
Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment

Prepared for Travel Oregon

Research Manager

Ladan Ghahramani

Summer 2020

ECONorthwest
ECONOMICS • FINANCE • PLANNING


Program and Policy Insight 

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	IV
PREFACE.....	V
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	VI
PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT.....	VI
METHODOLOGY.....	VI
WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE TOURISM WORKFORCE IN OREGON?	VI
WHAT ARE THE PERCEIVED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY?	VII
WHAT IS THE HIRING EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY?	VIII
WHAT IS THE RETENTION EXPERIENCE IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY?	VIII
WHAT IS THE TRAINING EXPERIENCE IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY?.....	VIII
WHAT WORKFORCE PLANNING AND FORECASTING FACTORS AFFECT THE TOURISM INDUSTRY?.....	VIII
WHAT WORKFORCE RECOMMENDATIONS EMERGED FROM THE RESEARCH?	IX
2. INTRODUCTION.....	10
LITERATURE REVIEW	10
DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS	10
STAKEHOLDER SURVEY	10
KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS	14
REPORT STRUCTURE	14
3. WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE TOURISM WORKFORCE IN OREGON?.....	15
DATA SOURCES AND METHODS	15
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TOURISM WORKFORCE	16
4. WHAT ARE THE PERCEIVED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY?	30
INDUSTRY CHARACTERISTICS.....	30
BEST PRACTICES AND CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER RESEARCH	33
5. WHAT IS THE HIRING EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY?.....	34
DIFFICULTY IN HIRING	34
EXTERNAL BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT.....	38
REQUIRED SKILL LEVEL	40
PREFERENCES FOR CERTIFICATIONS AND CERTIFICATES	47
RECRUITMENT RESOURCES.....	48
EMPLOYER-PROVIDED BENEFITS	50
BEST PRACTICES AND CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER RESEARCH	53
6. WHAT IS THE RETENTION EXPERIENCE IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY?	55
RETENTION DIFFICULTY	55
RETENTION STRATEGIES	57
BEST PRACTICES AND CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER RESEARCH	60
7. WHAT IS THE TRAINING EXPERIENCE IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY?.....	61
CAREER PIPELINES.....	61
OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT	62
TRAINING SUPPORT	64
TRAINING RESOURCES.....	66
BEST PRACTICES AND CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER RESEARCH	68

8. WHAT WORKFORCE PLANNING AND FORECASTING FACTORS AFFECT THE TOURISM INDUSTRY?	69
SEASONALITY	69
AUTOMATION	71
BEST PRACTICES AND CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER RESEARCH	73
9. WHAT WORKFORCE RECOMMENDATIONS EMERGED FROM THE RESEARCH?	74
EDUCATION AND TRAINING	75
JOB QUALITY AND STABILITY.....	77
INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITIES	78
10. CONCLUSION	80
11. BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	81
12. APPENDIX A. SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS.....	84
EMPLOYER RESPONDENTS.....	84
EMPLOYEE RESPONDENTS.....	90
13. APPENDIX B. VARIATION BY SUBGROUP.....	96
SECTOR.....	96
GEOGRAPHY	100
EMPLOYER SIZE	101
PUBLIC VERSUS PRIVATE COMPANY STATUS	103
EMPLOYEE TENURE IN TOURISM INDUSTRY	103
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	103
14. APPENDIX C. STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS	105
TOURISM WORKFORCE ASSESSMENT: HIGH LEVEL STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....	105
TOURISM WORKFORCE ASSESSMENT: KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL	106
15. APPENDIX D. SURVEY INSTRUMENT	109

Acknowledgments

ECONorthwest and Program and Policy Insight would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for making this project possible: the Oregon Employment Department and Dean Runyan Associates for providing data essential to the quantitative analysis; the employers, employees, and industry stakeholders who offered their insight and experience through interviews and surveys; and Travel Oregon for leading the project and providing valuable feedback throughout.

Preface

This workforce assessment was completed in 2019 and early 2020, just prior to the World Health Organization declaring COVID-19 a pandemic. A few months later, the murder of George Floyd sparked a movement against racial injustice, with the national spotlight on inequities faced by Black, Indigenous and people of color. In late summer, massive wildfires erupted across the state, devastating several communities. Smoke generated from the wildfires covered the state for weeks (often at hazardous levels), impacting business operations statewide. These three major events have affected Oregon's tourism industry in different ways.

The pandemic has radically altered the travel and tourism industry in the short term and its effects will linger for years to come. The crisis will likely accelerate some of the trends identified in this report, such as the pace of automation, while others will lessen in importance. However, as the industry recovers it will face many, if not all the workforce challenges discussed throughout the assessment. The pandemic has temporarily, if dramatically, reduced demand for workers, yet most of the skill needs identified in the assessment will remain critical, and may be intensified in some cases, as employers rely on fewer staff with broader skill sets.

Racial and social injustice has manifested itself across the industry – from incidents where people of color traveling in the state have been targeted, to social media accounts like @86dlistpdx detailing specific instances of racism and inequity toward staff and customers in Portland-area restaurants. This, coupled with an overall lack of diversity across the industry (90% of respondents who participated in the workforce assessment survey identified as white), presents an opportunity to confront racism and work toward a more diverse and inclusive tourism industry.

Oregon's tourism industry has been impacted by wildfires in the past, but the 2020 wildfire season is unprecedented. It may be several months before full damages and associated losses are assessed. While some businesses closed due to hazardous air quality, Oregonians across the state were displaced in evacuations, their homes and businesses destroyed.

As the industry copes with these shifts in the tourism economy, nimble industry support organizations (e.g., destination marketing organizations, workforce development, training partners and universities) will find opportunities to develop new initiatives with a focus on diversity and inclusion, and build on existing efforts to improve tourism career pipelines, recruiting practices, certifications and training programs. This document should serve both as a baseline assessment of conditions in Oregon's travel and tourism industry during good economic times, and a way in which to assess the effects of the social justice movement, increasingly catastrophic wildfire seasons and the COVID-19 pandemic, and as a guide for addressing persistent workforce issues going forward.



1. Executive Summary

Purpose of the project

The tourism workforce is the frontline of the tourism industry, contributing significantly to the quality of visitors' experiences and the overall success of the industry. Tourism industry leaders in Oregon are committed to supporting the needs of the industry's workforce and developing a deeper understanding of employment trends and stakeholders' perceptions of and experience in the industry. To better understand industry workforce conditions and help inform policy discussions and solutions, Travel Oregon hired ECONorthwest and Program and Policy Insight to complete a workforce assessment for the tourism industry in Oregon. This assessment was loosely patterned after the *Oregon Talent Assessment* completed in 2018, which focused on ten primarily traded-sector industries.¹

Methodology

The assessment included four key components: a literature review to identify key themes in the industry; analysis of employment and wage data to quantify tourism trends; a stakeholder survey of employers and employees in the tourism industry in Oregon to identify emerging trends and variation in experience; and key informant interviews to collect relevant insights on stakeholders' perceptions about and experience in the tourism industry in Oregon. Quantitative and qualitative analyses synthesize these data sources to answer the research questions posed in each section. The survey yielded just over 700 complete or usable responses—about 60 percent from employers and 40 percent from employees across tourism sectors and regions of the state.²

What is the current status of the tourism workforce in Oregon?

The data analyzed for this study present an industry characterized by large seasonal swings in employment and dominated by occupations requiring relatively little formal education with relatively low wages. These characteristics align with the perceptions of employers and employees in the tourism industry as well as the findings from the literature review.

Estimated tourism employment in Oregon has increased steadily over time, from 75,170 in 2012 to 89,079 in 2017, representing annual growth of 3.2 percent per year, consistent with

¹ Studied industries: Advanced manufacturing, Bioscience, Construction, Energy, Food and beverage manufacturing, Healthcare, Maritime, Outdoor gear and apparel, Technology and software development, and Wood products. See Oregon Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB), *Oregon Talent Assessment* (2018).

² Conclusions drawn from the survey come with an important caveat: the employers who responded to the survey are not necessarily the same employers for whom the employee survey respondents work, and the respondent groups are not necessarily (and were not designed to be) representative of the tourism workforce overall. Employee respondents, for example, were more highly educated and paid than the industry workforce overall, warranting caution in comparing and interpreting survey results (e.g., perceived industry characteristics).

employment growth for all industries combined. Tourism employment exhibits significant seasonality: the average change in employment between the summer and winter seasons between 2012 and 2017 is 13 percent, with seasonal fluctuation of tourism employment (relative to statewide employment overall) remaining fairly stable across the decade.³ The share of employment attributed to tourism ranges from 3 to 23 percent across the state's regions, with a statewide average of 4.8 percent.

Accommodation and food services is the industry with the most tourism employees in Oregon as well as the largest share of employment attributable to tourism (34%). Arts, entertainment, and recreation, the industry that includes guides and outfitters, has a smaller share of total tourism employment but tourism accounts for a slightly larger share of industry employment (37%). Both the number of tourism employees and the share of industry attributed to tourism are much lower for other industries (2% to 11%).

Occupations associated with accommodation and food services—hotel desk clerks, bartenders, housekeeping occupations, etc.—comprise nearly all of the most common tourism occupations, and the 20 most common tourism occupations account for 77 percent of tourism employment in Oregon. The data suggest tourism employment will grow slightly faster than overall employment, although anticipated growth varies considerably across occupations.

Tourism employment requires relatively little formal education for most positions: only one-quarter (25%) of tourism employment requires formal education (a high school diploma, equivalent, or higher) for entry-level jobseekers, compared to nearly three-quarters (73%) of non-tourism employment. Typical wages in the industry comport with these findings: average median wage for tourism employment is \$13.99/hour versus the overall median wage of \$19.03 (including tips) across all occupations; tourism wages are lower than non-tourism wages even after controlling for competitive education levels assigned by Oregon Employment Department (OED).

What are the perceived characteristics of the tourism industry?

The key industry characteristics described in this report, listed below, are somewhat more positive than the typical patterns reported by researchers of the industry, possibly due in part to the relatively highly educated and paid employee respondents to the survey.

- Welcoming, positive work environment
- Open door for hard-working, skilled and unskilled workers alike
- Opportunities for career growth and transferrable skills
- Relatively low wages and benefits
- More career orientation in some sectors than others

³ High and low seasons vary across regions of the state, but on average across regions, summer is the high season and winter is the low season.

What is the hiring experience within the tourism industry?

Most employers in the tourism industry reported difficulty finding qualified workers, similar to employers across other key industries in Oregon (*Oregon Talent Assessment, 2018*). Key findings about the hiring experience in Oregon include the following:

- Tourism employers hire less-qualified applicants in response to hiring difficulty
- External barriers to recruitment may affect the tourism industry more than other industries
- Applicants have insufficient digital and organizational-management skills and tourism-specific knowledge
- Word of mouth is the most prevalent means of advertising for and finding jobs
- Benefits are limited in the tourism industry

What is the retention experience in the tourism industry?

Employers agree that turnover is common in Oregon's tourism industry, particularly among part-time and seasonal employees. Increasing pay was the top retention strategy identified by employers and employees.

What is the training experience in the tourism industry?

This assessment's main findings about training suggest an opportunity to create, enhance, and communicate career pipelines, pathways, and advancement opportunities:

- Clear career pipelines are lacking but the industry offers advancement opportunities
- Most employers indicated their business has paid for employee training; employees were less likely to report they received paid training
- Employers felt they are most responsible for training their workforce

What workforce planning and forecasting factors affect the tourism industry?

Seasonality is a widespread and significant challenge for the tourism industry. Employers must find and retain qualified employees interested in seasonal work and/or figure out how to employ them year-round. Key findings on these topics are below:

- Seasonality is a prevalent feature of the tourism industry that affects employee attraction and retention
- Employers use diverse strategies to help retain the workforce through the seasons, such as reducing employee hours, offering training opportunities, and agreeing to re-hire the same employees the next season

- Most employers do not see automation as a significant factor for the tourism industry, although research suggests that automation will nonetheless disrupt many common tourism occupations to some extent

What workforce recommendations emerged from the research?

Recommendations resulting from this workforce assessment can be organized into the three categories below. Key potential actors to enact each recommendation are noted in parentheses:

Education and training

- Build and market a more formal pipeline (cross-sector)
- Improve coordination, communication, and data sharing between employers and educators (employers and educators)
- Communicate clearer, structured opportunities for advancement (employers and DMOs/trade associations)

Job quality and stability

- Create pooled benefit programs (employers and DMOs/trade associations)
- Develop complementary off-season businesses to reduce seasonality challenges (employers)
- Consider other ways to address real or perceived job quality issues (employers)

Industry-specific opportunities

- Focus on branding to raise awareness of tourism as a career path (DMOs/trade associations)
- Continue supporting small businesses and employers (DMOs/trade associations)
- Advocate with state and federal agencies for the recreational use of public lands (DMOs/trade associations and government)
- Continue seeking out opportunities to build Oregon's agritourism market (cross-sector)
- Focus on rural tourism development (cross-sector)

Travel Oregon could play a number of roles in enacting these recommendations, such as leader, communicator, facilitator, or convener. Many stakeholders cited Travel Oregon's strengths in communication, brand messaging, and marketing, which could play a role in several of the described efforts.

2. Introduction

The workforce assessment conducted for Travel Oregon comprised four key components: a literature review to identify key themes in the industry and inform data collection protocols; analysis of employment and wage data to quantify tourism trends; a stakeholder survey of employers and employees in the tourism industry in Oregon to identify emerging trends and variation in experience; and key informant interviews to collect relevant insights that provide a deeper understanding of stakeholders' perceptions about and experience in the tourism industry in Oregon. Quantitative and qualitative analyses synthesize these diverse data sources to support Travel Oregon's understanding of key tourism workforce issues and possible opportunities.

Literature Review

The literature review for the project summarized current research on tourism workforce development, including trends, challenges, and possible ways to address those challenges. The purpose of the review was to bring forward the major challenges and issues tourism businesses experience in trying to develop and retain their workforce. The review also included case studies of how tourism agencies have developed their own workforce and best practices for addressing common workforce challenges. Relevant findings from the literature review are discussed at the end of each report section.

Data Collection and Analysis

Concurrent with the literature review the project team collected and analyzed administrative data primarily from the (OED), including firm-level employment counts and total payroll from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), occupational projections, and data from Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) reports. Employment ratios from Dean Runyan Associates were also essential to the analysis. The data analysis provides information about employment and workforce characteristics and trends in the tourism industry, including industry size by region, top occupations, educational requirements, wages, anticipated occupational growth, and risk of automation.

Stakeholder Survey

The goal of the stakeholder survey⁴ was to collect broad input on key aspects of the tourism industry across employers and employees. The survey was fielded online using the Survey Gizmo platform and shared through Travel Oregon's extensive industry network. The survey received 515 complete responses and 397 partial responses. Partial response analysis yielded 194 usable responses (i.e., responses that had completed a majority or all of the survey but had

⁴ Please see Appendix D for a copy of the stakeholder survey.

not clicked “submit”). Of the 709 complete or usable responses, 415 were from individuals that had responsibility for hiring another staff person (referred to as “employers” in the analysis) and 294 were from individuals that had not been responsible for hiring another staff person (referred to as “employees” in the analysis). The following section provides a brief overview of respondent characteristics. Please see Appendix A for more details on survey respondent demographics.

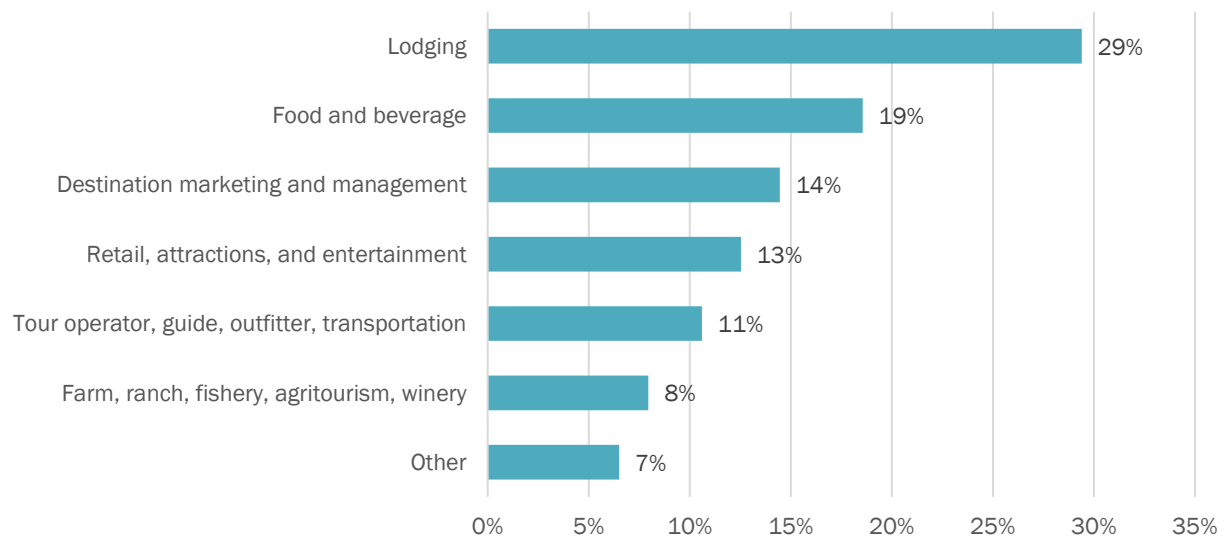
Employer Respondents

Employer respondents were from diverse sectors within tourism. As noted in Figure 1, nearly one-third of employer respondents identified lodging as their primary sector, followed by food and beverage and destination marketing and management. Among those who identified a secondary sector, one-third identified food and beverage and roughly one-fifth each identified “other” or retail, attractions, and entertainment.

Employer respondents represented diverse tourism sectors

Figure 1. Percent of employer survey respondents by sector

N=415



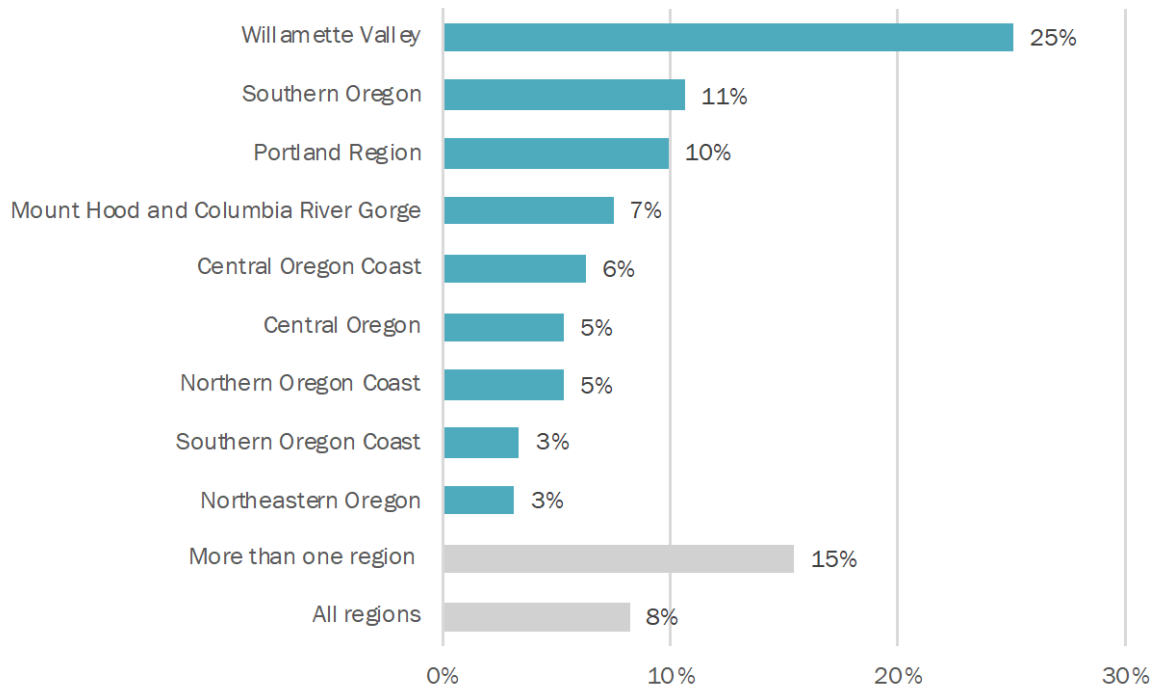
Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Most employer respondents worked in private organizations (64%) and the vast majority worked for for-profit organizations (87%). Employer respondents also tended to work for small organizations. Half of employer organizations had nine or fewer employees, and 37 percent had between 10 and 99 employees.

As shown in Figure 2, one-quarter of employer respondents operated in the Willamette Valley, followed by 15 percent that worked in more than one region, and 11 percent that operated in Southern Oregon. Employer respondents were highly educated, with 70 percent holding a bachelor’s or graduate degree, and most were female (67%). Employer survey respondents represented a range of ages, with roughly half of employer respondents 50 years or older, and half younger than 50.

Employers represented diverse geographic regions; one-quarter of survey respondents were from the Willamette Valley region

Figure 2. Percent of employer survey respondents by geographic region
N=415



Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Almost all employer survey respondents were white (94%), with 3 percent each reporting race as multiracial, Asian, or other race. Employer respondents were also asked to estimate their annual income: approximately half of employer respondents made between \$50,000 and \$99,999. Twenty percent made above \$100,000 and 9 percent made below \$25,000.

Employee Respondents

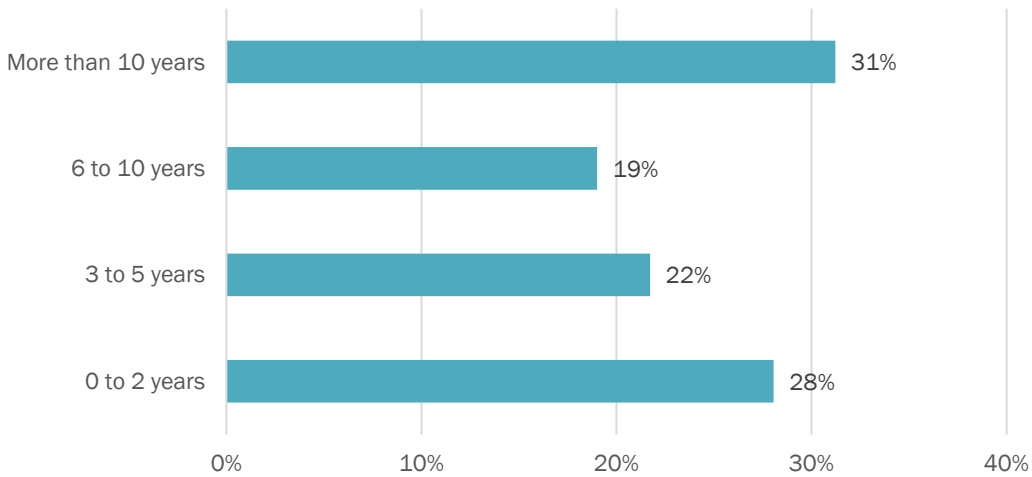
As shown in Figure 3, employee respondents were fairly evenly distributed across tenure in tourism, with nearly 30 percent each working in tourism for less than 2 years or more than 10 years. Most respondents were full-time, year-round workers (73%), with 15 percent part-time year-round workers and 11 percent seasonal workers. Among the 9 percent of employee respondents earning less than \$25,000, 37 percent were full-time year-round workers, 10 percent were full-time seasonal workers, 47 percent were part-time year-round workers, and 7 percent were part-time seasonal workers.

Thus, overall analysis of employee survey feedback is largely composed of full-time, year-round workers in the industry, whose input varies in some cases from part-time workers.

