personal knowledge of their character and skills.
 - Offer customer service skills as part of classes. Customer service is really lacking in most businesses.
 - One of the biggest issues would be to teach basic mathematical skills to the upcoming generations. Our largest problem is finding entry-level employees that can count back money and make change without the use of a cash register to tell them the amount of change to give back. It is overwhelming how many younger people can't perform this simple task!
 - Personal qualities, entrepreneurial skills-someone who cares about coming to work and want to grow with the company, work efficiency skills, thinking skills.
 - Provide more practical application on needed skills
 - Stress the basics: reading, comprehensive, writing, English language usage and knowledge, communication skills, computer skills, spreadsheets.
 - Teach basic interpersonal skills, phone skills, proper dress. I get people every week applying for a job that call on the phone or come in with another person or underdressed and do not have a basic resume.
 - Teach customer service skills. We find that many youth don't make eye contact, don't speak up, create conversation and sometimes are not polite. They tend to think they are always right.
 - Teach life skills, relationship skills and conflict resolution skills
 - Teach more basic skills-spelling, math etc.

- Teach people the basics (reading, writing and math) so we can teach them job specific skills.
- Technical skills development in welding
- Understanding business, entrepreneurial skills, understanding of free enterprise system, understanding of relationship between work/reward, understanding respect for all people.
- We need classes in medical coding. HCPCS coding, customer service skills, better English and communication skills.
- We need to teach people skills. How to communicate, how to present oneself,

how to solve problems, how to manage. The technical aspects of a position can be accomplished with on the job training. The people skills are much more difficult to develop.

- Dressing for work (including before hired and asking for application)
- Showing up for work
- Health-conscious behavior
- Honesty. Good luck.
- Integrity, friendliness, responsibility, self-management

Suggestions About Specific Career Fields

- A focused effort at creating sales professionals vs. just business administration
- Add more vo-tech classes, hands on education, customer service
- Add training specific to our industry, screen-printing and manufacturing press operation
- Automotive, computer
- Basic computer classes.
- Better math and business courses.
- Better training for office work environment and administration
- Birch bark business, log home building
- Business management training
- Business, computers, accounting
- Civil engineering, truck driving
- Computer and business programs are important.
- Computer software training, micro station drawing software, eagle point design software
- Computer/GIS training of students and continuing education opportunities
- Fine-tune and concentrate instruction on specific math's and sciences instead of just touching on them as an overview i.e.: calculators, physics, and geometry.
- Forget the P.E. and elective stuff, teach them the stuff they need and get them out to the workforce.
- Educate more dental hygienists and assistants

- Great local nursing programs at ICC
- Have automotive related classes
- High schools should stress industrial and mechanical jobs for majority of students
- Heavy carpentry course at ICC, AT training courses, teach students the "Dale Carnegie" course.
- High schools should stress industrial and mechanical jobs for majority of students
- Keep abreast of changes in the electrical industry so our employees can learn safe and efficient ways to maintain the electrical distribution system with the advances in technology.
- Keep preparing kids for college. Stay on top of computer trends.
- Lab tech, x-ray tech, medical records, coders, transcriptionists,
- Teach people to close in sales. Be self-motivated and creative and responsible
- Local programs to educate dental assistants and hygienists
- Maintain strong arts programs
- Managerial studies
- More communication classes, practical uses More local tech programs offered at local colleges
- More local tech programs offered at local colleges
- More people with CDL and driving experience

- My most concern is kids are not taught enough of the basics at home-dish washing, cleaning, etc.
- Offer a business entrepreneurial course for those of us who own a small business that would like to expand to create more jobs in the Grand Rapids area.
- Offer animation technology classes
- Offer classes for opticians
- Offer graphic design classes
- Offer insurance courses
- Offer land-surveying courses that link together with St. Cloud State University. B.S. degree in land surveying
- Offer sales strategy education
- Organic gardening and sales
- Owner/operator drivers
- Pharmacy technician
- Promote journalism as a career path with student papers and classes
- Provide as many business classes as possible.
- Provide some education in basic customer service
- Put more time and money into the vocational areas in high schools. Not everyone can be a doctor, lawyer or stockbroker.
- Raise awareness of value of farming and promote better marketing possibilities in the area.
- Support music education, especially orchestral
- Train more people to do mechanic work
- Train students on the care of people with Alzheimer's
- Two-year degrees in line and electrical technicians
- We live in a high tourism industry area. Maybe offer classes in high school and summer hands on programs with resorts and hotels. Maybe this would create interest and keep young families in the area.