Employee respondents were equally distributed across tenure in tourism

Figure 3. Percent of employee respondents by length of tenure in tourism

N=221



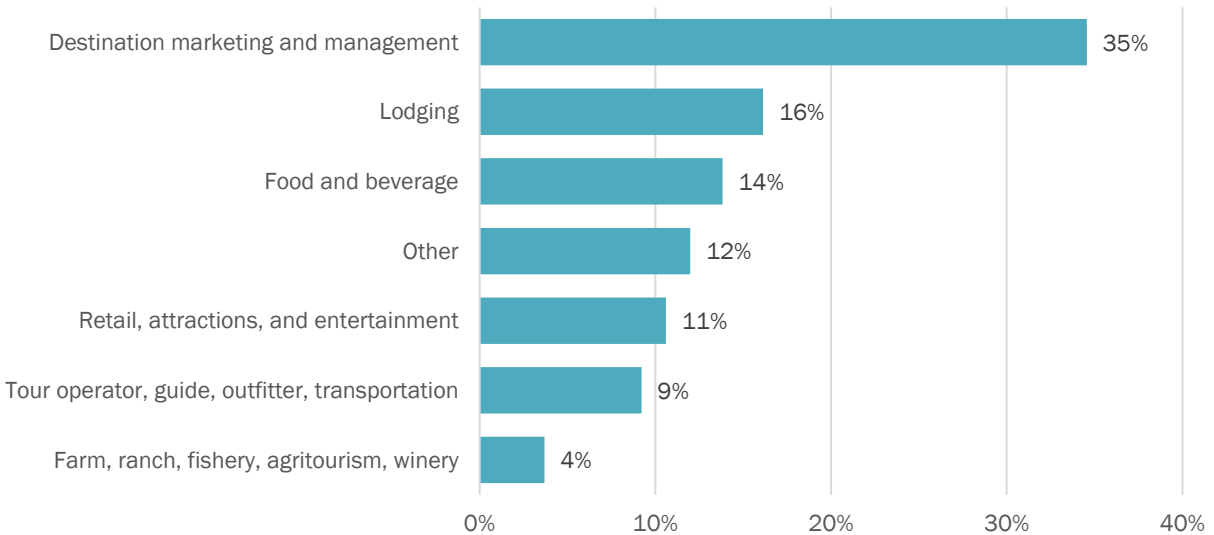
Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

One-third of employee survey respondents were from destination marketing and management (compared with 14% of employer respondents), followed by the lodging and food and beverage sectors, as shown in Figure 4. The composition of represented sectors is important to consider when interpreting the generalizability of results across sectors.

One-third of employee survey respondents were from the destination marketing and management sector

Figure 4. Percent of employee respondents by sector

N=217



Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Employee respondents were highly educated, with two-thirds holding bachelor's or graduate degrees. Most employee survey respondents were female (75%) and between the ages of 30 and 50 (52%); one-third of respondents were over 50, and 16 percent were under 30. Most employee respondents were white (90%), and 10 percent identified as Latino. Fifty percent of employee respondents reported annual incomes between \$35,000 and \$74,999.

Key Informant Interviews

The intent of the key informant interviews⁵ was to provide context to supplement the survey data, obtain more-detailed input on workforce challenges and opportunities in the industry, and solicit workforce development best practices and recommendations from those working in the tourism field.

To allow for the data collection and analysis to be responsive to input from the field, the key informant interviews were conducted in waves. The first two stakeholder interviews were with Todd Montgomery, program lead for Business & Hospitality Management at OSU Cascades, and Wendy Popkin, Executive Director of the Education Foundation, Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association. The purpose of the initial interviews was to provide suggestions for the parallel literature review and inform the focus of data collection and underlying research questions. The second wave was with three individuals from destination marketing, human resources, and workforce development/training to further inform data collection and analysis. The third and final wave of interviews was with business owners, managers, or executives who could provide an employer's perspective on workforce development issues and trends in the industry. Through all three waves, interviewees were asked to provide referrals to other potential interviewees, which contributed to the final tally of 16 interviews.

The interviewees represented diverse sectors within the tourism industry, including lodging, restaurants, transportation, recreation, land management, and agritourism. Interviewees represented companies operating in Central, Eastern, and Southern Oregon, as well as the Portland metro area, Willamette Valley, Oregon Coast, and statewide. Companies ranged in size from two to 510 employees working in Oregon.

Report Structure

The remainder of the report is organized according to key questions that guided the data collection and analysis framework. Within each section, we provide analysis of supporting data and where applicable, describe variation by different subgroups of interest, including sector, geographic location, employer size, and employment status, among others.⁶ We also tie analysis findings to themes identified during the literature review.

⁵ Please see Appendix C for a copy of the stakeholder interview protocols.

⁶ For consolidated detail by subgroup, please see Appendix B. Variation by Subgroup.

3. What is the current status of the tourism workforce in Oregon?

This section describes Oregon’s tourism workforce based primarily on administrative data provided or published by the (OED). These data present an industry characterized by large seasonal swings in employment and dominated by occupations requiring relatively little formal education and with relatively low wages. As discussed in subsequent sections, these characteristics, perhaps not surprisingly, align with the perceptions of employers and employees in the tourism industry, and the findings are consistent with this study’s literature review. They can also, to varying degrees, present recruiting and retention challenges for employers, one of the factors motivating Travel Oregon’s interest in commissioning this report.

At present, the most readily available data regarding workforce characteristics do not have a formal definition for the tourism industry, presenting many challenges to developing a comprehensive and accurate picture of the tourism workforce, how it has evolved over time, and how it might change in the future. Despite the many necessary approximations and assumptions required to produce the figures in this section, we believe the data presented provide valuable insight into the characteristics of the tourism workforce and useful guidance for policy discussions going forward.

Data Sources and Methods

We use the following data sources for the analysis presented below:

- Firm-level employment counts and total payroll for 2012 to 2017 by detailed industry code from OED’s Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), aggregated by geography (state and Travel Oregon tourism regions) and industry subsectors defined by three-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes. These data provide trends in employment but not occupation and require assumptions (identified below) to estimate the share of employment in NAICS-defined industry sectors attributable to direct employment in the tourism industry.⁷
- Occupational projections to 2027 aggregated by region and tourism sector.⁸ These data provide region-level counts of 2017 employment, projected 2027 employment, and employment dynamics (e.g., anticipated job openings) by occupation for relevant industrial sectors. As with employment, we apply assumptions about the share of occupational employment in each sector attributable to direct employment in the tourism industry.

⁷ Throughout this report we use “direct tourism employment” and “tourism employment” interchangeably.

⁸ Due to limitations in the data OED can release, the regions do not align exactly with Travel Oregon’s definitions.

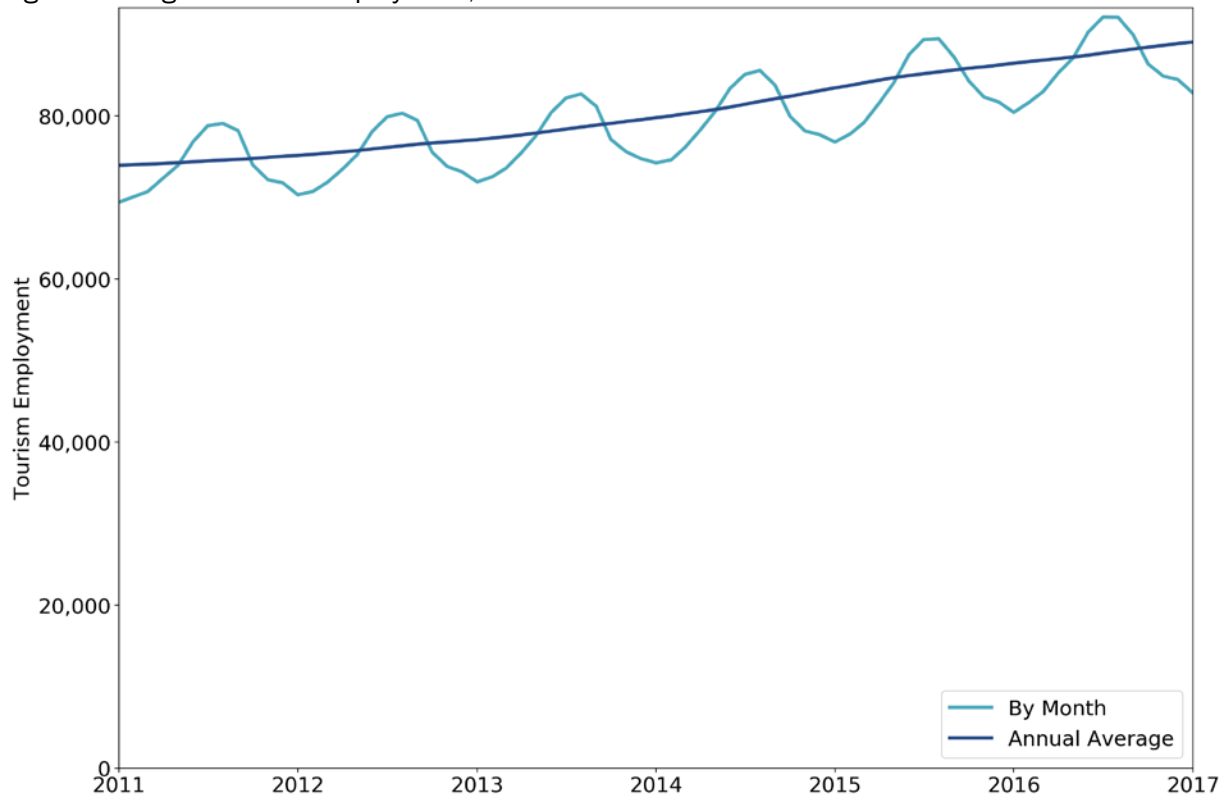
- Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) reports published by OED. We link the occupational wage data contained in these reports to the occupational employment data to characterize the distribution of wages within the tourism industry.
- Estimates of the probability of job automation from Frey and Osborne (2013) to allow us to characterize the automation risk faced by the tourism workforce.

After processing each source data set, we applied assumptions provided by Dean Runyan Associates about the share of employment in industries defined by 3-digit NAICS codes for each tourism region.

Characteristics of the Tourism Workforce

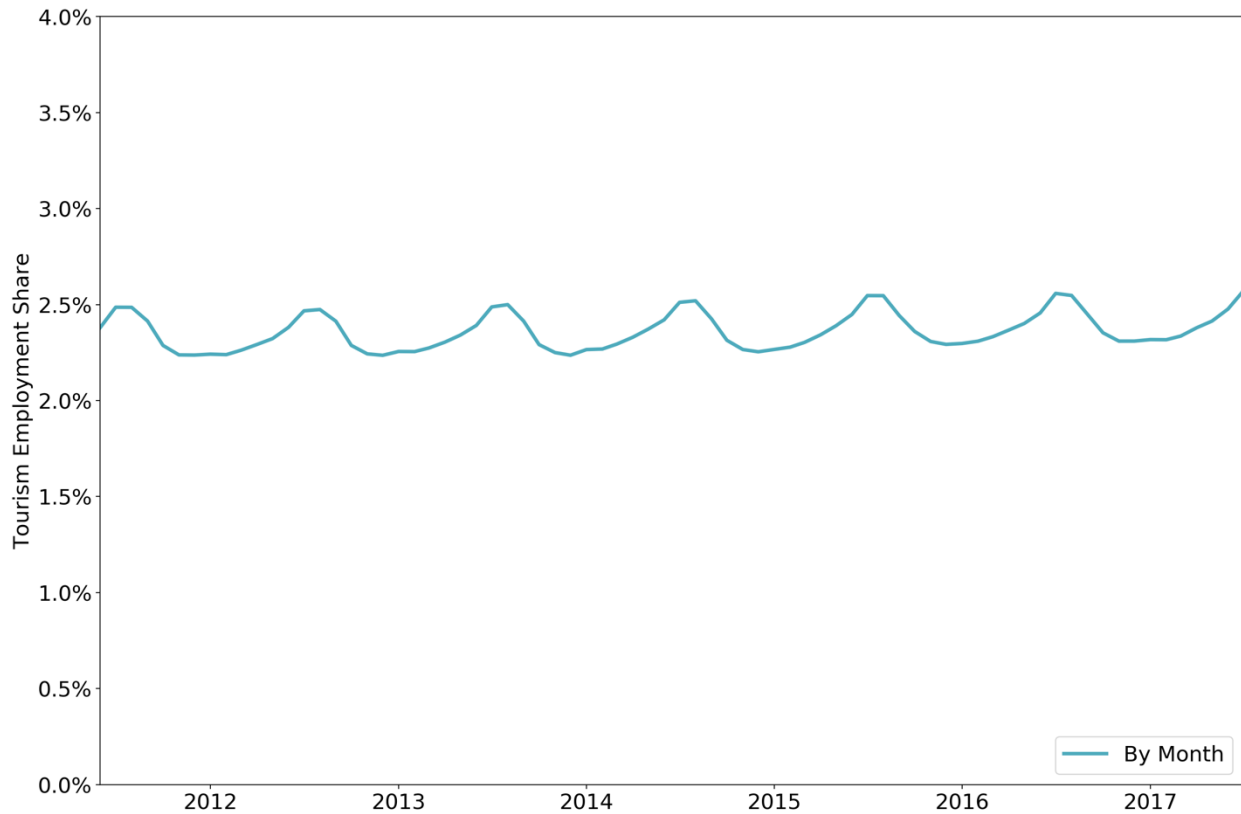
Figure 5 shows Oregon tourism employment over most of the past decade. Clearly evident in the figure, tourism employment exhibits significant seasonality. Estimated tourism employment has increased steadily over time, from 75,170 in 2012 to 89,079 in 2017, representing annual growth of 3.2 percent per year, consistent with employment growth for all industries combined as evidenced by Figure 6. The fluctuations in this latter figure indicate that the seasonality exhibited by tourism employment is somewhat greater than that for the state overall, with fluctuations that have remained fairly stable relative to the state across the analysis period.

Figure 5. Oregon tourism employment, 2012-2017



Data source: Oregon Employment Department (QCEW); Dean Runyan Associates (employment ratios)

Figure 6. Oregon tourism employment as a share of all Oregon employment, 2012-2017



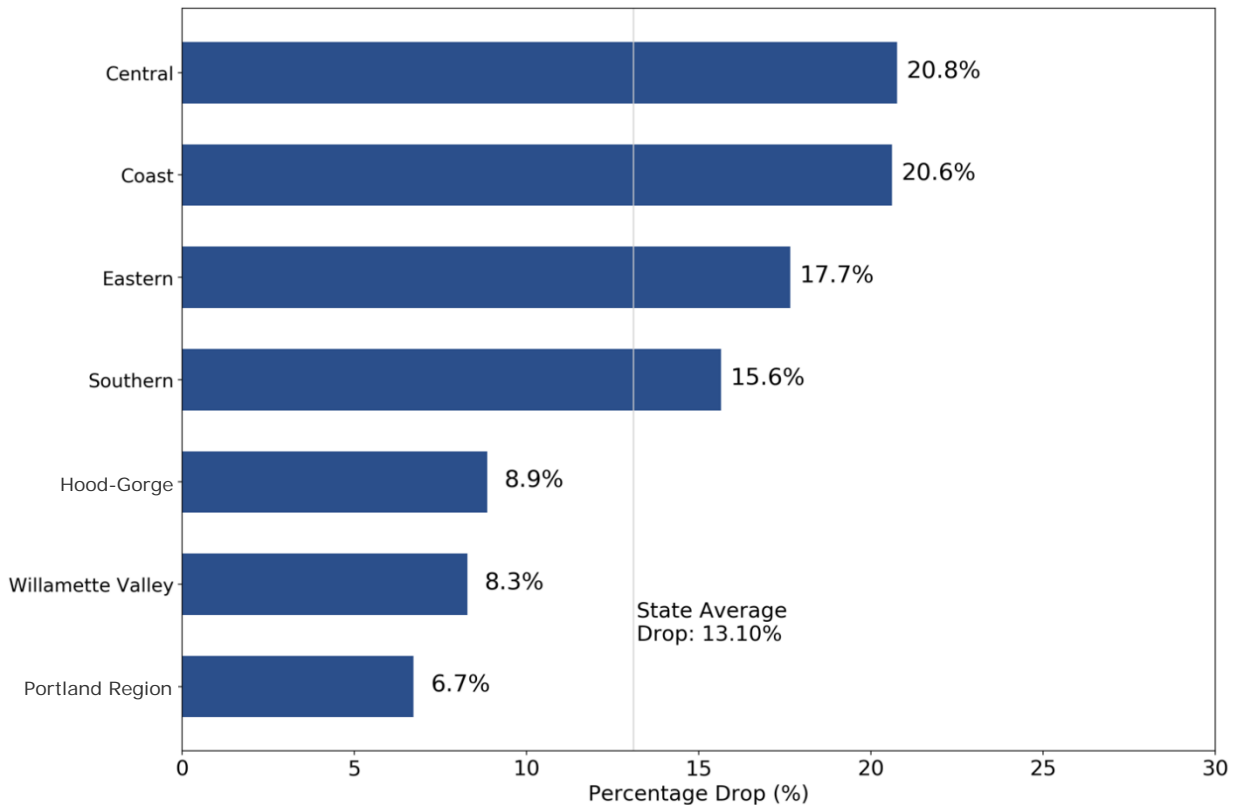
Data source: Oregon Employment Department (QCEW); Dean Runyan Associates (employment ratios)

To quantify the degree of seasonality we calculate the average change in employment between summer and winter across the period 2012 to 2017. By this metric we find considerable variation in the degree of seasonality across the seven tourism regions, as illustrated by Figure 7.⁹ The Portland Region and neighboring Hood-Gorge and Willamette Valley regions, for example, have much smaller summer-to-winter drops in employment—under 10 percent—compared to the statewide tourism industry average of 13 percent and to much higher rates of 15 to 21 percent observed in the other regions.

Differences in the portfolio of seasonal products offered in each region likely drive much of the observed variation in seasonal employment change. The smaller drops for the Portland, Hood-Gorge, and Willamette Valley regions reflect the portfolio of products and experiences available in those areas compared with other areas (e.g., the appeal of Portland dining and entertainment options spans the year, whereas coastal tourism relies more heavily on good weather).

⁹ High and low seasons vary across regions of the state, but on average across regions, summer is the high season and winter is the low season.

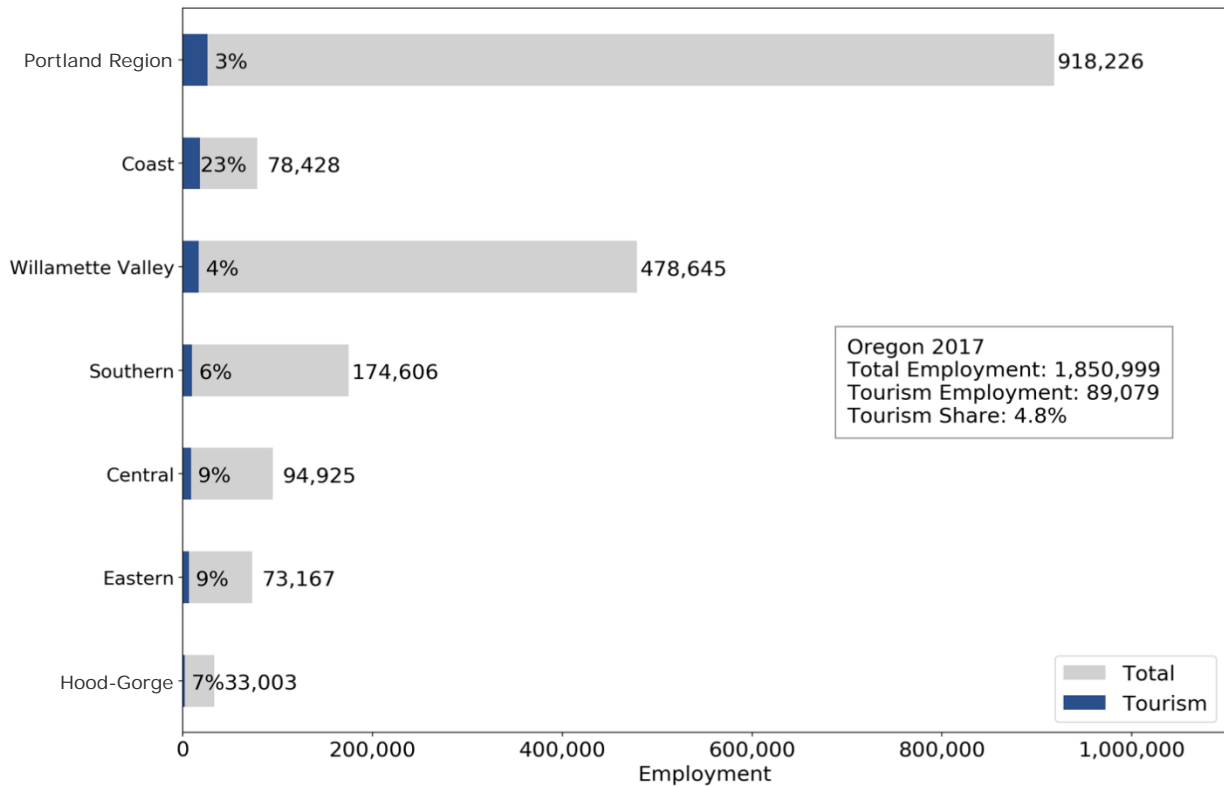
Figure 7. Average summer to winter drop in tourism employment, by Oregon region, 2012-2017



Data source: Oregon Employment Department (QCEW); Dean Runyan Associates (employment ratios)

We also find notable variation in the share of each region’s employment attributable to tourism employment (see Figure 8). The Portland Region has the largest number of tourism jobs, but at 3 percent, the smallest share of employment attributed to tourism. In contrast, 23 percent of employment in the Oregon Coast is attributed to tourism, equal to about two-thirds the number of tourism jobs in the Portland Region, despite the Oregon Coast having less than 10 percent of the total employment in Portland. The share of employment attributed to tourism ranges from 4 to 9 percent across the other regions of the state, with a statewide average of 4.8 percent.

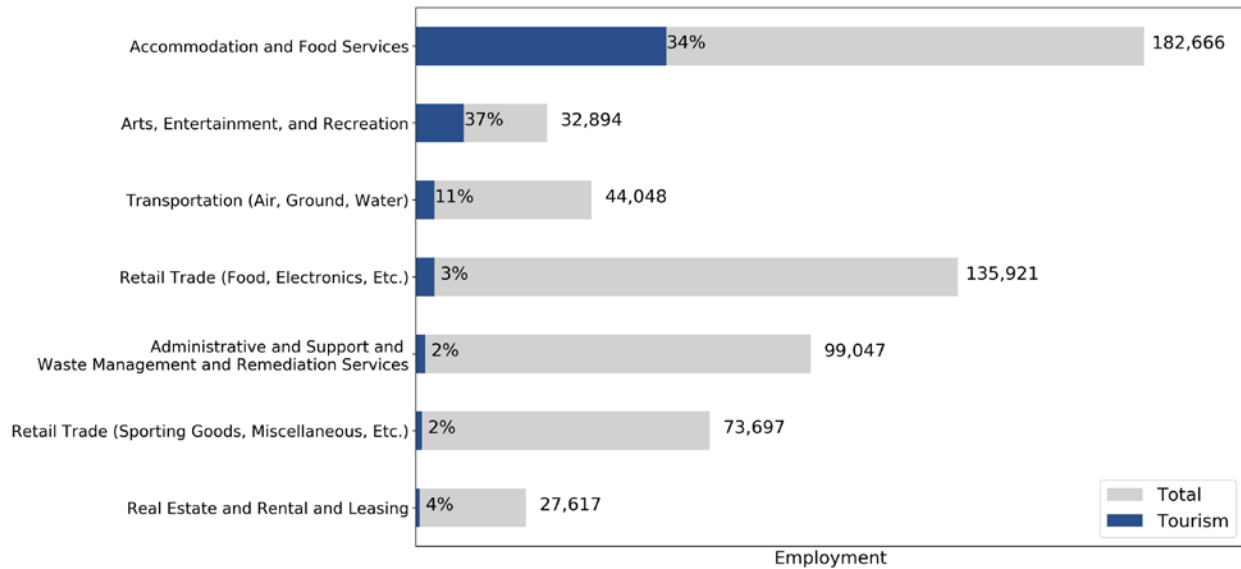
Figure 8. Share of employment attributed to tourism, by region, 2017



Data source: Oregon Employment Department (QCEW); Dean Runyan Associates (employment ratios)

Figure 9 displays the share of Oregon employment attributed to tourism by two-digit NAICS industry. Accommodation and food services, the largest two-digit industry by total employment, also accounts for a large share of tourism employment. Similarly, accommodation and food services is the industry with the largest share of employment attributable to tourism (34%). Arts, entertainment, and recreation, the industry that includes guides and outfitters, has a smaller share of total tourism employment but tourism accounts for a slightly larger share of industry employment (37%). Relevant to tourism, private-sector Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) fall under the administrative and support industry (the tourism employment estimates do not include public sector entities).

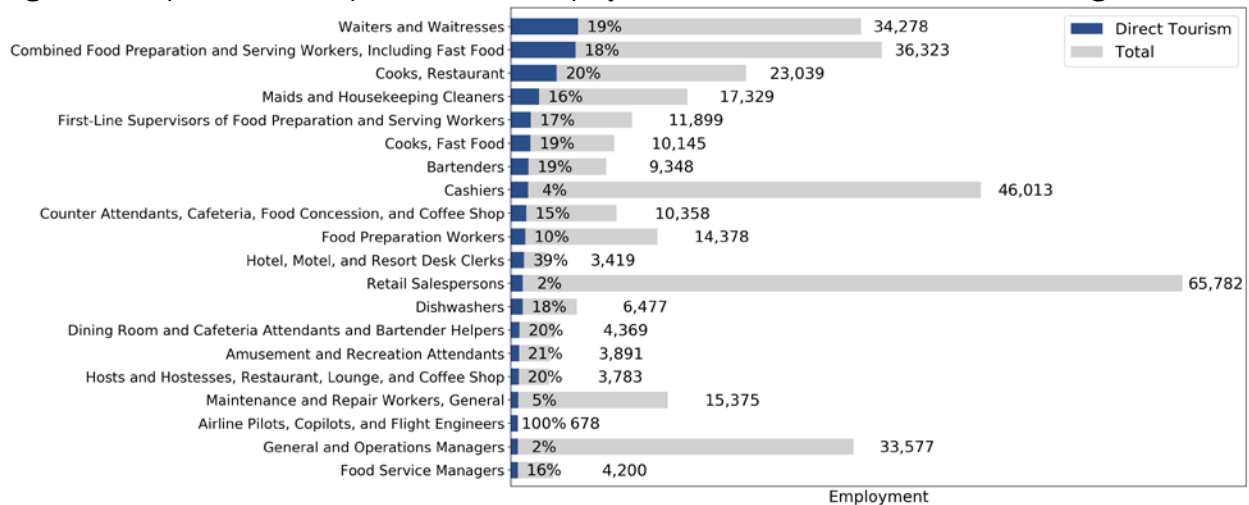
Figure 9. Oregon employment by two-digit NAICS, 2017 employment and tourism's share of total



Data source: Oregon Employment Department (QCEW); Dean Runyan Associates (employment ratios)

Consistent with the distribution of employment by industry, Figure 10 indicates that occupations¹⁰ associated with accommodation and food services—hotel desk clerks, bartenders, housekeeping occupations, etc.—comprise nearly all of the most common tourism occupations. Tourism in turn accounts for up to one fifth of the most common tourism jobs (waitstaff, food preparers, and restaurant cooks). These 20 most common tourism occupations account for 77 percent of tourism employment in Oregon.

Figure 10. Top tourism occupations, 2017 employment and tourism's share of total, Oregon



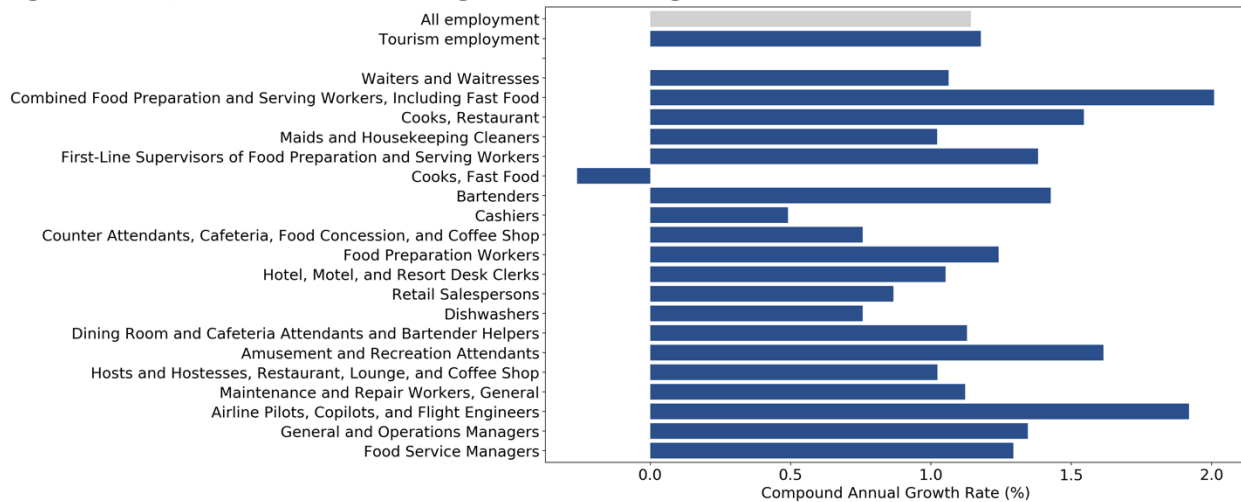
Data source: Oregon Employment Department (Staffing Patterns); Dean Runyan Associates (employment ratios).

¹⁰ These are job titles used by the government to collect data and have been included in this assessment for consistency purposes. Travel Oregon recognizes that some of these job titles assign gender and may not be representative or inclusive of how individuals identify.

Note: Tourism’s estimated share of each occupation represents a conservative lower bound due to limitations in the available data.

Overall, the data suggest employment growth just slightly above growth anticipated across occupations, although anticipated growth varies considerably across occupations (see Figure 11).¹¹ On the other hand, new jobs will account for a slightly smaller share of all job openings in the top tourism occupations compared to the average across all occupations (see Figure 12), an indication of higher “churn” from tourism to non-tourism occupations, although specific occupations exceed the all-occupations average.

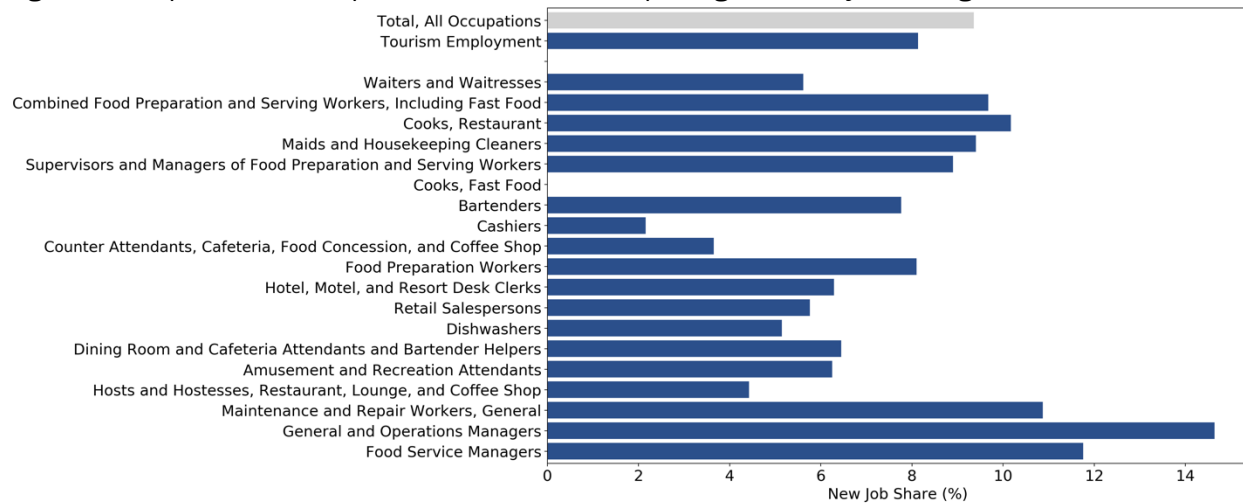
Figure 11. Top tourism occupations’ growth rates, Oregon, 2017-2027



Data source: Oregon Employment Department (Staffing Patterns, Employment Projections); Dean Runyan Associates (employment ratios)

¹¹ Note that the anticipated growth rates are based on OED’s occupational projections and are occupation specific but not industry specific (i.e., the projections illustrated in the figure are not specific to tourism).

Figure 12. Top tourism occupations' share of total openings for new jobs, Oregon, 2017-2027

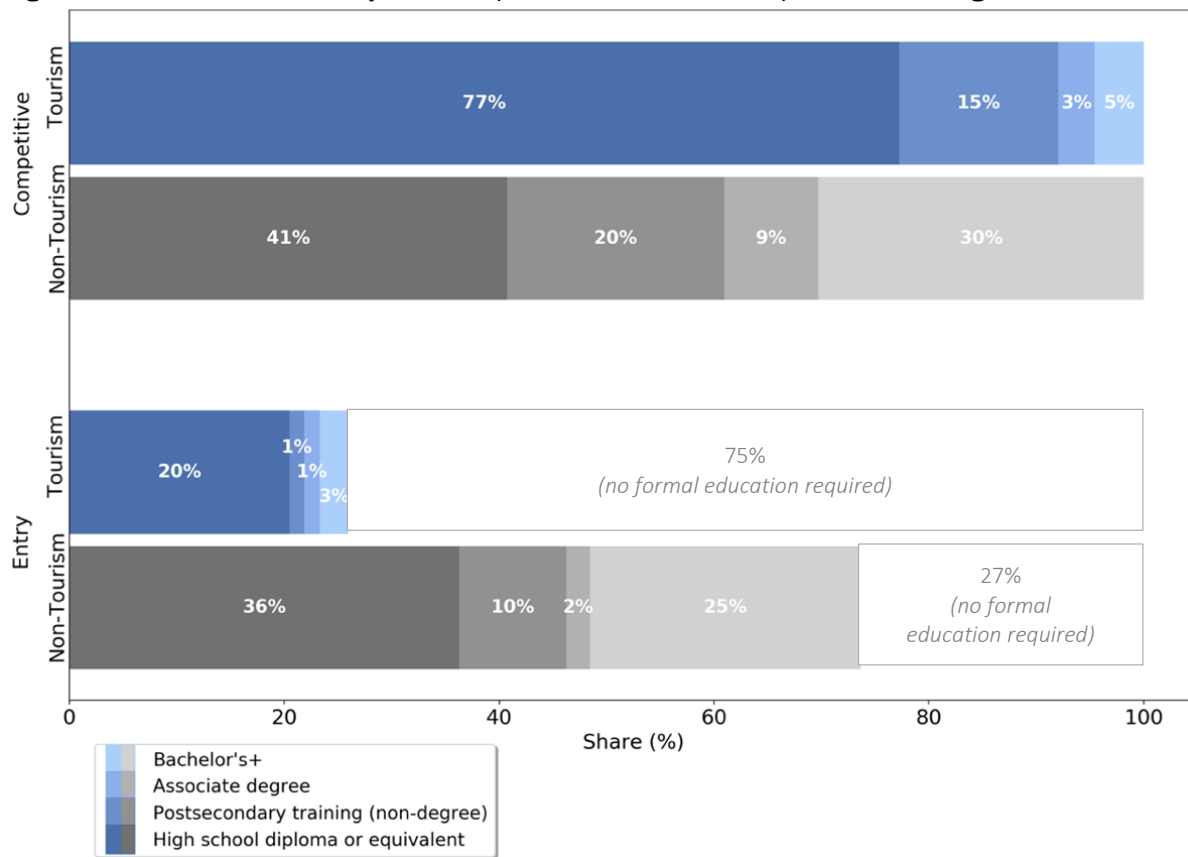


Data source: Oregon Employment Department (*Staffing Patterns, Employment Projections*); Dean Runyan Associates (*employment ratios*)

Also consistent with common perceptions of the industry, tourism employment requires relatively little formal education for most positions. Figure 13 illustrates this by displaying the distribution of OED’s two types of educational requirements—typical entry-level education level and typical competitive education level—for tourism and non-tourism employment across occupations.

Only one-quarter (25%) of employment in tourism requires formal education (a high school diploma, equivalent, or higher) of entry-level jobseekers, compared to nearly three-quarters (73%) of non-tourism employment. Even at the competitive level, more than three-quarters (77%) of tourism employment requires only a high school diploma or equivalent, which is considered the minimum standard for all occupations. This compares with 41 percent, on average, for other non-tourism employment.

Figure 13. Distribution of entry and competitive educational requirements, Oregon, 2017

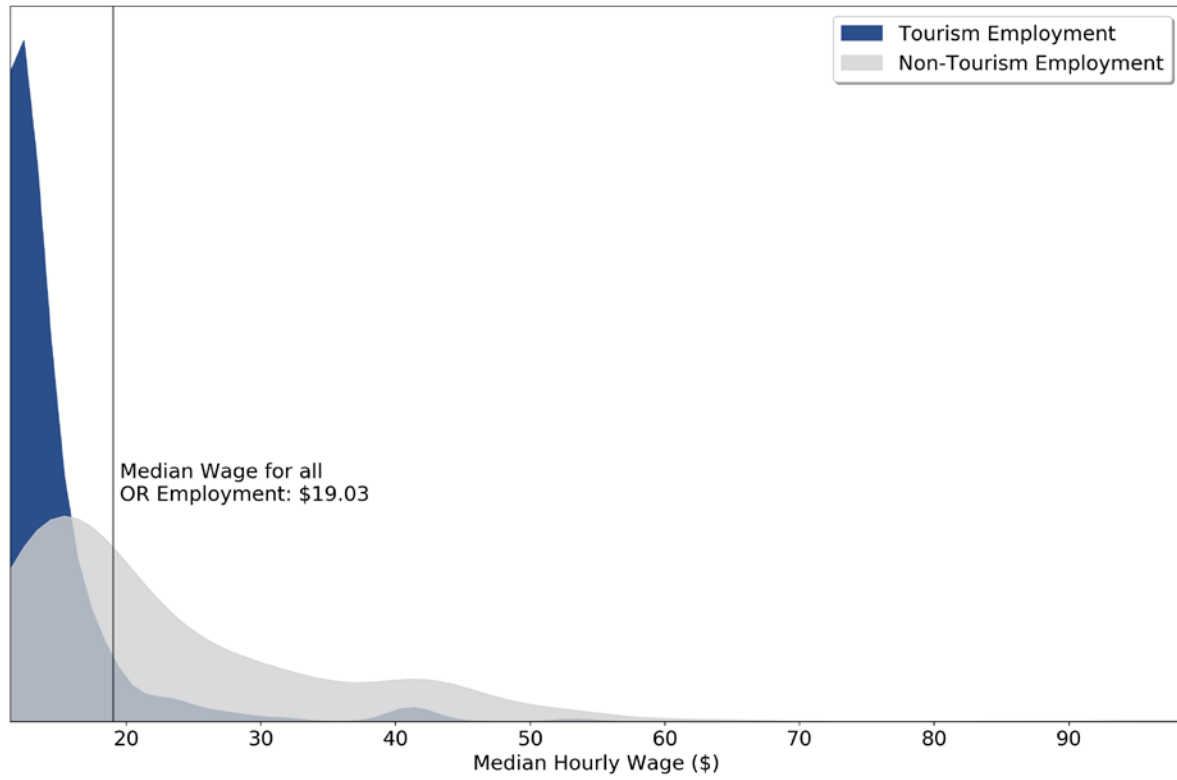


Data source: Oregon Employment Department (Staffing Patterns, Employment Projections); Dean Runyan Associates (employment ratios)

Typical wages in the industry comport with the findings regarding educational requirements. Although median wages vary considerably across occupations in every industry, a large share of tourism employees can expect to earn less than their counterparts in other occupations (see Figure 14; average median wage for tourism employment is \$13.99/hour versus the overall median wage of \$19.03/hour across all occupations¹²). This is not solely due to lower requirements for formal education, however. As indicated by Figure 15 tourism wages fall below non-tourism wages even after controlling for the competitive level of education assigned by OED.

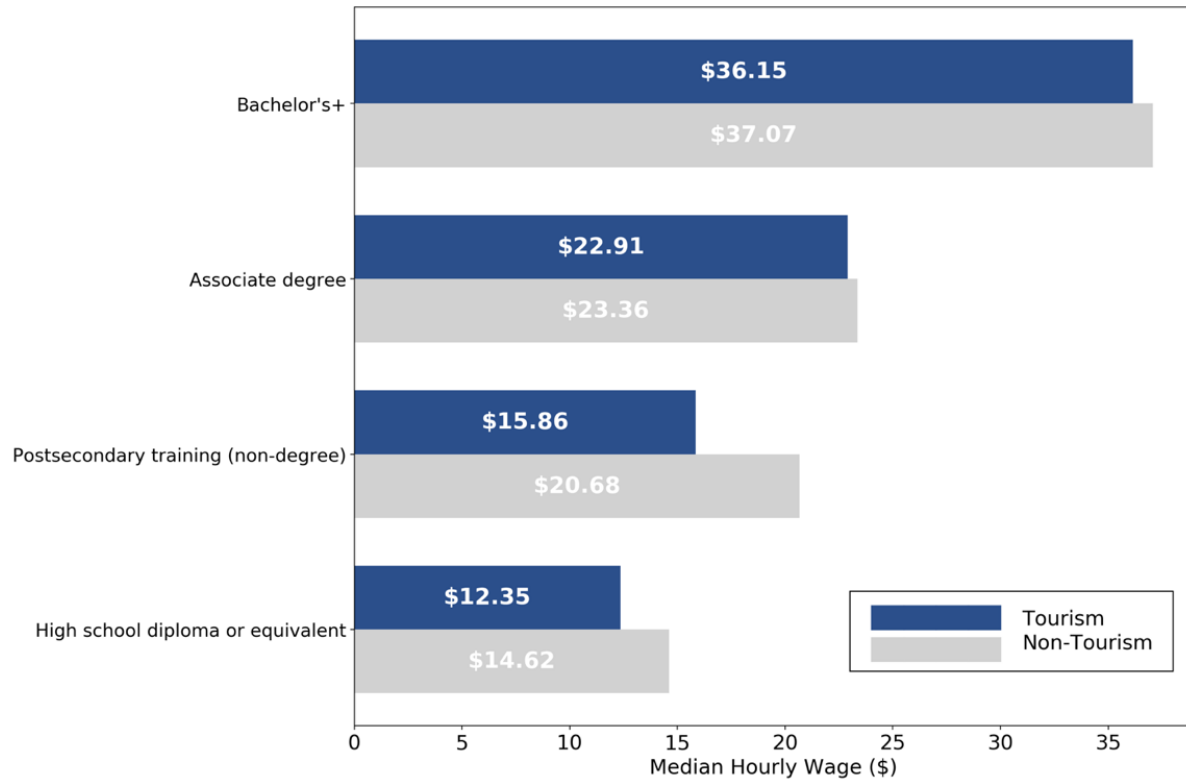
¹² Average median wages include tips for hourly workers.

Figure 14. Distribution of median hourly wage, Oregon, 2017



Data source: Oregon Employment Department (Staffing Patterns, Occupational Employment Statistics); Dean Runyan Associates (employment ratios). Note: The y-axis is a measure of density, or proportion of individuals at each median hourly wage.

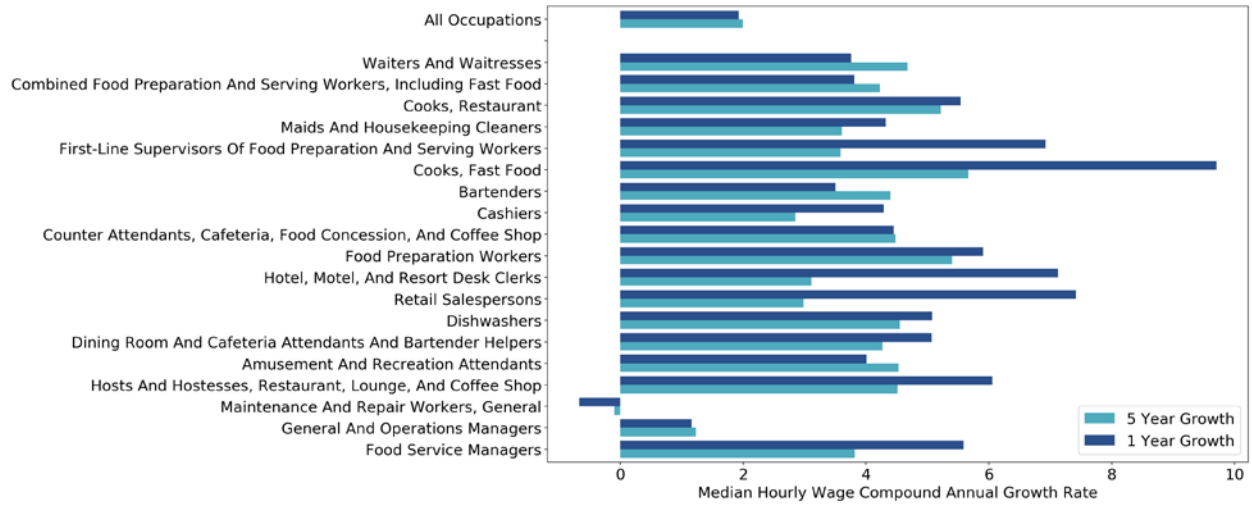
Figure 15. Median wage for tourism and non-tourism employment by competitive education level, Oregon, 2017



Data source: Oregon Employment Department (Staffing Patterns; Employment Projections; Occupational Employment Statistics); Dean Runyan Associates (employment ratios)

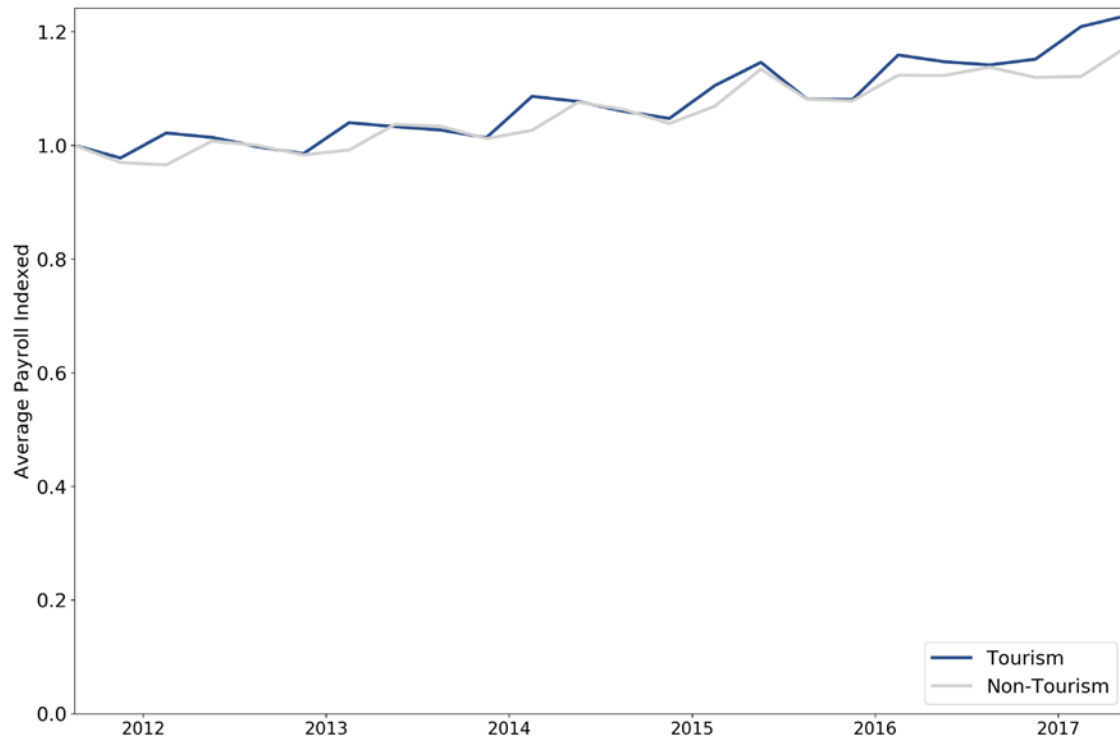
Figure 16 shows the growth in median wages over one and five years to 2018. Wage growth in nearly every tourism occupation exceeds the average across all occupations, although a large share of this growth can be attributed to increases in the statutory minimum wage. Overall, total payroll in the tourism industry has tracked growth in all other industries (see Figure 17). It is too early to tell whether the apparent divergence in the most recent quarters of data reflects a trend towards above average wage growth, perhaps due to recent minimum wage increases, or a temporary exaggeration of the seasonal divergence observed for earlier years.