Suggestions About Education, Training, and Teaching

- Make sure graduate can read and write properly—too many cannot do either and this is very sad!!
- Allow speakers to explain our different types of occupations.
- Continue to expand through on line courses to meet individual needs
- Continue to provide community ed training
- Currently collaborating with local colleges (ICC, Hibbing, Lake Superior)
- Develop business etiquette
- Don't let students graduate if they don't meet educational requirements
- Educate students on work
- Educate young people about the advantages of a small healthy town
- Expand, improve, continue to offer on-line instruction, which allows people to live in remote areas and still become educated.
- Have openness to Christian spiritual training
- Industrial arts classes seem to have slipped by the wayside and I believe they are more vital than our educators do.
- I feel it would be advantageous for students to be involved with professional businesses outside of this community—a few days of witnessing a climate of career professional. Personal presentation is also lacking.
- ICC—continue to provide Human Service Programs. Encourage community internship to help students (future employees) gain experience in the workplace.
- ICC, Hibbing vo-tech
- In the future, offer our employees without diplomas GED class information
- Instill a better sense of responsibility i.e.: arrive at work on time and ready to start, don't wait to be told what to do—if you see that it needs to be done, do it. If you will be late or can't work to call.
- Internships at local business
- It would be great if schools were able to require respect and honesty from students. There seems to be a lack of it

- in the younger workforce. I realize to do so may be interpreted as a “violation of the students civil right”. Good help (honesty, responsible, dependable, self motivated) is truly hard to find.
- It’s adequate at present for these fields
 - Let students know they should expect to have to compete and should want to win that expectation.
 - Maintain quality of education and make education opportunities accessible for everyone
 - Make college affordable
 - More hands on training
 - Offer a travel program to students
 - Offer certification, seminars
 - Offer education topics for area schools at a low cost (requesting topic input from school districts)
 - Please keep generating many students with interests and motivation learn. Create “life long learners”. Thanks
 - Promote local employment/provide adequate and substantive customer based (priority) education to potential employees/students
 - Provide continuing education. Address needs for aging population, address end of life issues i.e.: family roles, quality of life, and responsibilities.
 - Raise the “standards” bar both educationally and behaviorally. Demand responsibility and accountability
 - Responsibility, counting back change, listening to instructions and following them, asking questions, self-starting.
 - Seems odd, but back to the basics of manners and common sense in everyday situations
 - Teach accountability
 - Teach all young people the importance of credit worthiness.
 - Teach character and morals, be stricter with students, and establish school dress codes. Fad hairstyles, clothing, etc. all create a self focused culture-this strikes at the root of our employment problems. People want what’s in it for them. What feels good for them, rather than what is best, right, just or equitable, good for the society or our culture.
 - Teach common sense
- Teach responsibility in what they do
 - Teach students how to count change.
 - Teach the basics. Basic communication with the general public, how to professionally present themselves in speaking, appearance and attitude. Understanding why businesses are business. Get the big picture.
 - Teach the kids how to write better, teach respect, to be more responsible
 - Teach the students to first seek: doing a job to the best of their ability and enjoy a job well done before “how much money do I make?”
 - Teach their students to be their best and take pride in what they do
 - Technical schools continue with the job type training. As jobs are completed, have students quickly go to a new project.
 - Technical college education. This community needs to address good paying jobs for women. We have a glut of women, college educated, making low wages. Why? What jobs are available fore women?
 - Train people how to count change, responsibility
 - Train students in teamwork, attitude, etc.
 - Train students on the basics, counting back change without using a calculator, customer service, appearance, how businesses actually operate, rules, taxes, advertising, strategies, competition. Train them for a job interview.
 - Transitional student services for students that have special needs
 - Utilize the college more-We are here and try to anticipate employer needs as well as react, but need your help.
 - We do all of our own training so we get the results we want
 - We have to allow teachers and employers (esp. teachers) to drill and teach the younger generation about how important discipline and honesty is. A lot of problems in the workforce can be led back to a few basic rules not entirely enforced.
 - We need additional options for four year and graduate learning close to home. Focus on technology, engineering, more work with business

on internships. More focus on non-traditional students (financial

assistance, childcare, etc.)

Uncategorized Suggestions

- Being responsible on starting wages based on education and job applying for.
- Be flexible and be prepared to fill gaps as they arise.
- Jobs - with jobs come employment and family opportunities (our church population depletes with aging and families moving away).
- Let families raise their children without government interference.
- Offer a hassle free support base for business owners who have an idea for

expansion so we don't miss any important details that could create a hardship. Primarily financial.

- THANKS TO THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE. WE NEED MINDS THINKING INNOVATIVELY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY.
- They are adequate

Findings

Selected Findings

The survey data provides a rich resource upon which detailed analysis may be done. Some notable selected findings include:

- More than 70% of survey respondents said that they have moderate or extreme difficulty finding well-prepared candidates for entry-level employment positions.
- The greatest difficulties stated by respondents in finding well-prepared employment candidates are declining attitudes/work ethics and lack of skills.
- Only about 5% of local employers prefer a Baccalaureate (4-year) degree or more for entry-level employees.
- Educational preferences are higher for future entry-level employees than for current entry-level employees.
- The majority of employers responding prefer new employees to have at least some work experience.
- Approximately 2/3 of respondent employers pay under \$10.00 per hour.
- Approximately 94% of respondent employers pay under \$15.00 per hour.
- The highest number of training areas listed by survey respondents, are sales and related, office and administrative, and business and financial jobs.