Figure 16. Top tourism occupations, wage growth rate, Oregon, 2018



Data source: Oregon Employment Department (Staffing Patterns; Occupational Employment Statistics); Dean Runyan Associates (employment ratios)

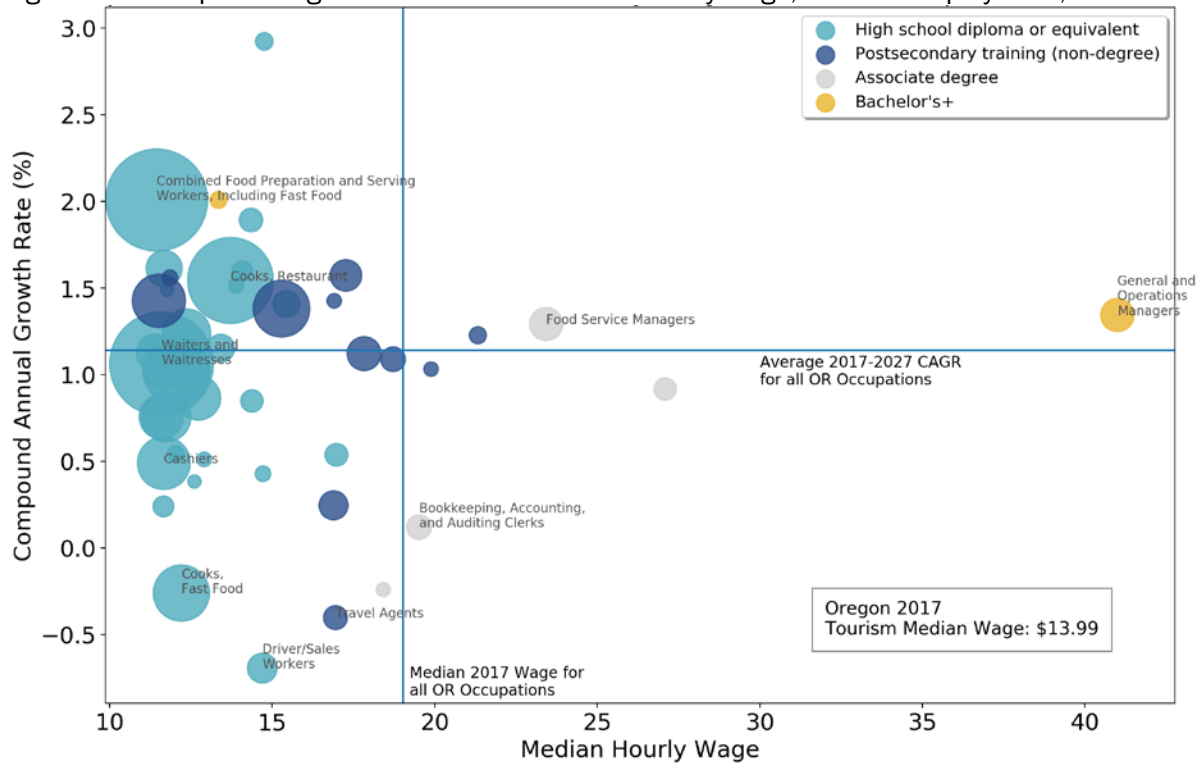
Figure 17. Oregon average quarterly payroll, indexed to 2012, 2012-2017



Data source: Oregon Employment Department (QCEW); Dean Runyan Associates (employment ratios)

Figure 18 plots projected occupational growth against median wage for tourism employment. Employment requiring a bachelor’s degree or better is expected to grow more rapidly than the average across all occupations, although these relatively high-wage occupations represent a small share of tourism employment. Tourism employment requiring other levels of education is expected to grow at roughly the same rate as all Oregon employment, give or take a percentage point.

Figure 18. Occupational growth rate versus median hourly wage, tourism employment, 2017-2027

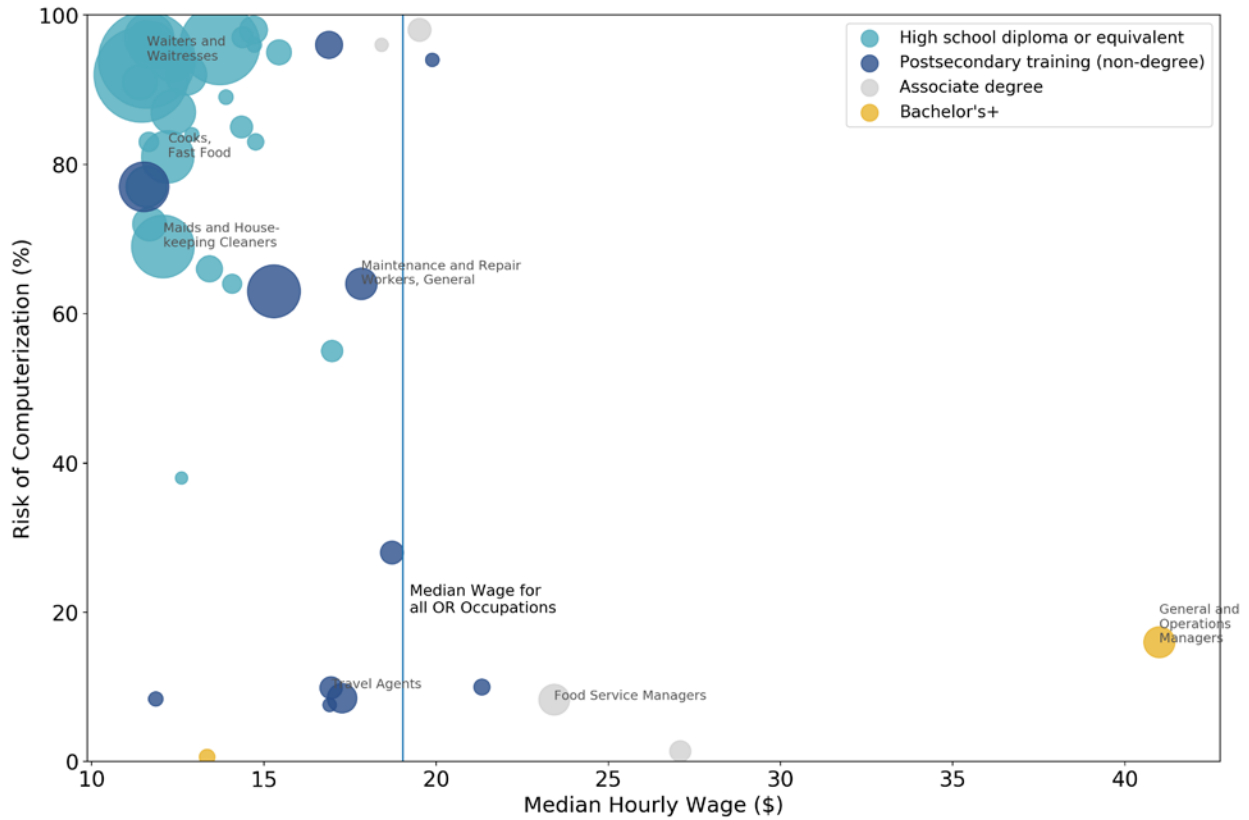


Data source: Oregon Employment Department (Staffing Patterns; Employment Projections; Occupational Employment Statistics); Dean Runyan Associates (employment ratios)

Not surprisingly given the low education requirements and the assumptions that drive the selected analysis of automation risk, tourism employees could face a high probability of job disruption due to computerization at some point in the future.¹³ The probability falls dramatically, however, for occupations with higher education requirements (see Figure 19 and Figure 20).

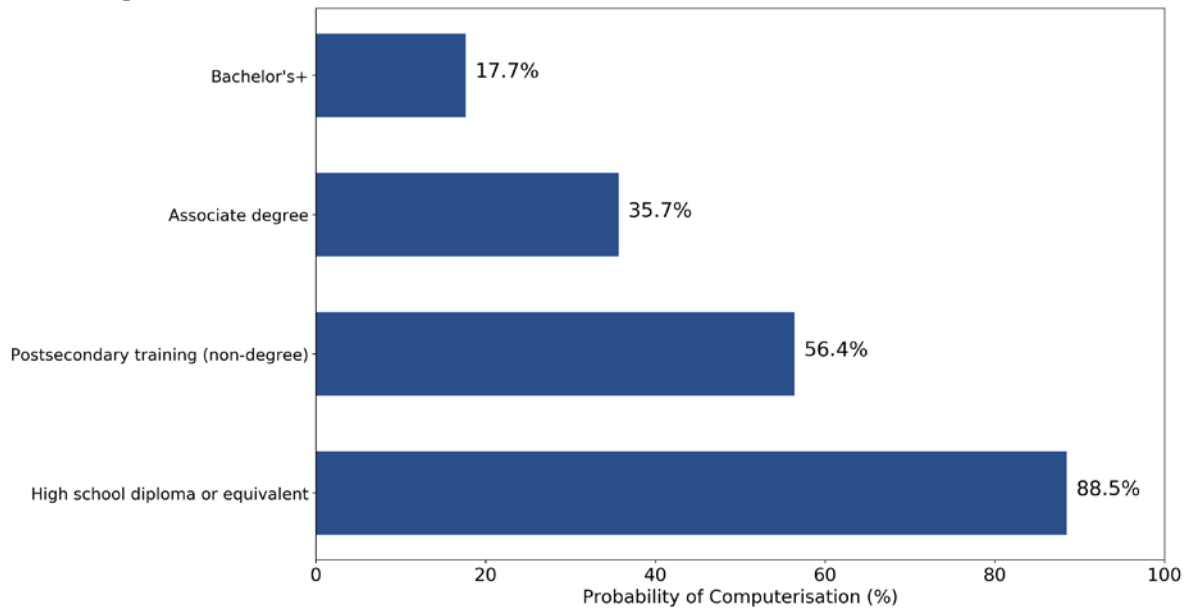
¹³ Frey and Osborne (2013) define “computerization” as job automation by means of computer-controlled equipment.

Figure 19. Risk of computerization vs median hourly wage, tourism employment, Oregon, 2017



Data source: Oregon Employment Department (Staffing Patterns; Employment Projections; Occupational Employment Statistics); Dean Runyan Associates (employment ratios); Frey & Osborne, 2013

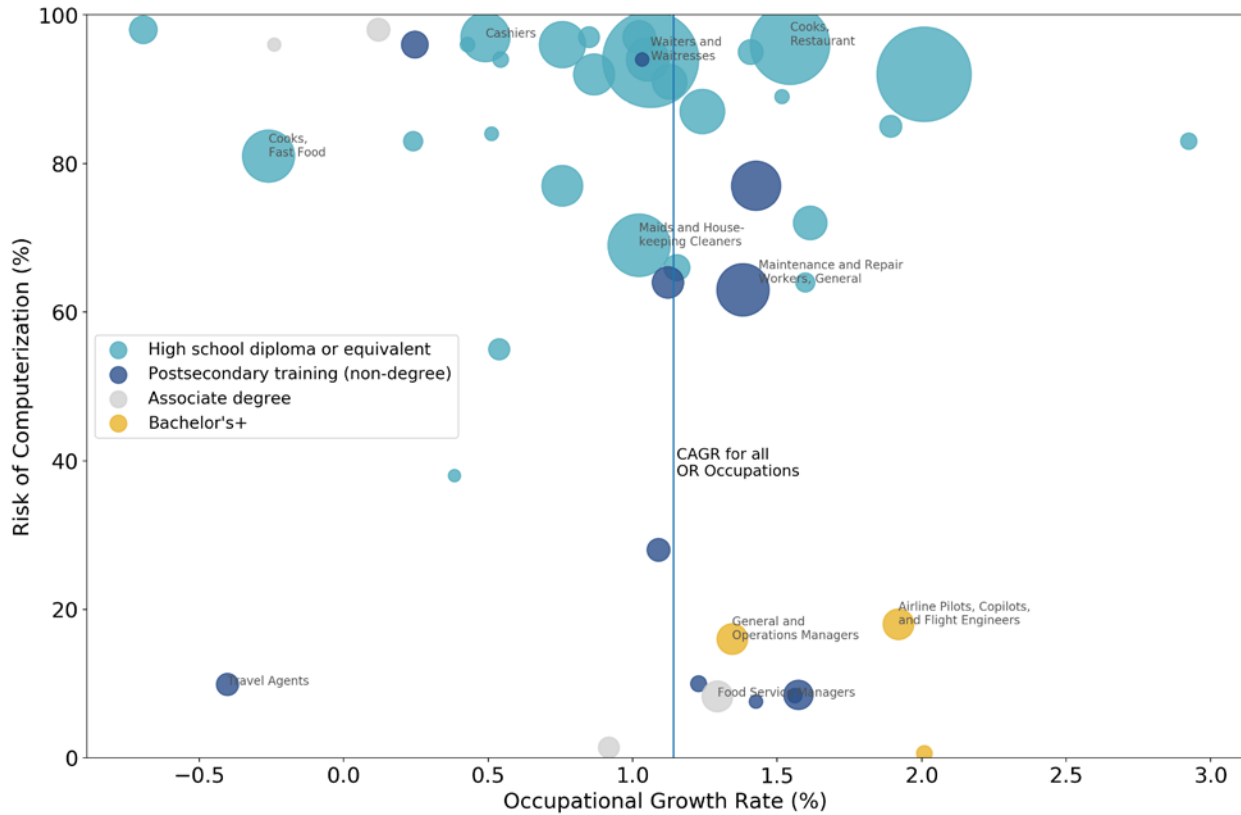
Figure 20. Tourism employment's median probability of computerization by competitive education level, Oregon, 2017



Data source: Oregon Employment Department (Staffing Patterns; Employment Projections); Dean Runyan Associates (employment ratios); Frey & Osborne, 2013

We conclude this section with the forward-looking Figure 21, which plots computerization risk against projected growth rate for tourism employment by occupational education requirements. As in the prior two figures, employees that require a bachelor's degree or better are expected to fare relatively better, being in occupations with both higher projected growth rates and a much lower risk of computerization.

Figure 21. Risk of computerization versus occupational growth rate, tourism employment, Oregon, 2017



Source: Data source: Oregon Employment Department (Staffing Patterns; Employment Projections; Occupational Employment Statistics); Dean Runyan Associates (employment ratios); Frey & Osborne, 2013

4. What are the perceived characteristics of the tourism industry?

Industry Characteristics

As shown in Figure 22 and Figure 23, employers and employees agree that the tourism industry offers a welcoming environment that provides work-life balance and a satisfactory physical environment. The culture and nature of the work, which can be fun and varied, are key benefits according to employers interviewed.

The interviewees also expressed how the industry offers workers the opportunity to learn soft and communication skills that benefit individuals personally, and occupational skills that are transferrable across the country and world.

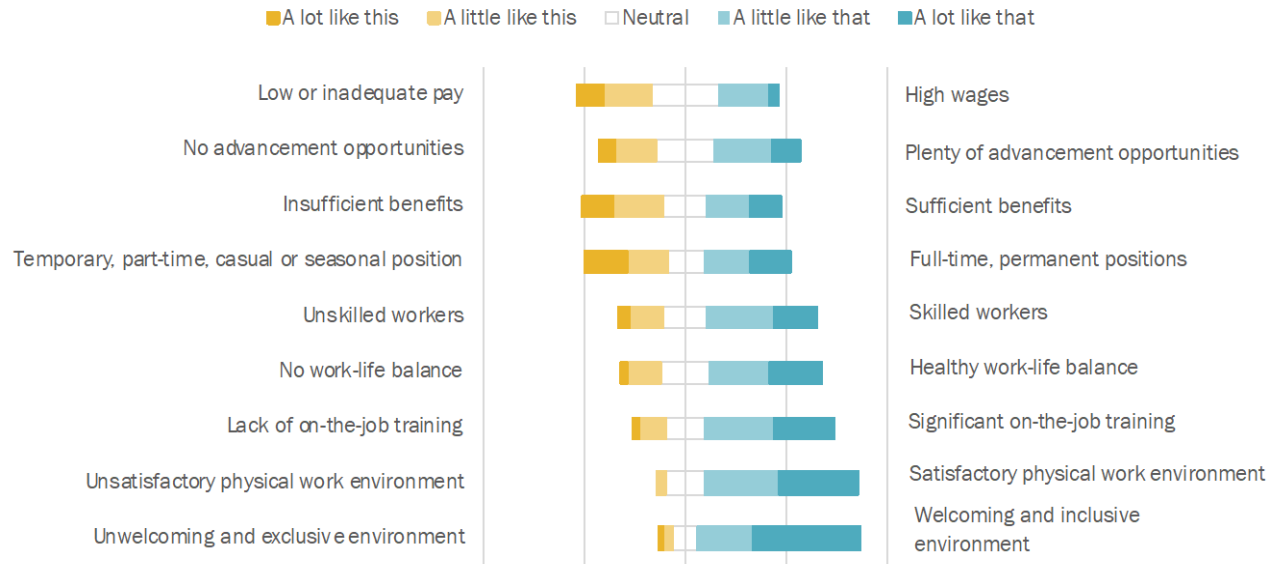
“You get to meet people from all over the world. It’s ever changing.”
Accommodation employer

“Outdoors jobs are the most fun you can have.”
Tour Operator, Guide, Outfitter employer

Employers consider tourism to provide a welcoming environment and work-life balance

Figure 22. Employers’ perception of the characteristics of the tourism industry by portion of employers in each response category

N varies 392 to 403



Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

More than half of employers and employees surveyed felt the industry is composed of skilled workers. However, a point of pride among employers interviewed is that hard-working but unskilled workers can enter the industry in entry-level positions, receive on-the-job training, and move up to more skilled, management-level positions over time. Indeed, more than half of employers (64%) cited opportunities for on-the-job training as characteristic of the industry and

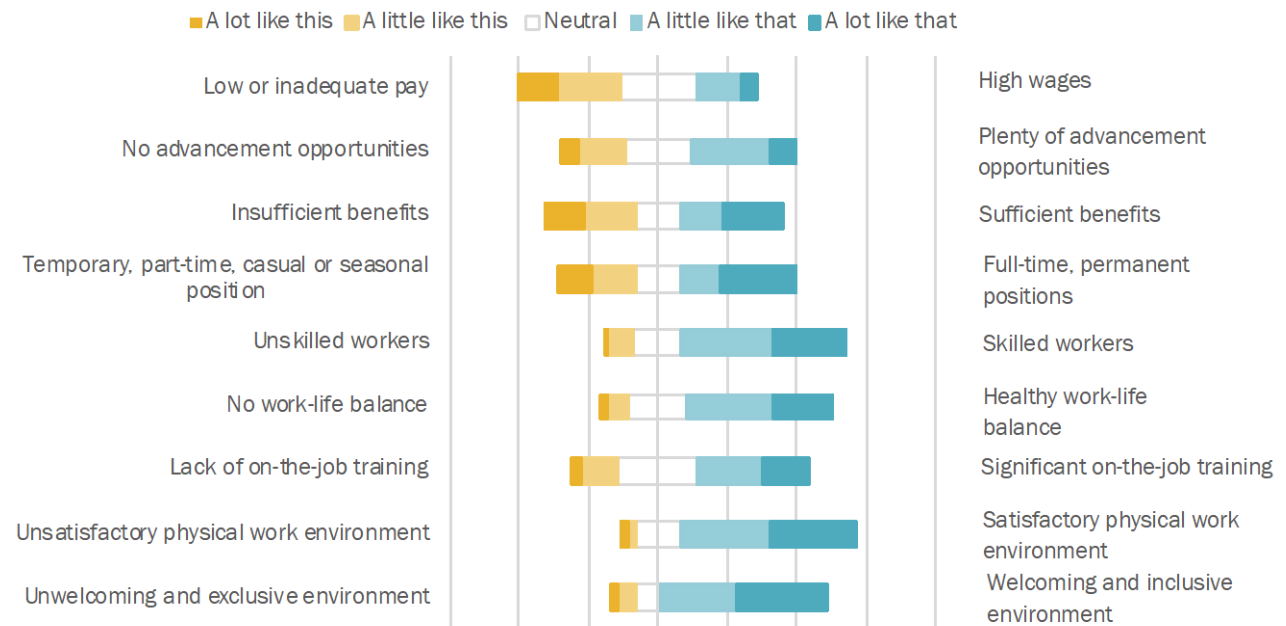
47 percent of employees agreed. Nearly half of employers and employees surveyed felt advancement opportunities were a feature of the industry (43% and 44%, respectively).

Employee and employer survey responses were more mixed on whether part-time/seasonal positions or full-time positions were characteristic of the industry, with employees more likely to consider full-time positions more characteristic. Employer interviewees noted how variable, unpredictable schedules can be hard for workers in the industry. And, as discussed in more depth in the section on seasonality, nearly all employer interviewees expressed how seasonality is one of the chief disadvantages of the industry, affecting recruitment, retention, and overall workforce quality.

“Hospitality is the great equalizer. You don’t have to have a college education. You have to have a desire to learn, to be curiously intelligent, and focused. It is the only industry where you can go from being a housekeeper to a general manager. From dishwasher to a very successful owner.”
Food & Beverage / Accommodation employer

Employees perceive a welcoming environment with relatively low wages and benefits in the tourism industry

Figure 23. Employees’ perception of the characteristics of the tourism industry by portion of employees in each response category
N varies 168 to 174



Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Employers and employees' responses were more mixed regarding the nature of the industry related to low versus high wages and insufficient versus sufficient benefits. The share of employer respondents considering the industry to provide sufficient (38%) versus insufficient (40%) benefits was fairly even, while slightly more employer respondents considered the industry to offer low wages (37%) versus high wages (30%). Likewise, the share of employee respondents considering the industry to provide sufficient (44%) versus insufficient (38%) benefits was fairly even, but relative to the difference among employer respondents, more employee respondents considered the industry to offer low wages (43%) versus high wages (25%). Employer interviewees corroborated these findings, citing a chief disadvantage of the industry is low pay or a pay scale that tops out at a lower level than some other industries.

"Historically the industry has low-paying jobs. They are entry level wages until you get into middle and upper management. We don't pay a lot of money and that is the biggest barrier. The way cost of living is going, it is not enough to meet all [the employee's] financial needs. Some need a second job, or even third job."

*Food & Beverage /
Accommodation employer*

Variation by Subgroup

In addition to conducting analysis on key workforce issues in the Oregon tourism industry overall, the project team also analyzed variation in response by several key subgroups of interest. This section highlights the subgroup variation that was identified through statistical analysis.

Sector. A factor analysis conducted on industry characteristics identified two discrete buckets of attributes.¹⁴ The first bucket, which we call work environment characteristics, includes the likelihood that the industry provides a welcoming and inclusive environment, on-the-job training opportunities, healthy work-life balance, and a satisfactory physical work environment. The second bucket, which we call career orientation, includes the likelihood that the industry provides full-time permanent positions, requires skilled workers, offers opportunities for advancement, and delivers high wages and sufficient benefits. There was little difference among employers across sectors regarding their perceptions of tourism's ability to support a positive work environment. Employer respondents from the lodging and tour operator sectors were less likely than those from the destination marketing sector to view the industry as career oriented.

Similarly, there was little difference among employees across sectors on the work environment characteristics composite scale, but perceptions of career orientation varied somewhat by sector. Destination marketing employees were more likely to consider tourism likely to offer full-time, permanent positions, compared to agritourism and retail employees, and were more likely to

¹⁴ Factor analysis is a statistical method that describes variation among correlated variables. In the workforce assessment analysis, industry characteristics fell into two distinct factors, as described above: work environment characteristics and career orientation. We created mean scores for each of the scales of these factors and analyzed them by different subgroups of interest.

consider tourism jobs to offer sufficient benefits. Retail and food and beverage employees were less likely to view the tourism industry as career oriented.

Geography. Employer respondents from the Northern and Central Oregon Coast were less likely to agree that tourism offers permanent, full-time positions compared to other regions, perhaps reflecting the seasonality of the tourism business in their region. Central Oregon Coast employer respondents were also relatively less likely to view tourism as an industry of skilled workers (20% agreed, 52% disagreed). There was little difference by geography in employers' perceptions regarding tourism's ability to provide a positive work environment, but employers who had staff/business in all regions of the state were more likely to identify tourism as career oriented compared to those in the Central Oregon Coast or Southern Oregon.

Employer Size. Employer respondents from organizations with nine or fewer employees were more likely to perceive tourism industry jobs as not providing sufficient benefits compared to other sectors. Perceptions regarding the culture and characteristics of the tourism industry varied little otherwise by organization size.

Employment Status. Full-time workers were more likely to consider the tourism industry to be career oriented, compared to both part time and seasonal workers.

Best Practices and Connections with Other Research

Researchers generally agree that the tourism industry suffers from a perceived lack of career opportunities and pathways to higher-paying positions. Employees often view the industry as a steppingstone to other careers, particularly if their work is in hospitality, which can have long hours and low compensation and is often incompatible with family life (Brown et al., 2015; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005; Dogru et al., 2019). The Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association (ORLA) also found that many employees view their employment in tourism as short-term before moving on to a different career and are concerned about the lack of on-the-job skills training, development, and promotional opportunities (Montgomery, 2017). Millennials, which represent 44 percent of the workforce in the country's hotel and lodging industry (American Hotel & Lodging Association, 2017), are hesitant about staying in the industry because of the perceived and real characteristics of the industry (e.g., low compensation, low-skilled jobs, poor management, long unsociable working hours, irregular/inflexible work schedules, high staff turnover) and their conflict with certain millennial values (e.g., work-life balance) (Gobelna, 2017). Employers need to adapt their managerial approach to better attract young people (Gobelna & Marciszewska, 2016).

The key findings of this report are more sanguine than the common patterns observed in the industry. Respondents view the work environment in Oregon's tourism industry as generally positive and open to skilled and unskilled workers alike. The industry offers a mix of permanent and temporary positions that help acquire transferrable occupational skills. And there seem to be opportunities to grow one's career from entry-level positions. However, lower wages are a deterrent to working in the industry. The contrast between this report and existing

research may be related to the relatively highly educated employee respondents, one-third of whom work in the destination marketing and management sector.

The tourism industry could attempt to address the perception among new and potential employees that it does not offer “real” careers. One suggested best practice is to begin career-technical training during earlier years of school to create a longer-term vision of careers and pathways. Employers should be aware of highly educated workers potentially ending up “in casual roles working long hours, and with limited promotion opportunities” (APEC-TWG, 2017). The industry should also promote itself as having “career[s] of choice” with “diverse career pathways” (Ackehurst & Loveder, 2015).

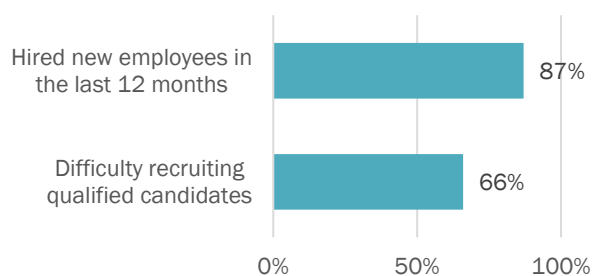
5. What is the hiring experience within the tourism industry?

Difficulty in Hiring

A vast majority (87%) of employer survey respondents indicated that their firm had hired part-time or full-time employees in the last 12 months, as shown in Figure 24. Sixty-six percent (66%) of employer respondents noted difficulty recruiting qualified applicants for positions they were trying to fill.

Most employer respondents had difficulty recruiting qualified candidates

Figure 24. Percent of employers by hiring experience
N=369



Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

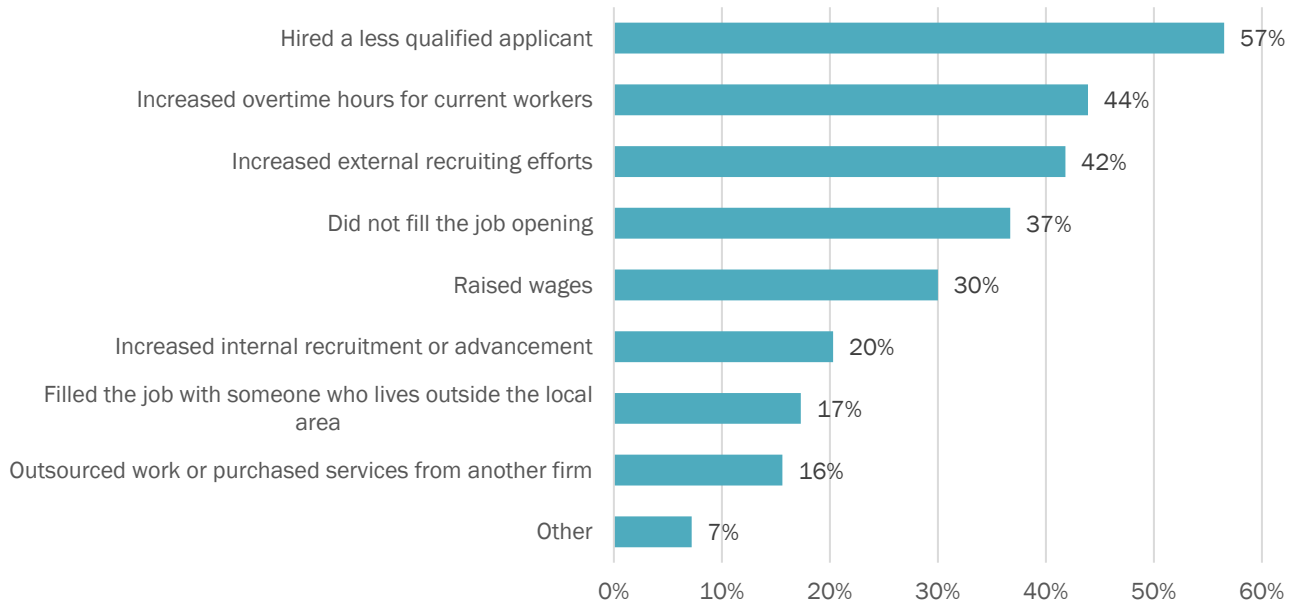
In response to difficulty in hiring, employers are most likely to hire a less qualified applicant (57%), as shown in Figure 25, while 37 percent state that they did not fill the job opening. While many contextual factors affect recruitment and hiring (see page 25), employers interviewed elaborated that the current low unemployment rate was a key reason for the widespread challenge of finding qualified applicants. Employers report difficulties attracting candidates who are willing to do less desirable jobs, such as those involving physical labor or night shift work, even with wages as high as \$17-19 per hour. Wage competition from other industries may be at play. As shown on page 14 in Figure 14 and in Figure 15, median wages in non-tourism industries are higher than in the tourism industry. Other common employer responses to hiring difficulties were to increase overtime hours for current workers (44%) or increase external recruiting efforts (42%).

While employer survey respondents were less likely to indicate they raised wages in response to hiring challenges, most employers interviewed indicated they used this strategy – to a point: interviewees report that slim profit margins limit the extent to which they can raise wages.

Other strategies cited by employers interviewed included offering flexible and/or very reduced schedules (e.g., less than two days per week) and increasing efforts to promote from within.

Most employers hired a less qualified applicant in response to hiring challenges

Figure 25. Percent of employers by response to hiring challenges
N=237



Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

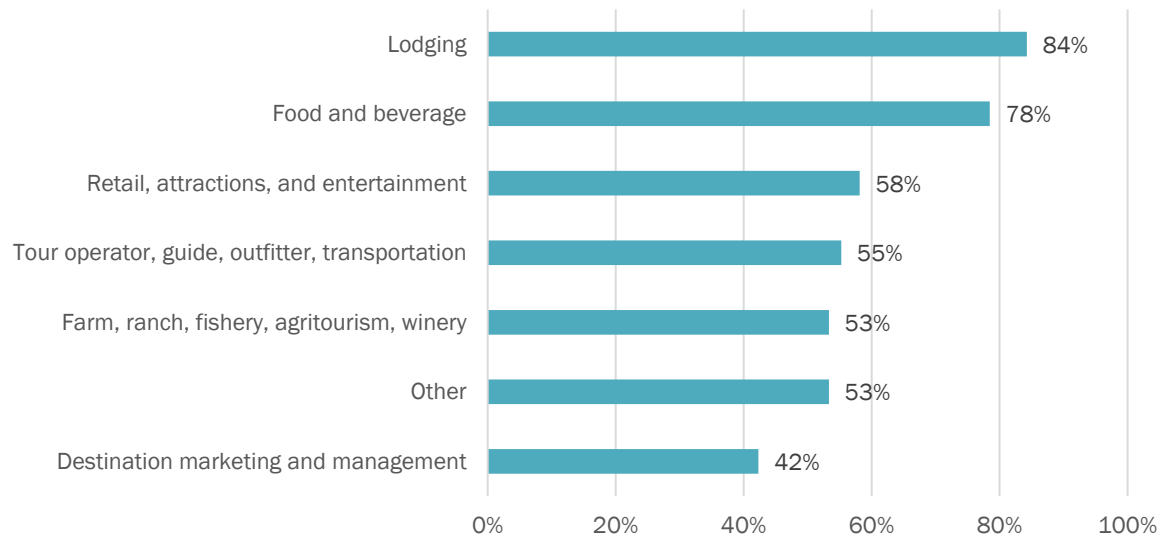
Variation by Subgroup

In addition to conducting analysis on key workforce issues in the Oregon tourism industry overall, the project team also analyzed variation in response by several key subgroups of interest. This section highlights the subgroup variation that was identified through statistical analysis.

Sector. Employers from the lodging and food and beverage sectors were more likely to have identified difficulty recruiting qualified applicants compared to other sectors.

Lodging and food and beverage employers were more likely to identify challenges in recruiting

Figure 26. Percent of employers citing difficulty recruiting qualified applicants, by sector
N is 358 for all sectors and varies from 15 to 108 across sectors



Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

In terms of responding to difficulty in hiring:

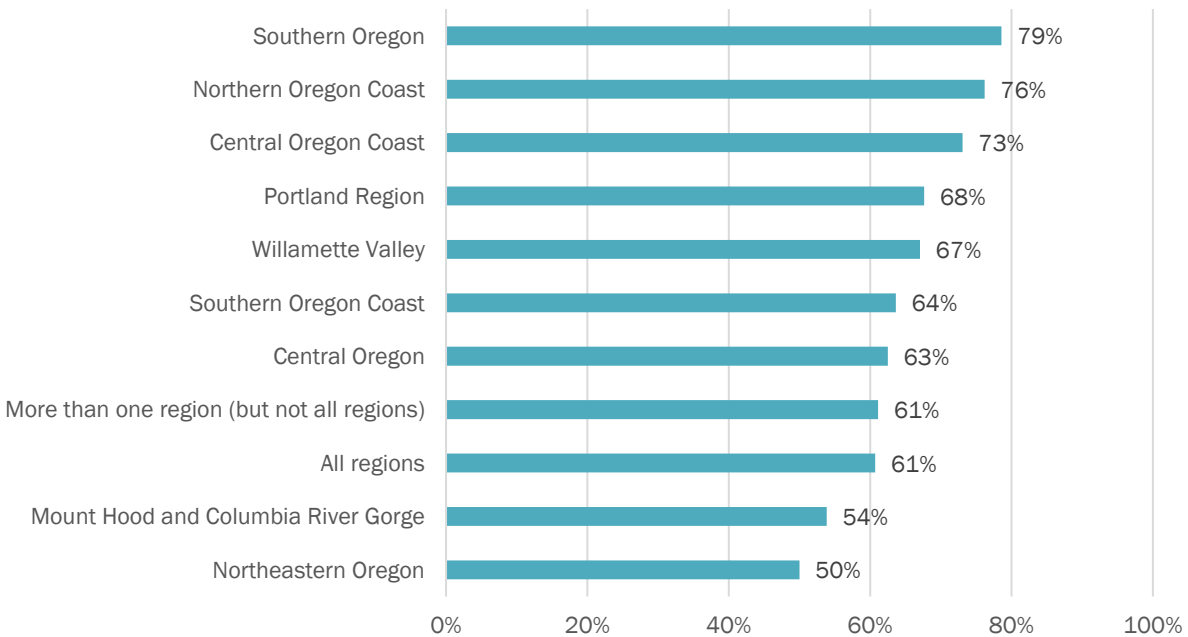
- Employer respondents from the lodging sector were more likely to have hired a less qualified applicant compared to other sectors, while respondents from tour operations and destination marketing were less likely to have hired a less qualified applicant compared to their peers in other sectors.
- Lodging and food and beverage employer respondents were more likely to have increased overtime hours for current workers in response to hiring difficulties compared to destination marketing respondents, who were less likely to have increased hours in response, perhaps reflecting flexibility from the more typical shift schedules prevalent in the lodging and food and beverage sectors.
- Lodging respondents were also more likely than respondents from the retail and entertainment sector to have raised wages in response to hiring difficulties.

Geography. A majority of respondents across geographic regions identified difficulty in hiring over the past 12 months.

A majority of employers across all geographic regions identified challenges in recruiting

Figure 27. Percent of employers citing difficulty in recruiting qualified candidates, by region

N ranges from 12 to 88 across regions



Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

There was little variation by geography in terms of response to difficulty in hiring and there was slight variation by region in employers' perception of factors contributing to difficulty in hiring:

- Respondents from the Northern Oregon Coast and Central Oregon Coast were more likely to agree or strongly agree that cost of living was a factor in difficulty in hiring
- Respondents from the Willamette Valley, Southern Oregon, and Northeastern Oregon were less likely to identify cost of living as a factor.
- Employers from the Portland Region were less likely to think that housing options affected hiring compared to Central Oregon Coast respondents
- Willamette Valley employer respondents were less likely to consider cost of housing a factor compared to the Northern Oregon Coast, Central Oregon Coast, and Central Oregon.

Employer Size. Respondents from small businesses of nine or fewer employees were less likely to cite difficulty recruiting qualified applicants (55% versus 73% and 88% among larger businesses). They were also less likely to indicate that they had not filled the job opening, had hired a less qualified applicant, or had increased overtime for current workers compared to their peer in larger agencies. This experience may reflect less hiring demand—and therefore fewer hiring challenges—among the smallest business employers. Employer respondents from

the largest businesses were more likely to cite increasing internal advancement and external recruitment in response to hiring challenges when compared to smaller organizations.

Private/Public. Private employer respondents were more likely to cite difficulty recruiting qualified applicants (72%) compared to public employer respondents (56%). They were also more likely to have hired a less qualified applicant (61% versus 41%) or raised wages (33% versus 19%), possibly reflecting less flexibility to adjust qualifications or wages among public sector employees.

External Barriers to Recruitment

More than half of employer survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the following external factors act as barriers to recruiting qualified applicants (see Figure 28):

- Lack of qualified applicants (69%)
- Housing options where job is located (65%)
- Nature of the job (seasonal, part-time or unconventional hours) (62%)
- Cost of living where job is located (55%)
- Competition from other regions or industries (53%)

While external barriers to recruitment affect all industries, the tourism industry may be more vulnerable to some of these barriers. Cost of living, particularly housing, was cited by interviewees as particularly challenging to recruitment in the tourism industry because many tourism jobs start at or near minimum wage and are in resort destinations with high housing costs. While some stakeholders felt minimum wage laws negatively affected the industry due to increased costs of doing business, most felt that a solution to the industry's mismatch between cost of living and wages was to increase wages – and many have.

Connected to cost of living, the lack of appropriate, effective transportation can be a barrier to recruitment. Given limited public transit options, many tourism jobs in rural areas necessitate a car, which can be cost prohibitive to lower wage workers. Urban areas have more public transportation options, and some employers subsidize transit passes, but high housing costs in central city areas mean workers living in more affordable areas in the metro area may have to commute long distances to get to work.

Additionally, the seasonal aspect of the industry presents unique housing challenges. Rural or coastal area employers, in particular, report difficulty attracting seasonal employees due to the dearth of affordable, short-term housing. Agritourism businesses may have space to build workforce housing for seasonal employees but land use laws can affect their ability to do so. Further, many tourism businesses are located in destination or resort communities, where it is

"I can attract someone to apply, but then they realize there is nowhere to live."
*Retail and Attractions
employer*

particularly lucrative to convert permanent rental housing stock into short-term rentals (e.g., Airbnb).

The booming economy was the primary reason cited for the lack of qualified applicants and fierce competition from other industries, particularly construction, which is perceived to offer higher wages. Recent changes in national immigration policy were also cited as having particularly negative impacts on the tourism industry, which relies on and values the immigrant labor force, including refugees. Considering the current low unemployment rate, recent policy changes are poorly timed for the industry, according to interviewees.

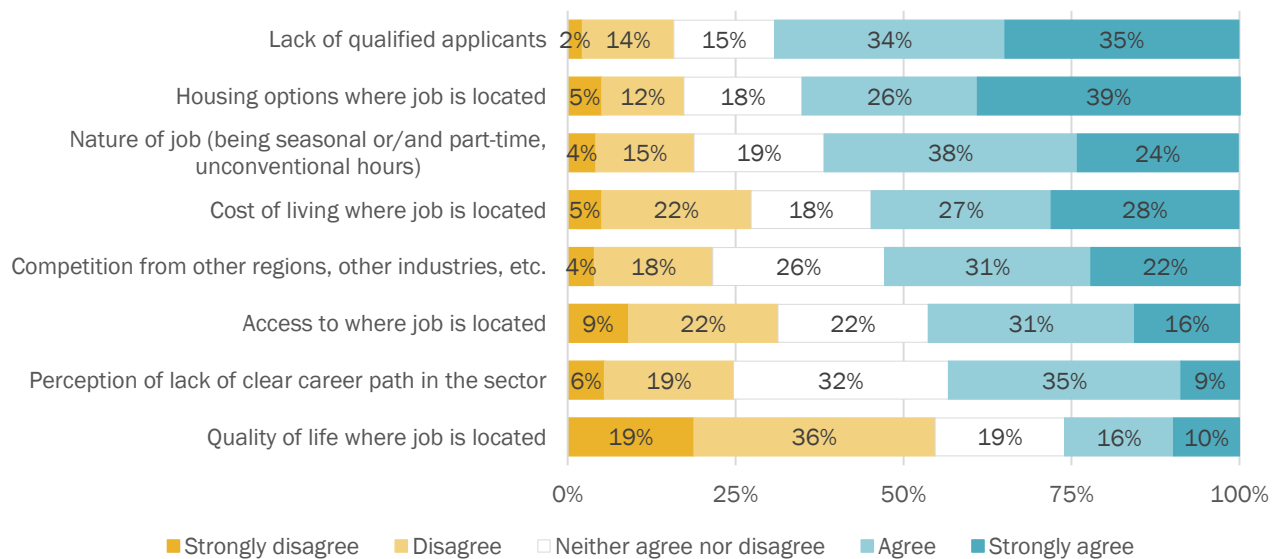
Other external barriers to recruitment cited included being in a rural area with a smaller labor pool, lack of clean drug screens and/or criminal records, and lack of childcare, particularly for jobs with non-traditional hours.

Further, the prevalent public perception of the tourism industry as low paying and lacking opportunities for career growth contributes to the recruitment challenges. Several stakeholders stated that the perception is deeply entrenched in parents, as well, who counsel their children to avoid the industry.

"The biggest barrier to recruitment is the public perception that hotels and restaurants are horrible places to work. I don't blame the workers; if they understood the career part, we'd have a bunch of people."
Food & Beverage employer

Quality of life was not a perceived barrier to hiring. More than half of employer respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that quality of life where the job is located posed a barrier to recruitment. Interviewees shed light on this finding, noting that tourist destinations are attractive places to visit. Employers cite lack of qualified applicants as a key barrier to recruitment

Figure 28. Percent of employers by perceived external barriers to recruitment
N varies 343 to 358



Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Variation by Subgroup

In addition to conducting analysis on key workforce issues in the Oregon tourism industry overall, the project team also analyzed variation in response by several key subgroups of interest. This section highlights the subgroup variation that was identified through statistical analysis.

Sector. Employers from the lodging and food and beverage sectors were more likely to identify a lack of qualified applicants as a key barrier to hiring compared to employers from the retail and entertainment sector. Respondents from DMOs were far less likely to identify seasonality of their sector as a barrier to hiring, especially when compared to respondents from the tour operation sector, reflecting the year-round stability of most destination marketing employers.

Required Skill Level

Employers were asked for their perspective on whether applicants had a range of different skills needed in the tourism industry (see Figure 29). Employer respondents were more likely to agree or strongly agree that applicants had the following skills:

- Basic skills (e.g. reading, writing, critical thinking) (81%)
- Appropriate education level (e.g., high school diploma or bachelor’s degree) (66%)
- General occupational skills (e.g., bookkeeping, sales) (60%)
- Job-specific occupational skills (e.g., food handling, commercial driving, housekeeping) (57%)

- Soft or interpersonal skills (e.g. communication, relationship building, dependability) (55%)

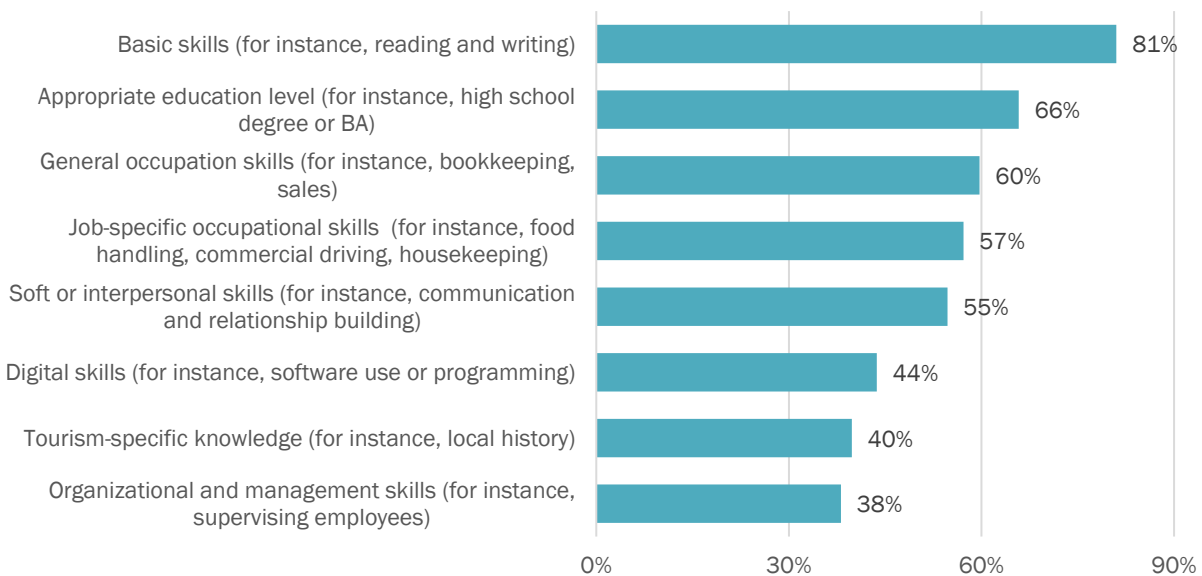
They were less likely to agree or strongly agree that applicants had the following skills:

- Digital skills (e.g., software use, programming) (44%)
- Tourism-specific knowledge (e.g., local history) (40%)
- Organizational and management skills (e.g., supervising employees) (38%)

Employers find applicants strongest in basic skills

Figure 29. Percent of employers who agree that applicants have identified skill

N varies 342 to 359



Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

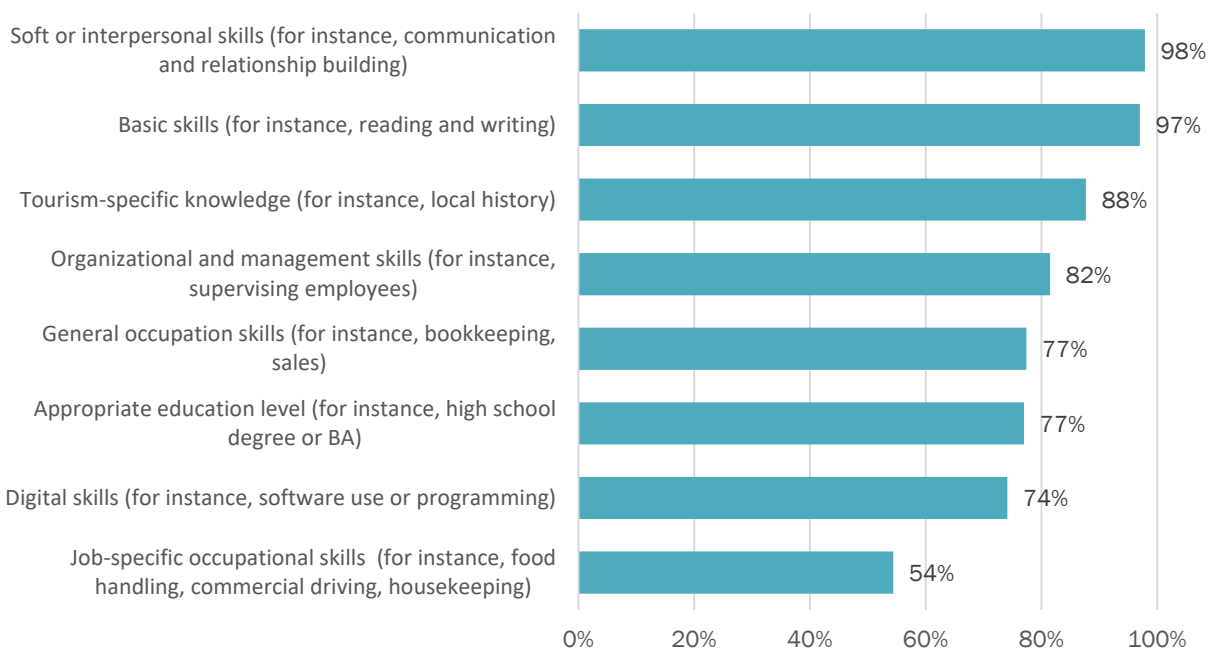
Employee survey respondents were asked whether various skills were required to perform well at their job (see Figure 30). The vast majority of employees agreed or strongly agreed that all the reported skills are necessary for their job performance. In particular, a large share of employees strongly agreed that the following skills are essential for job performance:

- Basic skills (e.g. reading, writing, critical thinking) (87% strongly agreed)
- Soft or interpersonal skills (e.g. communication, relationship building, dependability) (90% strongly agreed)

Employees identify basic skills and soft skills as particularly important to job performance

Figure 30. Percent of employees who agree that skill is essential to performing their job

N varies 192 to 200



Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Viewing the employee perspective in light of employer responses, basic skills appear to be both essential to job performance and adequately represented in the applicant pool. In contrast, while 90 percent of employees felt soft or interpersonal skills were essential to their job performance, 55 percent of employers agreed or strongly agreed that applicants have adequate soft or interpersonal skills, suggesting an opportunity for continued focus on soft skill preparation in high school and postsecondary training programs. Tourism employers seek employees who are service-oriented, able to make a connection with a customer, and able to assess a guest's needs and make sure they are being met.