The survey data are considered to be useful for developing recommendations for community, employer, or educational system action, although such recommendations are not developed in this survey report. Collection and reporting of survey data is considered to be sound and valid, however, as with all surveys, care must be taken when analyzing and interpreting data.

Findings for Individual Survey Questions

The 410 survey responses provide information from the business community about their businesses, about their human resources, and about how they see their need for new, entry-level employees. This information may yield clues to work force development efforts that would be most helpful with respect to economic development in the Itasca County area. Reviewing in more detail the responses to each of the survey questions (not including the restricted school district information nor the extensive comments about future trends) yields individual question findings including:

- The majority of responses were from Grand Rapids. Responses were submitted from all parts of Itasca County, with only three zip codes not producing a survey response.

- The majority of respondents, more than 62%, reported that they were year round businesses. Among businesses with significant identifiable seasonality, businesses indicated that summer was their primary business season.
- Businesses indicating that retail trade was their main business produced the largest number of responses, 23.99%. Overall, responses were indicated in each of the 26 listed categories with an additional 9.03% of respondents indicating business types other than those listed.
- The majority of respondents, 56.44%, indicated that they had 4 or fewer employees. 86.39% of respondents indicated they had 19 or fewer employees.
- A large number, 72.35%, of respondents indicated that they had 4 or fewer part time employees. Of companies with 250 or more employees, none reported having part time employees.
- 82.47% of respondents indicated that 25% or fewer of their employees were considered “seasonal”, while 7.41% indicated that all of their employees were seasonal.
- 87.72% of respondents indicated that a union represented less than 25% of their employees. 1.25% of respondents indicated that a union represented 100% of their employees.
- About half, 49.53%, of respondents indicated that the Itasca County area was the primary market for their product or service. 8.45% of respondents indicated that their primary markets were national, international, or other than the choices listed.
- The majority, 72.24%, of respondents indicated that their employment did not vary by more than 10% in any season.
- A variety of unions represent employees in the survey area. The largest number of respondents, 4.18%, indicated that AFSCME represents their employees. However, 86% of respondents indicated that their employees have no union representation.
- 94.32% of respondents pay less than \$15.00/hour for entry-level employment wages.
- More than half, 61.71% of survey respondents said that they provide paid time off for a variety of reasons for their employees, and many surveyed employers offer a range of other benefits. 27.56% of respondents said that their businesses offer no benefits to employees.

- 74.14% of respondents indicated that less than 25% of their average yearly employment was considered entry-level. 6.65% of respondents indicated that 75-100% of their average yearly employment is considered entry-level.
- 50% of survey respondents prefer at least a high school diploma for entry-level employees. 21.65% of respondents indicate no preference for a minimum educational level for their entry-level employees.
- 45.5% of survey respondents prefer at least a high school diploma for entry-level employees. 19.86% of respondents indicate having no preference for a minimum educational level for their 2002 entry-level employees.
- 50.86% of survey respondents prefer at least 1-3 years of experience for entry-level employees. 43.77% of respondents indicate either no experience is needed or they had no preference for a minimum educational level for their year 2002 entry-level employees.
- 53.92% of survey respondents prefer at least 1-3 years of experience for future entry-level employees. 39.22% of respondents indicate either no experience will be needed or they will have no preference for a minimum educational level for their future entry-level employees.
- 72.1% of respondents found difficulty finding well-prepared candidates for entry-level positions.
- 43.23% of respondents, who indicated difficulty in finding well-prepared candidates for entry-level positions, indicated that lack of skills, training, and/or education lead to the difficulty, while declining attitudes/work ethics accounted for 34.95% of the difficulty.
- 88.25% of survey respondents stated they do not offer military preference in hiring for new positions.
- Survey respondents indicated a wide range of skills that are lacking in their employees. Although there was no indication of a single, overriding skill that was lacking, thinking skills, work efficiency skills, and personal qualities were listed more frequently than technical skills.
- 96.22% of survey respondents said that they prefer to hire new employee candidates from the Itasca/Aitkin/Cass Counties area.
- Survey respondents indicated the most need to hire new employees for sales and related positions (30.00% of respondents), office and administrative support (21.95%), and for business and financial positions (15.37%)

- 56.02% of survey respondents said that they do not employ high school students.
- 61.03% of survey respondents said that they employ college students.
- Many businesses reported that they affiliate with local educational institutions; 53.17% of survey respondents said that they are not affiliated with local school districts or Itasca Community College in any of ten specified activities.
- 63.41% of survey respondents said that they do not recruit entry-level employees from post secondary educational and training institutions.
- Of six listed program types needed to raise skill levels of the future and current workforce, business service programs were the most frequently mentioned by survey respondents followed by engineering/construction/manufacturing programs, and health services programs.