While not unique to the tourism industry, employers also spoke about wanting employees with character, a positive attitude, and a desire to work.

Basic Skills

Among employer respondents who felt basic skills were hard to find, the following skills were identified as lacking among applicants by the greatest shares of employer respondents:

- Critical thinking (73% of respondents who felt applicants did not have needed basic skills identified critical thinking as a basic skill that is hard to find)
- Written communication (61%)
- Verbal communication (49%)

Employee respondents who said that basic skills were required for their job identified all subcategories as required for their job.

“Customer service is a hallmark of any brand and defines the success of any company and whether [the company] leaves a 5-star impression.”
Tour Operator, Guide, Outfitter employer

Education Level

Among employers who did not think applicants had the required education level, 5 percent or less noted any particular grade level (e.g., high school, college graduate) as hardest to find.

“The biggest challenge across the industry is we forget that we are in the business of creating experiences for other people. A lot of things fall under that blanket of “hospitality”: humility, empathy, generosity.”
Food & Beverage / Lodging employer

Occupational Skills

Among employers who did not think applicants had necessary general occupational skills, the following were identified as hard to find by the greatest share of respondents:

- Sales, promotion, marketing (53%)
- Facilities and equipment maintenance (41%)

Several employers interviewed also cited the need for applicants with marketing/digital marketing skills, as well as job-specific skills, including bookkeeping, finance, and revenue management. Stakeholders indicated that people are less aware of these jobs in the industry and “college graduates don’t come out with these skills.”

Among employee respondents who said that technical skills and know-how were required for their jobs, the greatest share noted the following technical skills in need: sales, promotion, and marketing (80%) and mathematics (63%).

Job-Specific Skills

Housekeeping and alcohol-server certification were the hardest to find among job-specific occupational skills, followed by commercial driving.¹⁵ Food handler training, spa industry accreditation, and environmental science were other noted hard-to-find job-specific skills.

¹⁵ Due to a technical error in survey implementation, this question restricted respondents to one choice in the survey, rather than a “check all that apply” format, which was the format of the other detailed skills questions. Respondents may have selected more than one response option if available.

Soft Skills

Among employer respondents who did not think that applicants had the needed soft skills, the following were identified as soft skills that are hard to find by the greatest shares of employers:

- Interpersonal communication (71%)
- Customer service (67%)
- Dependability (67%)
- Motivation (66%)
- Relationship building (48%)
- Cross-cultural communication (41%)

As with basic skills, among employees who said that soft skills were required, the vast majority identified all soft skills subcategories as required for their jobs.

Digital Skills

Among employers who did not think applicants had needed digital skills, the following were identified as hard to find by the greatest share of employers:

- Graphic design (49%)
- Job related software (42%)
- Online productivity software (42%)
- Website design (42%)

Among employees who said that digital skills were required for their jobs, skills related to online communication (94%), job-related software (77%), online scheduling (65%), and online productivity products (65%) were critical to their job performance.

Tourism-Specific Knowledge

Among employer respondents who did not think applicants had the needed tourism-specific knowledge, the following were related skills they identified as hardest to find:

- Knowledge about local cultural history (19%)
- Knowledge about local and regional opportunities for visitors (17%)
- Tourism marketing or management knowledge (17%)
- Knowledge about local environment (15%)
- Knowledge about industry-specific norms and practices (15%)
- Knowledge about local food and wine (13%)

- Foreign languages (13%)

Organizational Skills

Among employers who did not think applicants had the needed organizational and management skills, the majority found the following skills hard to find:

- Problem solving and decision making (73%)
- Managing and supervising people (65%)
- Time management (61%)
- Planning and organizing (55%)
- Financial management (48%)
- Project management (48%)

Like basic and soft skills, employees reported similar job skill requirements (i.e., the majority identified all subsectors as critical to their job performance) for organizational and planning and tourism-related skills (with the exception of foreign languages).

Variation by Subgroup

In addition to conducting analysis on key workforce issues in the Oregon tourism industry overall, the project team also analyzed variation in response by several key subgroups of interest. This section highlights the subgroup variation that was identified through statistical analysis.

Sector. Employer respondents from the lodging sector were more likely to identify job-specific occupational skills as a need compared to several other sectors. Destination marketing and retail employer respondents were more likely to identify digital skills to be in need, while lodging and tour operation employers were less likely to cite this. Employer respondents from the tour operation sector were most likely to cite a need for knowledge about local environments, including plants and animals, and respondents from agritourism were less likely to state this as lacking.

In addition to asking employers what they viewed as needed skills for their sector, employees were asked to identify what they perceived to be essential skills for their jobs. Among employees, food and beverage employees were more likely to identify supply chain management and procurement as essential to their jobs, tour operators were more likely to identify facilities and equipment maintenance, and agritourism employees were more likely to identify machine operation as an essential technical skill. All sectors felt that sales, promotion, and marketing was an essential technical skill.

Among digital skills, employees from all sectors found online communication to be essential to their jobs. Lodging and agritourism employees were less likely to cite graphic design as an

essential skill for their job, and food and beverage employees were less likely to consider online scheduling as essential to their jobs. Destination marketing employees were more likely than other sectors to consider capacity to use online productivity software as essential to their job performance.

Among tourism-specific knowledge by sector, food and beverage and agritourism employees were more likely to consider knowledge about local food and wine as essential to their job functions. Tour operator employees were more likely to consider knowledge about the local environment, including plants and animals, as essential to their work. Destination management, tour operator, and lodging employees were more likely to consider tourism marketing or management knowledge as critical to their positions.

Industry-specific skills that were cited as important by interviewees included cooking skills and knife skills (food and beverage), cash handling (retail and attractions), interpretive skills (tour operator), regional planning (land management), and commercial driver's license (transportation services).

Geography. Geographically, employer respondents from the Northern Oregon Coast were less likely to agree that applicants had the needed soft skills compared to their employer peers in the Willamette Valley.

Public/Private. Public employers were more likely to agree or strongly agree that applicants had the needed general occupation skills compared to private employers (67% versus 57%), needed digital skills (53% versus 39%), and needed tourism-specific skills (47% versus 36%).

Tenure. Employee respondents who had been at their job less than one year were less likely to consider basic skills as essential to their jobs. There was little other variation in responses to required skills based on employee time in the industry.

Employment Status. Seasonal staff were less likely to view the following as essential to their jobs:

- Digital skills
- Organizational skills
- Soft or interpersonal skills
- Tourism-specific knowledge

Preferences for Certifications and Certificates

Among employer respondents with a stated preference on certifications and certificates, 72 percent preferred applicants that had obtained certifications, and 28 percent did not.¹⁶ A few interviewees also indicated they prioritize certifications and hospitality degrees largely because it means the applicant chose the industry, and thus may be more likely to stay, but those applicants are rare.

Seven percent of employee respondents noted that a CTE diploma or certificate was required for their job. Among those, common certifications identified include:

- CPR and first aid
- Food handler certification
- Alcohol beverage serving certification
- Wilderness first responder
- Sommelier

Whether a preference or a necessity due to the limited number of applicants with certifications or certificates, most interviewees indicated they choose employees for personality and will train them.

Subgroup Analysis

In addition to conducting analysis on key workforce issues in the Oregon tourism industry overall, the project team also analyzed variation in response by several key subgroups of interest. This section highlights the subgroup variation that was identified through statistical analysis.

Sector. A larger share of employer survey respondents from the food and beverage, agritourism, retail and entertainment, and tour operation sectors gave preferences for certifications or certificates, as shown in Figure 31.

"If we have [applicants] with formal training, that is dreamland."

Food & Beverage / Lodging employer

"I can teach most anyone skills. I want someone passionate about our company vision and our clients. It's about finding someone who has character, integrity, commitment, and perseverance. Sometimes I find a good person and I don't have an opening, but I find a place for them anyway."

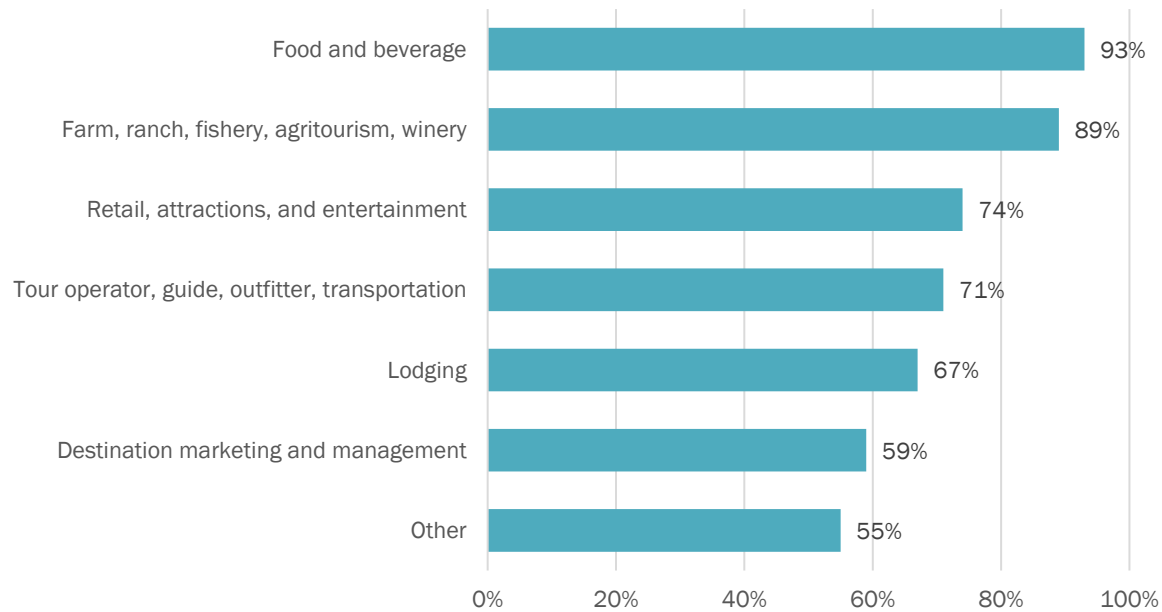
Transportation Services employer

¹⁶ Among all employer respondents, 42 percent preferred applicants with certifications or certificates, 17 percent did not, 29 percent didn't know, and 12 percent did not answer the question.

Certifications/certificates preferred in food and beverage and agritourism sectors

Figure 31. Percent of employers preferring certifications or certificates, by sector

N varies 11 to 84



Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Employer Size. Employers from smaller businesses (nine or fewer employees) were more likely (78%) to give preference to applicants with certifications or certificates than were larger businesses (100 or more employees) (55%).

Recruitment Resources

Employers interviewed and surveyed indicated they use online job boards to post jobs, including second language websites in some cases, but even more popular—and perceived as potentially more effective—are word of mouth, networking, and referrals, exemplifying the personal touch employers are investing in recruitment.

The four resources used by a majority of employer survey respondents, as shown in Figure 32 include:

- Word of mouth from current staff (72%)
- Word of mouth from colleagues or business network (67%)
- Social networking websites (63%)
- Posting on career sites (51%)

Similarly, employee survey respondents cited a wide variety of sources in hearing about their current or most recent job. Word of mouth referrals, either from family and friends or from colleagues

“For some jobs you can find people through the internet and submit job applications through the Internet. That is 50% of our jobs. For the other 50% it is hard to fill them that way, so we partner with social services organizations to reach out to people who don’t have the tech experience.”
Food & Beverage / Lodging employer

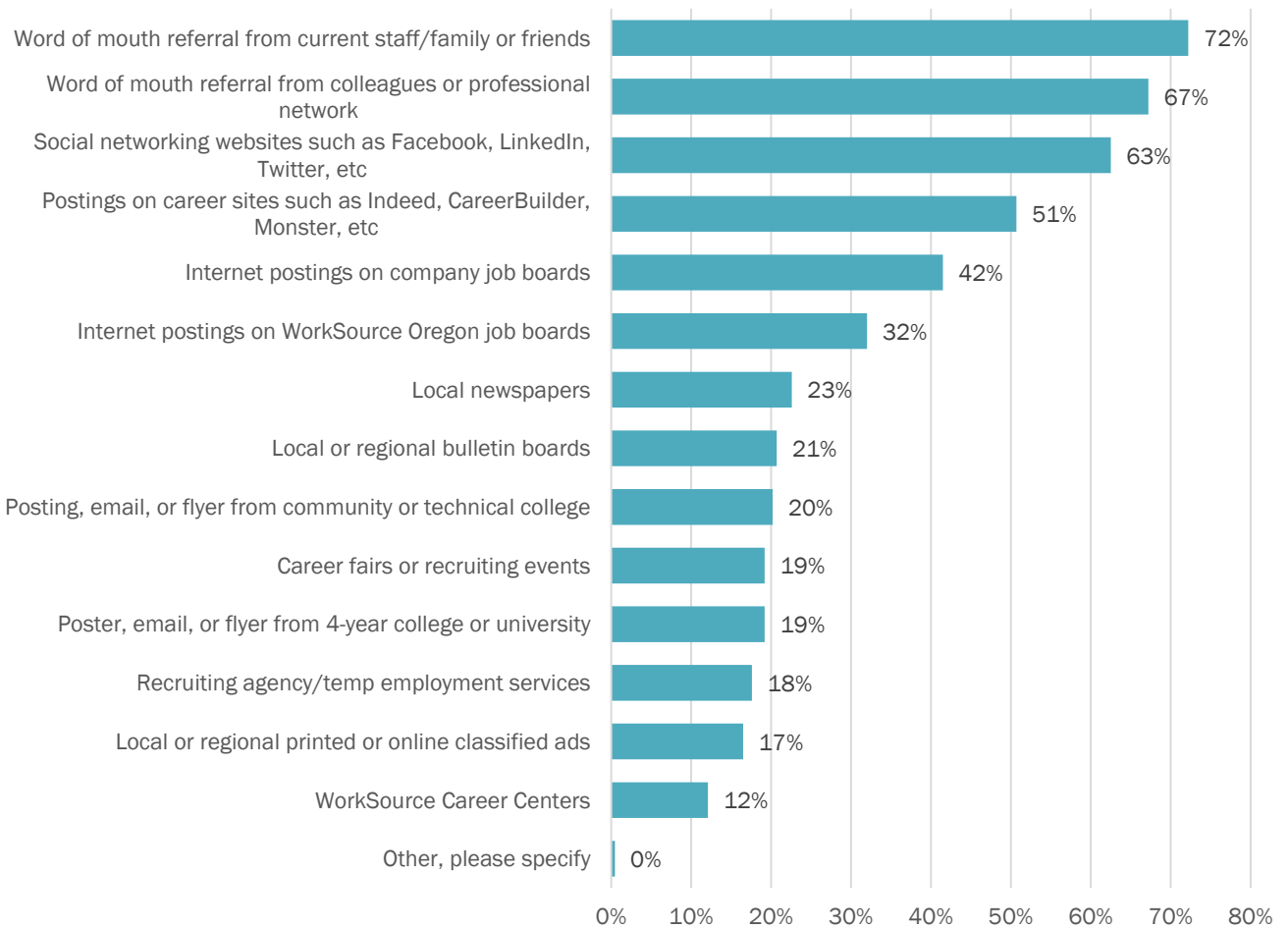
and professional networks, were two of the top key recruitment strategies cited by employees. The sources noted by the greatest share of employee respondents include:

- Word of mouth referral from colleagues or professional network (23%)
- Word of mouth referral from family or friends (18%)
- Other sources (23%), within which 37% had started their own business

While few employers surveyed cited local newspapers as a recruitment resource, several interviewees in less-populated regions reported they placed ads in the local paper. Other recruitment resources cited by interviewees, but less frequently, included social media, job fairs, internal promotions, Craigslist, third-party recruiting companies, college visits, employment department, and partnerships with social service agencies.

Word of mouth and social networking are key recruitment resources

Figure 32. Percent of employers that had used recruitment resource
N=374



Data source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Variation by Subgroup

In addition to conducting analysis on key workforce issues in the Oregon tourism industry overall, the project team also analyzed variation in response by several key subgroups of interest. This section highlights the subgroup variation that was identified through statistical analysis.

Geography. Geographically, employer respondents from the Central Oregon Coast were more likely to post positions on WorkSource Oregon job boards and in local newspapers, and Portland Region employers were less likely to do so. Southern Oregon employers were more likely to use career fairs and WorkSource Centers compared to those in the Willamette Valley or Hood-Gorge. Southern Oregon employers were also more likely to use recruiting agencies compared to employers in Portland Region, Hood-Gorge, and the Willamette Valley.

Employer Size. Larger companies used more diverse and extensive recruitment strategies. Larger companies (10 to 99 employees and 100 or more employees) were more likely than smaller organizations to use the following recruitment resources:

- Internet postings on WorkSource Oregon job boards
- Internet posting on company job boards
- Postings on career sites

The largest companies were more likely than the smallest companies to recruit on social media, and more likely than small or midsize companies to recruit at career fairs, with local or regional online classified ads, via WorkSource Career Centers, at community or 4-year colleges, or via recruiting agencies.

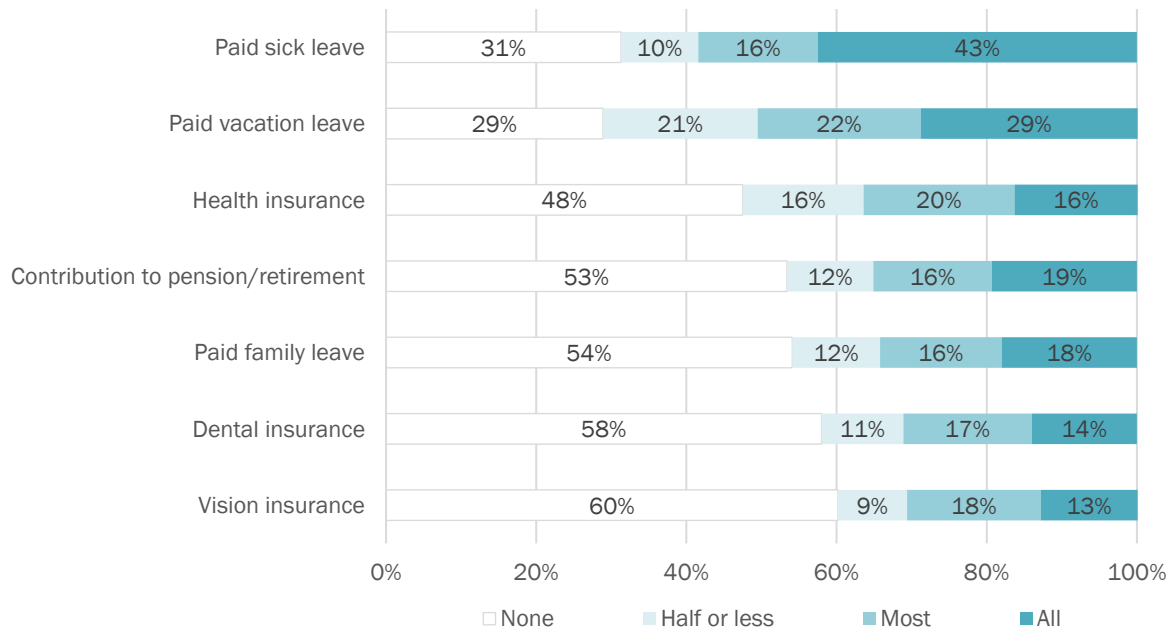
Employer-Provided Benefits

Benefits are limited in the tourism sector, as shown in Figure 33. Paid sick leave was the benefit offered to all employees by the largest share of employers (43%). Almost 30 percent (29%) of employers offer paid vacation leave to all employees. Most employers report that none of their employees receive vision insurance (60%), dental insurance (58%), paid family leave (54%), contribution to pension/retirement (53%), or health insurance (48%).

Paid vacation leave is the most commonly provided benefit

Figure 33. Percent of employers by the portion of their employees that receive benefit

N varies 333 to 360



Data source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

The perception among the employers interviewed is that 401ks, health care coverage, and paid leave are common benefits for full-time employees, particularly at larger companies, but also among smaller employers.

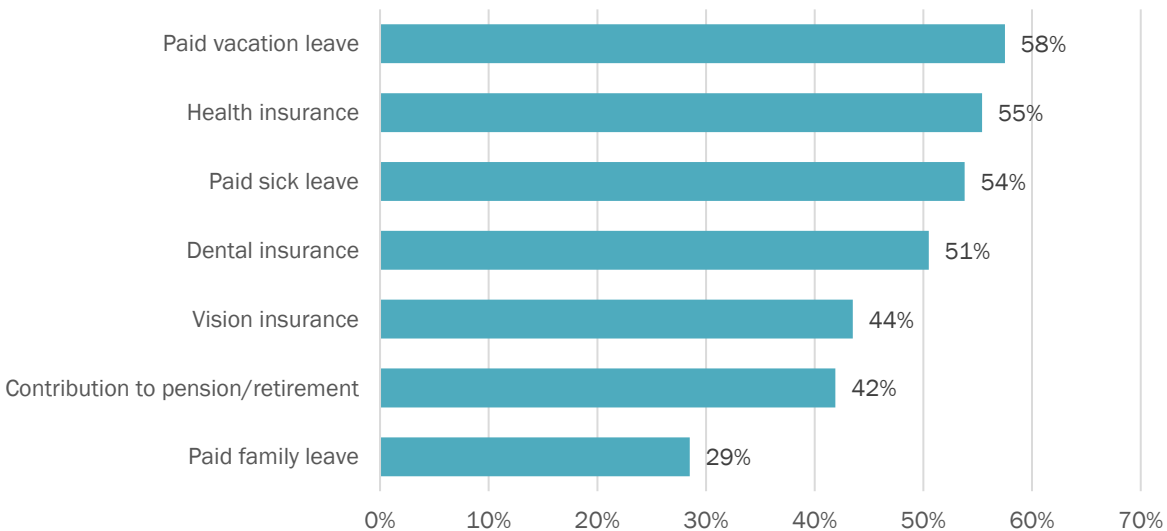
In contrast, the majority of employee respondents noted receiving the following benefits, as shown in Figure 34:

- Paid vacation leave (58%)
- Health insurance (55%)
- Paid sick leave (54%)
- Dental insurance (51%)

Paid vacation, health insurance, and sick leave were top reported benefits among employees

Figure 34. Percent of employees who reported benefit receipt

N=185



Data source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

These findings differ considerably from employer responses to the question regarding benefits, suggesting that employee respondents were more likely to come from organizations with generous benefit packages compared to the industry as a whole. Generous benefit packages may be correlated with other positive work environment characteristics. Thus, employee responses should be considered in light of this potential bias (towards organizations able to provide more-generous benefits) and may not reflect the broader diversity of tourism employee experience.

Variation by Subgroup

In addition to conducting analysis on key workforce issues in the Oregon tourism industry overall, the project team also analyzed variation in response by several key subgroups of interest. This section highlights the subgroup variation that was identified through statistical analysis.

Sector. Employer respondents from DMOs were more likely to cite provision of benefits across all benefit categories, while tour operators were least likely to provide benefits to any employee across all benefit categories.

Reported employee benefit experiences also varied somewhat by sector.

- A majority of tour operator (77%) food and beverage (60%), and retail (60%) employees did not receive health insurance.

- Most employees across sectors did not receive dental or vision insurance, with the exception of lodging and destination marketing, where most employee respondents received these benefits.
- A majority of employee respondents received paid vacation leave across sectors, with the exception of tour operators, where 24 percent reported paid vacation leave, and retail, where 40 percent reported this benefit.
- Contribution to retirement was identified by a majority of employees in the destination marketing sector only.

Geography. Employer respondents from the Portland region were more likely to provide health, dental, or vision insurance compared to their peers in other regions.

Employer Size. Companies with 100 or more employees were more likely to offer benefits across all benefit categories, and companies with nine or fewer employees were least likely to offer these options, across all benefit categories.

Tenure. Employee respondents who had been in the industry more than 6 years were more likely than those who had been in the industry less than one year to receive dental insurance, vision insurance, paid time off, and paid sick leave.

Employment Status. Full-time workers were more likely than part-time or seasonal employees to receive benefits across all benefit categories.

Best Practices and Connections with Other Research

Skill problems can be thought of in three broad categories (Cappelli, 2014). Skill gaps are widespread shortfalls in basic skills; skill shortages are shortfalls of occupation-specific skills; and skill mismatches are oversupply or undersupply of skills. Both existing research and this study agree that there is a shortage of tourism-specific skills. The digitization of tourism means

employers are increasingly seeking employees with skills in social media, online reputation management, e-marketing, animation design, information technology, and website and app development (Buzzetto-Hollywood & Quinn, 2019; APEC-TWG, 2017). Moreover, customer service skills will continue to be in demand even as automation technology advances. For example, a recent survey found the majority of respondents preferred to interact with hotel staff as opposed to self-service (“Drivers of Change in Hospitality,” 2019).

Due to the specialized nature of many tourism jobs, many graduates are not considered job-ready, leaving a skill set mismatch between the supply and demand of labor (Pani et al., 2015). Potential solutions include developing professional education, attracting employers to participate in the training of graduates (Mosalev et al., 2018), analyzing the tourism market, identifying required skills, and improving the state of facilities at higher education institutions (Sidorov, 2018). To bridge the gap between the industry and education, educational institutions need to teach skills aligned with industry needs, and industry representatives need to be more actively engaged with schools and training. For example, employers can hold campus recruitment events and offer on-the-job training (Batra, 2016; Nachmias & Walmsley, 2015). Educational institutions can also consider new teaching methods to provide students with required and up-to-date skills (Ahmad, 2018). However, the limits of the classroom can still lead to few job-ready graduates (APEC-TWG, 2017). Better skills development will ultimately depend on collaboration across traditional boundaries: businesses, educational institutions, government, and other organizations need to work together at the “micro-market” level to meet the needs of employers and employees (Fuller et al., 2014; Fuller, 2014).

Promising Practices: Recruitment

Promising recruiting practices described by interviewed employers included hiring a full-time recruiter and taking a personal approach to recruitment, such as being involved in the community and building relationships with chambers of commerce, primary and secondary schools, and college hospitality programs. Several employers interviewed described positive experiences working with social service organizations that help find employment for youth, people with disabilities, people with criminal records, homeless individuals, and recent immigrants or refugees. For example:

- Stone Soup is a program in Portland that started in the summer of 2019. The program trains homeless or formerly homeless individuals in cooking and restaurant skills and works with local hotels and restaurants to place people in entry-level positions.
- Connect to Careers works with underrepresented youth to help them get their first job. Employers offer summer paid internships for mostly high school age youth, providing work experience for the student and good exposure for the industry.

Employers working with Stone Soup, Connect to Careers, and similar programs find that programs like these, which provide both training and support, not only fill needed positions, but increase the chances the employee will stay.

“It’s a best practice to look at where there are people who need to work and build those skills. Community services like Stone Soup are a win-win for the individual, community, and the industry.” - Accommodation employer

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) released a guide on how to assess the current tourism workforce and design appropriate programs to address challenges (Bonifaz et al., 2010). The guide includes an example of showing potential pathways in the tourism and hospitality industry (p3). The assessment found that the industry faces challenges such as a lack of soft skills, few training opportunities, and difficulties in welcoming youth into the industry. Recommendations included setting up a job center, starting joint university programs, offering advanced tourism destination management courses through the State Secretary of Tourism, and publishing a catalog of training providers.

This study's survey results can be compared to results from the *Oregon Talent Assessment* (OTA) survey completed in 2018. That survey included 363 employer respondents from a wide range of sectors across Oregon. Compared to this study's finding that 66 percent of employers had difficulty hiring, 77 percent of OTA respondents noted difficulty in finding qualified applicants for the jobs they were trying to fill. In response to difficulty in finding qualified applicants, those employers increased their recruiting efforts (74%), hired a less qualified applicant (38%), didn't fill the position (35%), raised wages (35%), and increased overtime for current workers (35%).

Similar to this study's survey, most OTA survey respondents agreed that applicants had the education level (81%) and basic skills (77%) required for the job but were less positive about soft skills and hard or occupational skills. Fewer OTA survey respondents—55 percent, the same share as this study's survey—agreed that applicants had the soft skills needed for the job.

To recruit workers, the most frequently cited strategy in the OTA survey was word of mouth (92%). Businesses also posted openings in various online resources and recruited through postsecondary education and training institutions. Twenty percent of survey respondents said they used WorkSource career centers as a recruitment resource.

6. What is the retention experience in the tourism industry?

Retention Difficulty

It is generally accepted by employers that there is a fair degree of turnover in the industry, particularly among part-time and/or seasonal employees. Forty four percent of employer respondents have had difficulty retaining employees over the past five years. The greatest share of employers agreed or strongly agreed (69%) that employees' poor job performance contributed to retention challenges (see Figure 35). More than half of employer survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the following factors contributed to retention challenges:

- Employees’ poor job performance
- Employees lacked the right skills
- Employees were unhappy with employment conditions
- Employees left for personal reasons
- Employees left for external factors like cost of living or accommodation

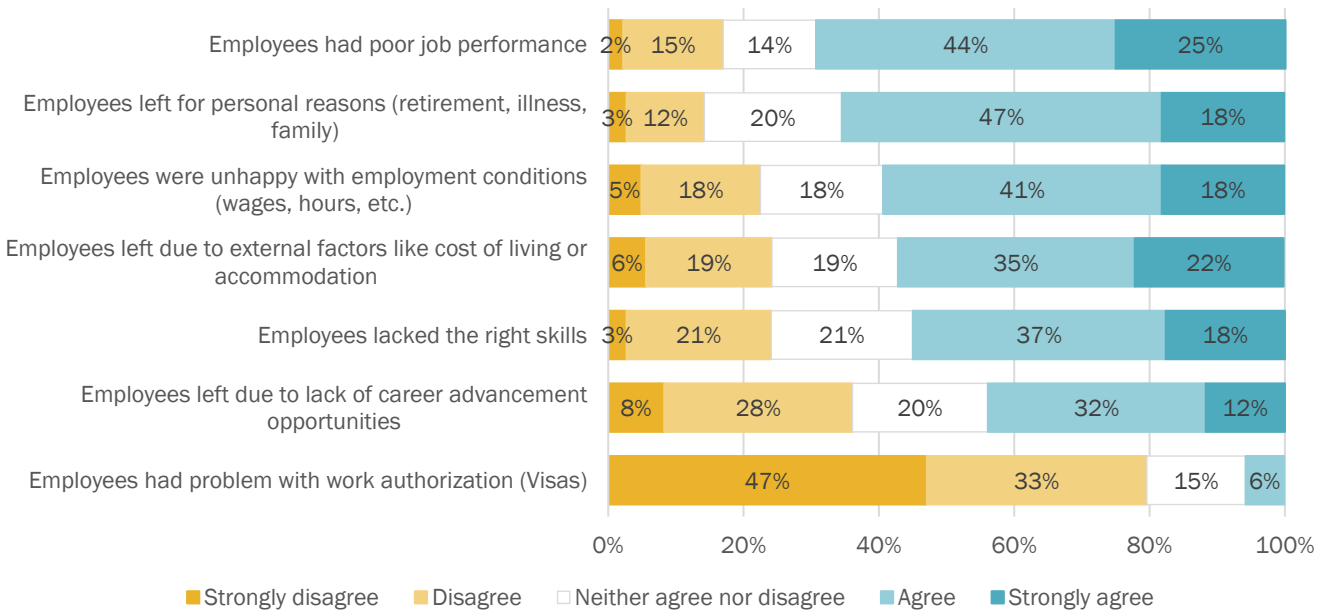
Less than half of employers agreed or strongly agreed that lack of career advancement opportunities contributed to retention challenges. However, according to interviewees in certain sectors, such as food and beverage or accommodation, positions are usually filled by younger employees for whom it is a “fill-in” career, not a true end career, or their employees leave because of a real or perceived lack of growth opportunities.

Among employers interviewed, the key factors affecting retention were seasonality, transportation difficulties, lack of career advancement, dissatisfaction with the job, or dissatisfaction with the schedule (e.g., lack of flexibility or time off). Also cited were low wages, lack of benefits, lack of full-time work, lack of day care, or competition from other industries.

Despite employer-reported challenges related to tenure, most employee respondents (76%) agreed or strongly agreed that they are likely to stay in the tourism industry over the next five years.

Poor job performance and personal reasons were top cited factors leading to retention challenges

Figure 35. Percent of employers that identified factor contributing to retention challenges
N varies 157 to 183



Data source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Variation by Subgroup

In addition to conducting analysis on key workforce issues in the Oregon tourism industry overall, the project team also analyzed variation in response by several key subgroups of interest. This section highlights the subgroup variation that was identified through statistical analysis.

Sector. Employer survey respondents from the lodging sector were more likely to identify difficulty retaining staff (73%), whereas among interviewees, food and beverage employers were more inclined to acknowledge low retention rates. Survey respondents from agritourism (21%) and DMOs (37%) were less likely to identify difficulty retaining staff compared to peers in other sectors.

Employer respondents from the lodging, food and beverage, agritourism, and destination marketing sectors were more likely to agree or strongly agree that poor employee performance contributed to retention challenges. More than half of respondents across sectors, with the exception of tour operations, felt that employees' lack of the right skills contributed to retention challenges. More than half of tour operator respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that this was a factor in retention.

There was little variation by sector in employees' likelihood to remain in the tourism industry.

Geography. Employers from the Willamette Valley were least likely to express difficulty retaining staff (58% indicated that this had not been a challenge the previous 12 months).

Employer Size. Similar to hiring experience, respondents from the largest companies (100 employees or more) were more likely to identify difficulty retaining employees—86 percent of respondents from large companies compared to 55 percent from mid-sized companies and 42 percent from small companies.

Factors that affected retention varied by company size:

- Mid-sized businesses were more likely to cite poor job performance and lack of the right employee skills compared to small or large businesses
- Large businesses were more likely to identify external factors like cost of living or accommodation

Employment Status. Full-time (82%) and part-time (74%) employees were much more likely than seasonal employees (43%) to expect to remain in the tourism industry over the next five years.

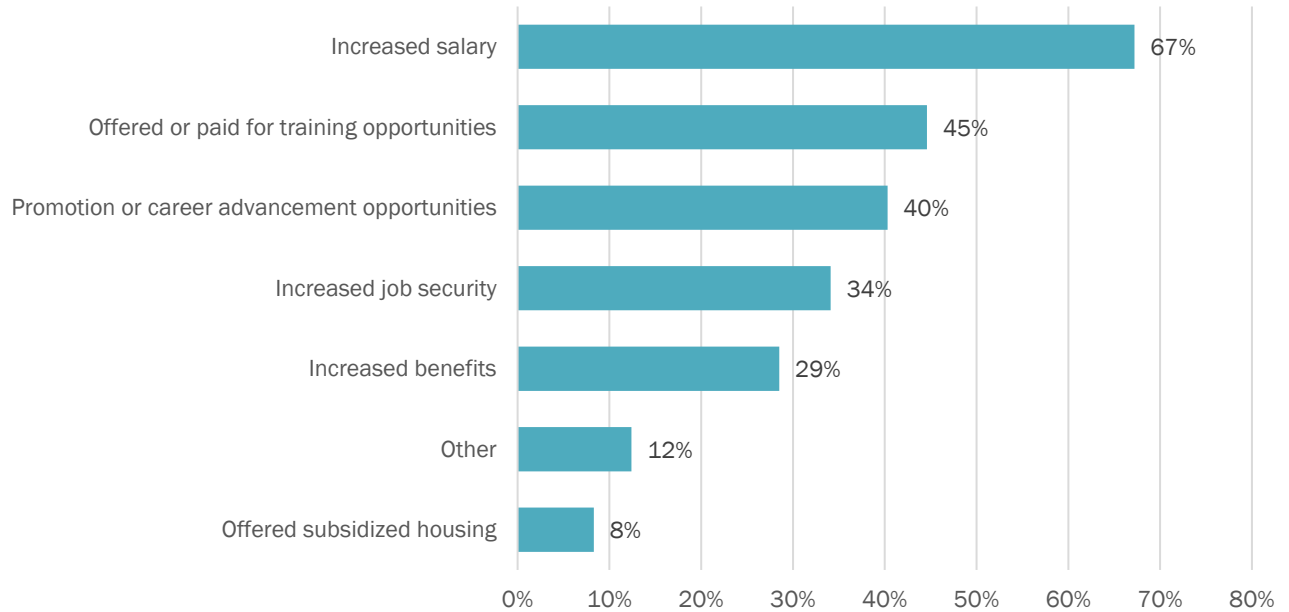
Retention Strategies

Employers reported using a number of strategies to retain staff, as shown in Figure 36. More than two-thirds of employer survey respondents increased salaries as a strategy to retain staff,

and over 40 percent of employers offered promotion or career advancement opportunities or offered or paid for training opportunities to increase retention.

Increased salary and paid training opportunities were top retention strategies noted by employers

Figure 36. Percent of employers offering retention strategy
N=367



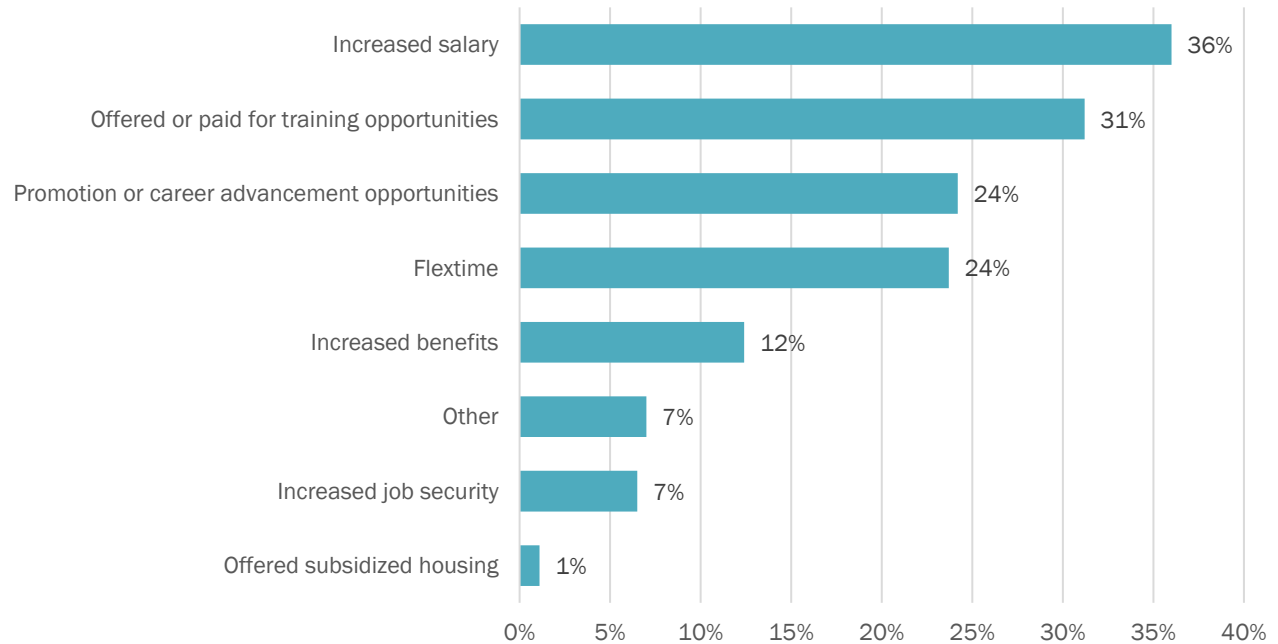
Data source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Employee respondents were asked whether their employers had offered them any of the identified strategies to retain them as an employee. Less than a third of employee respondents indicated that their employer had done any of the articulated strategies to retain them as employees. Increased salary was selected by the largest share of employee respondents, at 36 percent, as illustrated in Figure 37.

Increased salary and paid training opportunities were the most common retention strategies identified by employees

Figure 37. Percent of employees offered retention strategy

N=185



Data source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Variation by Subgroup

In addition to conducting analysis on key workforce issues in the Oregon tourism industry overall, the project team also analyzed variation in response by several key subgroups of interest. This section highlights the subgroup variation that was identified through statistical analysis.

Sector. More than half of employer survey respondents in each sector had increased salaries as a strategy to retain staff; more than three-quarters of respondents from lodging, food and beverage, tour operation, and agritourism cited this strategy. One-third or less of employer respondents across sectors had offered job security as a means of improving retention, with the exception of food and beverage, where nearly half (48%) of respondents indicated they had pursued this strategy. Respondents from agritourism (63%), destination marketing (52%) and food and beverage (51%) were more likely to have offered or paid for training opportunities. Very few employer respondents indicated that they offered subsidized housing to retain staff, except for tour operators, where 20 percent identified this option.

Geography. Geographically, the Northern Oregon Coast employer respondents were more likely to indicate that they had offered subsidized housing compared to other regions.

Employer Size. By size, smaller businesses were less likely to offer promotion or career advancement opportunities to retain staff when compared to mid- or large-sized businesses.

Employment Status. Full-time employee respondents were more likely than seasonal employees to have received increased salaries and paid training opportunities as efforts to increase retention.

Best Practices and Connections with Other Research

This assessment's survey findings and the broader literature suggest that turnover is relatively high in the tourism industry. Oregon State University's survey of outdoor recreation workers found that limited opportunities for career advancement is one of the drivers of turnover. About half of all employees who left their job did so voluntarily, and 38 percent of respondents cited career advancement as the main reason for voluntarily leaving. Only 29 percent of respondents agreed "each job position has a clearly defined path for career advancement" ("Outdoor Workforce Survey Key Findings," 2019). Only 43 percent of respondents reported their organization's onboarding program was effective in preparing new hires for success, 31 percent agreed their organization's leadership development program was effective in developing managers, and 29 percent agreed their organization's internship/apprenticeship program was effective in filling entry-level positions. Supporting temporary and part-time workers to see their future in the industry and training full-time workers to build their careers can help businesses improve their retention rates.

Increasing compensation (monetary and non-monetary) is a best practice in the industry. Businesses strive to improve employee retention by 1) providing more benefits and flexible workhours, 2) allowing employees to take more ownership roles, 3) offering more educational and transitional

Among the employers interviewed, several key retention strategies came to light:

- *Offer good pay and benefits:* Good pay and benefits, like health insurance, and perks, like travel discounts, are increasingly important for retention, but the costs can be prohibitive. When not possible to further increase wages and benefits, other strategies suggested below may help.
- *Offer a positive work environment:* Create a positive work environment that respects and values the employee.
- *Give employees authority and a sense of purpose:* Help employees feel invested in the success of the company and proud of where they work by implementing their ideas for growth and improvement and giving them a sense of purpose.
- *Commit to a full schedule:* In response to seasonality, make a commitment to 30 hours a week minimum year-round and retention of benefits for full-time staff.
- *Actively mentor employees for career growth:* Every manager should be engaged in mentoring at least one employee at all times.
- *Support employees:* Customer-facing jobs can be difficult, so managers need to be constantly supporting the workforce.

"I firmly believe that if every manager believes in servant leadership, retention will increase. The best thing we can do in small communities is to be really good employers." Food & Beverage employer

programs, 4) paying livable wages, and 5) encouraging more welcoming and inclusive company cultures (“Best Practices in the Hospitality Industry,” 2019; Fuller et al., 2014; Fuller, 2014). Improving retention requires companies to recognize the importance of retention, treat employees well, and demonstrate authentic concern for employees and customers.

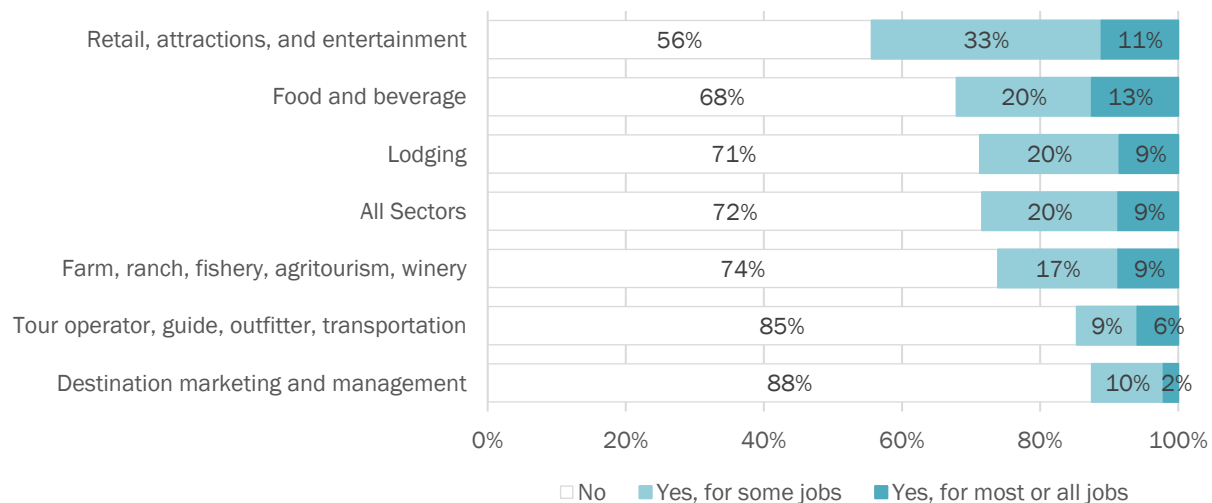
7. What is the training experience in the tourism industry?

Career Pipelines

Most employer survey respondents (71%) do not feel there is a clearly identifiable career pipeline that channels employees into entry level jobs in their organization (see Figure 38). Employer interviewees tend to agree, indicating a general lack of defined career pipelines for most jobs in the industry.

Most employers do not perceive a clearly identifiable career pipeline to channel new workers into entry level positions

Figure 38. Percent of employers that believe there is a clearly identifiable career pipeline, by sector
N = 310 for all sectors; varies between 23 and 94 by sector



Data source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Among survey respondents and employer interviewees, tourism career pipelines mentioned included:

- Hospitality internships that lead to entry-level positions for students from neighboring 4-year college institutions.
- Associate or certification programs from industry-specific organizations, including the following:

- OSU Extension and Colorado State University programs in agritourism
- OSU Extension Guide and Outfitter Recognized Professional (GORP) program
- Central Oregon Community College culinary program
- OSU Cascades hospitality program
- WSU Vancouver hospitality program

One employer interviewee expressed surprise that PSU does not have a hospitality degree and several felt that more needed to be done to build tourism career pipelines in high school and community colleges, if for no other reason than to build awareness of tourism career options.

“Our local community college doesn’t have a hospitality track, but even a certificate would be helpful.”
Retail and Attractions employer

Stakeholders note that the lack of statewide recognition of tourism as a vital industry contributes to the public workforce system not funding relevant training and community colleges not developing curriculum. While most employers interviewed saw value in developing the tourism career pipeline, some did not think this was as critical on the logic that a good person can be trained and mentored once hired.

Variation by Subgroup

In addition to conducting analysis on key workforce issues in the Oregon tourism industry overall, the project team also analyzed variation in response by several key subgroups of interest. This section highlights the subgroup variation that was identified through statistical analysis.

Sector. Retail and entertainment and food and beverage employers were somewhat more likely to cite a pipeline for workers.

Employer Size. Larger companies were more likely to consider there to be a clearly identifiable pipeline for workers (54% for some or most jobs) compared to small (20%) and mid-sized (30%) businesses.

Opportunities for Advancement

Forty-four percent of employer survey respondents did not feel there are clearly defined opportunities for career advancement and promotion within the typical position at their organization. Forty-seven percent felt there were clearly defined opportunities for career advancement for some jobs, and 10 percent felt there were clearly defined advancement opportunities for most or all jobs.

Interviewee input provides context for these findings. Most interviewees cited the unique career ladder opportunities in the industry for non-college graduates, as well as well-paid management positions for college educated individuals. Internally, however, several

interviewees indicated that they could do a better job articulating career ladders. It is often done in an ad-hoc fashion, where opportunities for advancement are given to employees who ask for new or more challenging assignments, rather than laying out for employees how to advance. One survey respondent identified organic career advancement within their organization, where housekeepers move into inspection and supervisory roles, or dishwashers move to prep cook, line cook, and eventually kitchen supervisor. Despite these informal paths, employers recognize the importance of more structured career ladders. As one stakeholder stated, “If we don’t grow them, they will grow themselves,” suggesting that employers who don’t give employees advancement opportunities will lose those employees to other companies. Many stakeholders reported that they pay for career advancing training for interested employees, such as supervisor training or job-specific skills training.

Variation by Subgroup

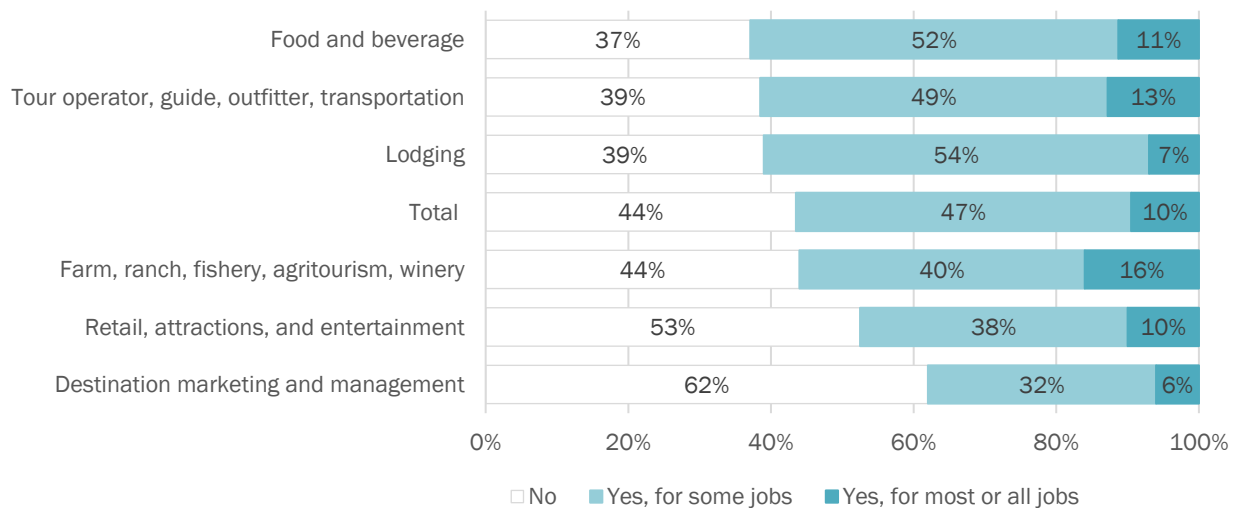
In addition to conducting analysis on key workforce issues in the Oregon tourism industry overall, the project team also analyzed variation in response by several key subgroups of interest. This section highlights the subgroup variation that was identified through statistical analysis.

Sector. As shown in Figure 39, destination marketing respondents, in particular, did not feel there were clearly defined opportunities for career advancement within the typical position at their firm (62%); similarly, more than half of retail and entertainment respondents (53%) did not feel there were advancement and promotion opportunities.

Perception of career advancement opportunities lowest for destination management sector

Figure 39. Percent of employers that believe there are defined opportunities for career advancement for a typical position, by sector

N = 336 for all sectors; varies between 25 and 100 by sector



Data source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Employer Size. More than half of all small business employer respondents did not consider there to be clearly defined opportunities for career advancement and promotion, compared to roughly one-third of mid-sized businesses and one-quarter of large businesses who did not identify career advancement opportunities within the typical position at their firm.

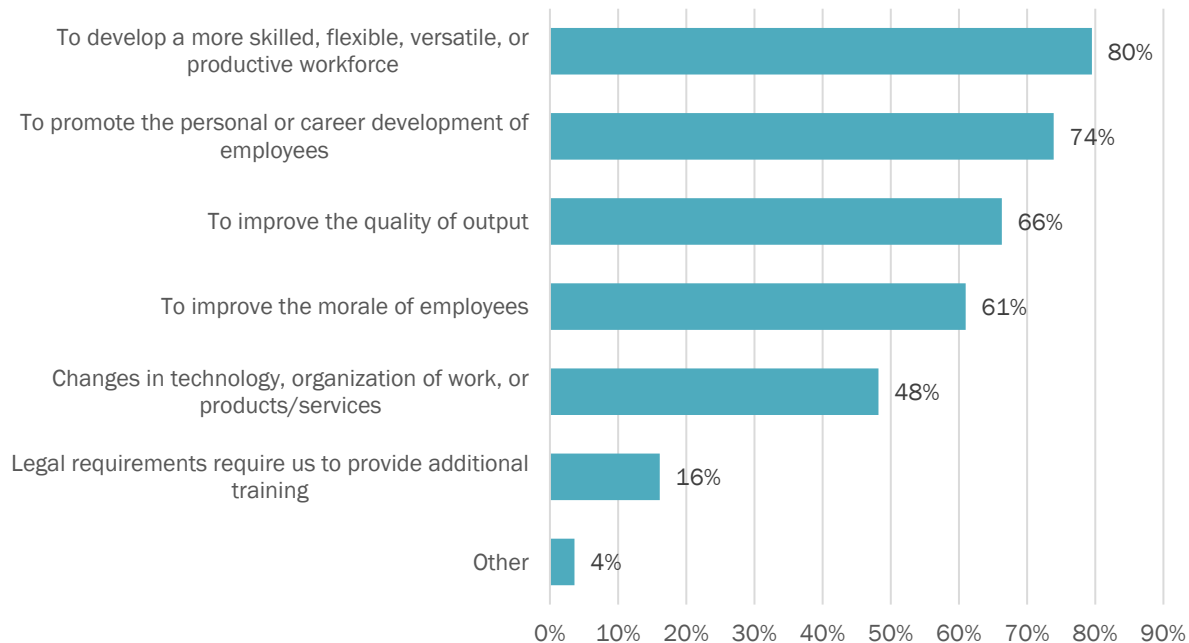
Training Support

Three-quarters of employers indicated that their firm had paid for classroom training, workshops, or seminars for employees over the past 12 months, but less than half of employee respondents indicated that their organization had paid for any type of training. The difference between the relatively high percent of employees reporting paid training and the relatively low employee report of training provision may reflect lack of alignment between employer and employee respondents (that is, the employers that responded to the survey are not the same employers for whom most of the employee survey respondents work), or may suggest that employer-sponsored training is offered to more advanced staff and less likely to be offered to staff without hiring responsibilities.

Employers cited multiple motivations for providing training, as shown in Figure 40. More than three-quarters of employer respondents provided training to develop a more skilled, flexible, versatile or productive workforce (80%) and to promote the personal or career development of employees (74%).

Most Employers Provide Training to Develop a More Skilled, Flexible Workforce

Figure 40. Percent of employers by reason for providing training
N=249



Data source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

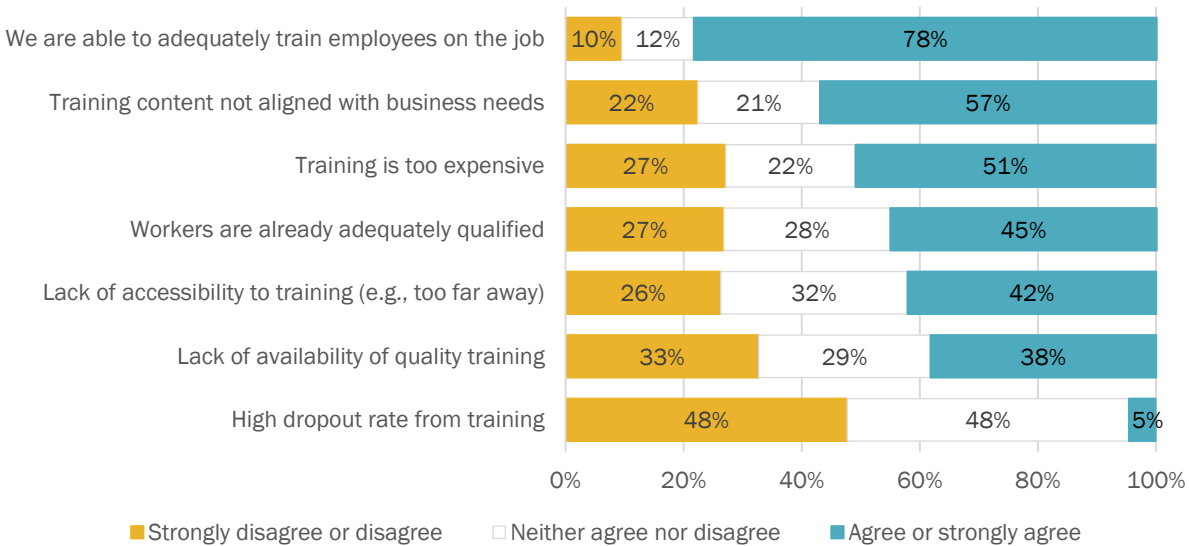
Firms that did not provide training were most likely to agree or strongly agree that the following issues preventing them from providing training (see Figure 41):

- They are adequately able to train employees on the job
- Training content is not aligned with business needs
- Training is too expensive

Adequate informal on-the-job training was the primary reason employers did not provide paid training opportunities

Figure 41. Percent of employers by reason for not providing training, among employers that did not offer training

N varies 80 to 83



Data source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Variation by Subgroup

In addition to conducting analysis on key workforce issues in the Oregon tourism industry overall, the project team also analyzed variation in response by several key subgroups of interest. This section highlights the subgroup variation that was identified through statistical analysis.

Sector. Tour operator respondents were less likely compared to other sectors to identify promoting the personal or career development of employees or improving the morale of employees as motivations for providing training.

Employer Size. The majority of respondents across firm size had offered training, from 68 percent of small businesses to 78 percent of mid-sized and 90 percent of large businesses.

Mid-sized firms were more likely to identify improving the quality of output as a motivating factor for providing training, and large firms were more likely than small firms to cite legal requirements as motivation for providing additional training.

Training Resources

Employers responding to the survey used diverse resources to provide training to their employees, but three key training sources were each cited by three-quarters of employer respondents: on-the-job training (77%); industry, business, or professional organization training or conference (77%); and in-house staff training (73%). As shown in Figure 42, self-study or online training was the resource used by the next greatest share of employers, at 38 percent.

These survey data were supported by the interviewees. Most of the employers interviewed do internal training or a combination of internal and external, primarily because of the lack of regional training options and the perceived efficacy of on-site training. Of those doing internal training, in addition to on-the-job training, most do some sort of structured training using in-house training resources or a training program created by a professional organization, college, or government agency.

Half of employers surveyed (52%) were satisfied with the training resources their firm used, while one-third were neither dissatisfied or satisfied. Twelve percent were very satisfied with their training resource.

Showing strong alignment with employer respondents, the vast majority of employee respondents felt the following training resources were important to helping them acquire the skills need for their jobs (see Figure 42):

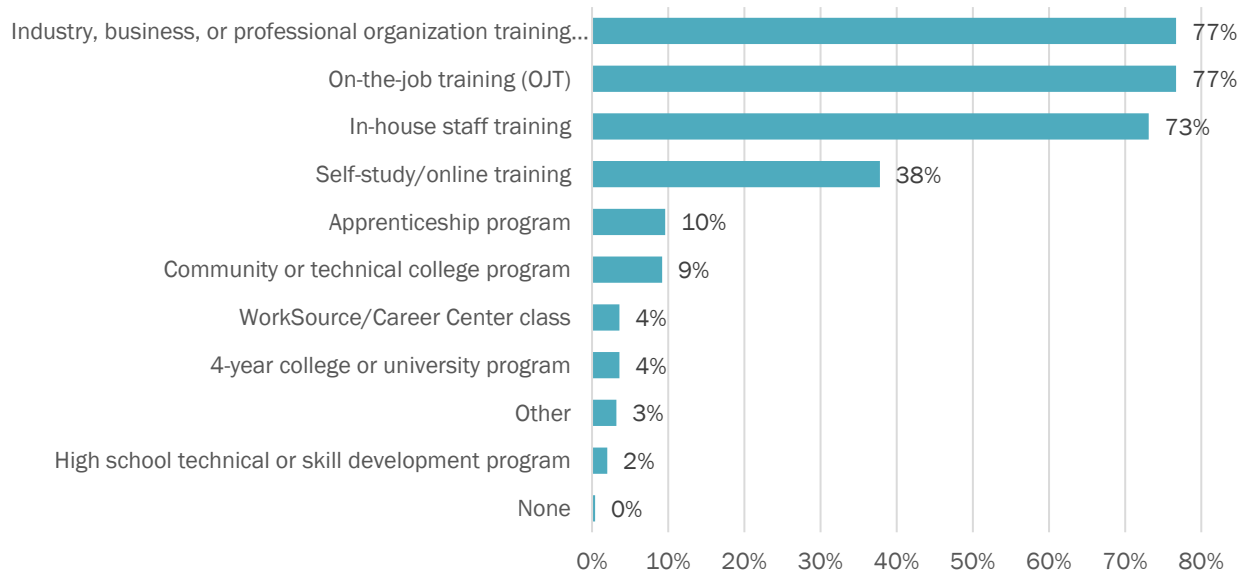
- On-the-job training
- In-house staff provided training
- Training provided by industry, business, or professional organizations
- Self-study/online training
- Non-tourism industry previous job experience
- Life experience

These findings suggest an alignment between training and value. However, the degree of circularity is unknown—that is, whether these were considered most important because they were the ones employees were most likely to have experienced or these were considered most important because they provided more value compared to known experience with other options.

Industry, on-the-job, and in-house training were key training resources

Figure 42. Percent of employers using training resource

N=249

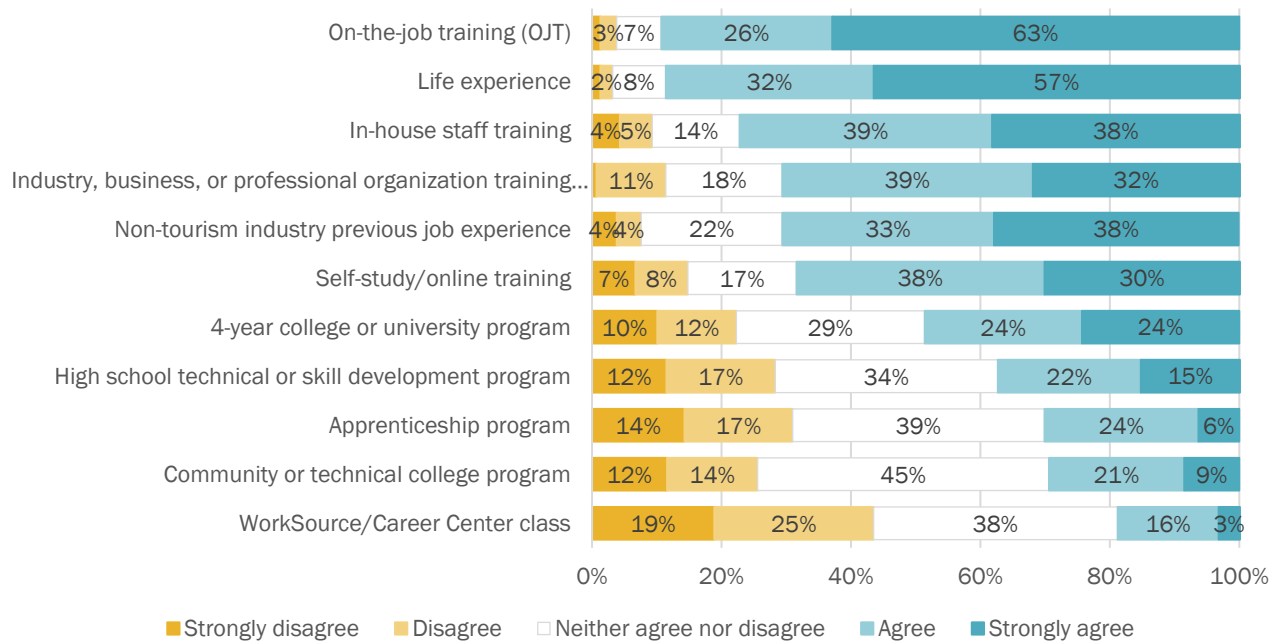


Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

On the job training, life experience, and in-house training were most helpful training options for employees

Figure 43. Percent of employees by how well training options helped them acquire skills needed for their jobs

N=126 to 159



Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Variation by Subgroup

In addition to conducting analysis on key workforce issues in the Oregon tourism industry overall, the project team also analyzed variation in response by several key subgroups of interest. This section highlights the subgroup variation that was identified through statistical analysis.

Sector. Destination marketing and management was less likely to use in-house staff training (53%) compared to lodging (81%), and tour operators were less likely to use industry, business, or professional organization training or conference compared to food and beverage employers (56% versus 88%).

Among employee survey respondents, destination marketing respondents (69%) were most likely to consider 4-year college training as important to acquiring needed skills. Destination marketing employees (68%) were also most likely to indicate that their employer had paid for industry, business, or professional organization training, compared to other sectors.

Employer Size. Large firms were more likely than small firms to provide in-house training and offer self-study or online training.

Best Practices and Connections with Other Research

Employers can help fix what's described as "the broken supply chain of labor" by communicating clearer, structured career paths for aspiring workers. Students, workers, career counselors, and family members helping young people with career decisions often cite the need for clarity around career paths. Employers can invest in understanding and communicating about pathways, starting with entry-level jobs, so that employees have a sense of direction and stability in the industry (Fuller et al., 2014; Fuller, 2014).

Employers in Oregon agree that there is an insufficient number of people in the workforce with desired skills and that they need to train their employees. Tourism businesses look for employees with social media and online reputation management skills and experience, and list Facebook as one the most desired skills. Employees look

Promising Practices: Training

Employers cited the following promising training practices:

- Travel Oregon's Guest Service Gold (routinely cited by stakeholders)
- Travel Oregon's We Speak
- Travel Oregon's annual Tour Operators, Guides, and Outfitters (TOGO) program
- Driver training resources through International Motor Coach, American Bus Administration, International Tour Management Institute, and Green Certified Motor Coaches
- OSU Extension Guide and Outfitter Recognized Professional (GORP)
- National Training Seminar for manager/supervisor positions
- Portland community policing on how to handle transients
- Forest Service "Good Host" training program

for training in customer service, housekeeping, staff management/human resources, and marketing (Phillips, 2018). Most of these skills can be learned on the job, yet employers sometimes report lack of educational programs at local colleges as a reason for difficulties in filling positions. One proposed solution is to create regional agencies that run professional development and retraining programs (Yumatov et al., 2017). Employers who feel they are responsible for the training of their workforce could collaborate with each other and educational institutions to provide a regional training option.

Compared to three-quarters of tourism employer respondents, 90 percent of OTA survey respondents indicated their business had paid for classroom training, workshops, or seminars lasting at least four hours for any employee over the last 12 months. Similar to this study's employer results, a substantial proportion of OTA respondents across sectors (89%) identified the development of a more skilled, flexible, versatile, or productive workforce as a training motivation. While similar shares of OTA and tourism survey respondents used on-the-job training (OJT), relatively more OTA than tourism respondents used self-study/online training, 4-year or community/technical colleges, apprenticeship programs, WorkSource/Career Centers, and high school technical or skill development programs.

8. What workforce planning and forecasting factors affect the tourism industry?

Seasonality

Seasonality is a widespread and significant challenge for the industry. Nearly three quarters (74%) of employer respondents indicated that their organization is a seasonal business. May or June is the start month of peak season for the majority of employer respondents, while September or October is the end month of peak season. Low season starts in October or November for the majority of employer respondents, ending March, April, or May.

Seventy percent of employers that identified as a seasonal business believe that seasonality affects their ability to find qualified employees. Similarly, 63 percent believe seasonality affects their ability to retain current employees.

Employer interviews support the survey findings. Interviewees shared that the seasonal nature of many tourism jobs affects long-term job retention, increases the need to recruit and train every season, and affects overall workforce quality. There is also a tension between the seasonality of workforce demand and housing demand (increased housing demand in the peak season without commensurate housing supply).

Employers use diverse strategies to respond to seasonality's impact on the workforce, as shown in Figure 44. More than half of employers of seasonal businesses reduced employee hours (62%)

and adjusted employee numbers (58%) in response to seasonality. Among employers interviewed, some of the smaller employers, who have limited ability to keep staff working through the off-season, indicate their employees go on unemployment or hopefully have saved enough in the peak season to survive the slow season. Given the impact of seasonality on retention, larger employers are more likely, and able, to assure at least 30 hours a week and retained benefits for their full-time staff.

Additional strategies to manage seasonality identified in the survey and interviews include:

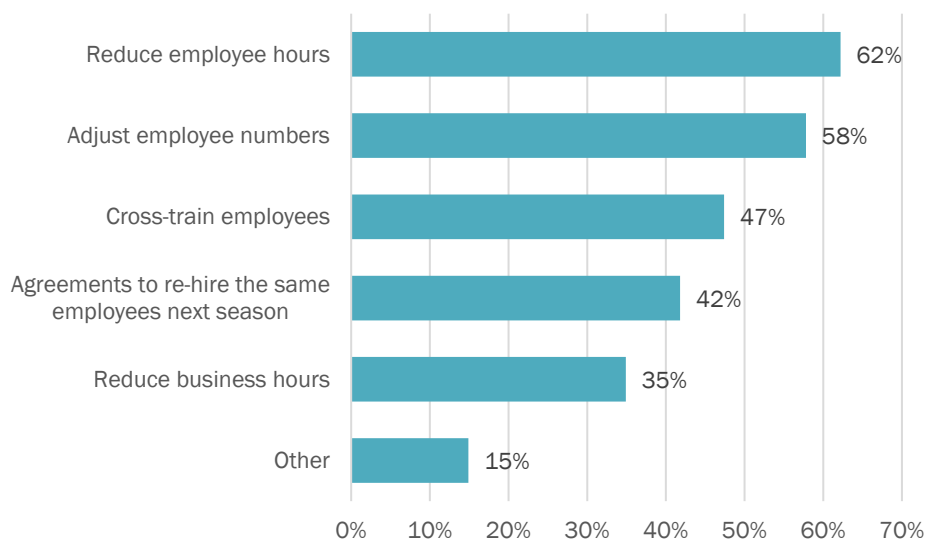
- Agreeing to hire the same people the following season
- Hiring freezes
- Cross-training employees and moving them to different jobs in the organization
- Having explicitly seasonal positions that target high school and college students
- Reducing business hours

Expanding offerings into the off-season is another strategy; interviewees cited the example of Mt. Bachelor Ski Resort buying Sun Country Tours, which provides year-round employment as ski area staff and river tour staff.

One-third of employee survey respondents consider themselves to work in a seasonal business, with food and beverage (71%), agritourism (57%), and retail (50%) most likely to identify seasonality.

Reducing employee hours and adjusting employee numbers were key responses to seasonality

Figure 44. Percent of employers who used strategies to respond to seasonality of business
N=249



Data source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Variation by Subgroup

In addition to conducting analysis on key workforce issues in the Oregon tourism industry overall, the project team also analyzed variation in response by several key subgroups of interest. This section highlights the subgroup variation that was identified through statistical analysis.

Sector. Almost all employer respondents from the tour operator sector consider their business seasonal (97%), while just 20 percent of respondents from DMOs considered their business seasonal. Among interviewees, the only sector reporting little impact from seasonality was food and beverage, except in university towns that rely on student customers. Lodging in Portland also reported some degree of flattening across seasons.

Lodging (78%) and food and beverage (75%) were more likely to reduce employee hours compared to tour operations (31%) and destination marketing (20%). Agritourism (67%), tour operations (61%), and lodging (63%) were most likely to adjust employee numbers in response to seasonality, compared to retail (48%) and destination marketing (30%). Lodging (63%) and food and beverage (55%) were most likely to cross-train employees in response to seasonality while tour operator respondents were most likely (64%) to have established agreements to rehire the same employees across seasons. Food and beverage (49%) and retail and entertainment (52%) were most likely to reduce business hours in response to seasonality.

Employer Size. Small firms may have less tools at their disposal to respond to seasonality. Mid-sized and large firms were more likely to adjust employee numbers and cross-train employees in response to seasonality when compared to small firms.

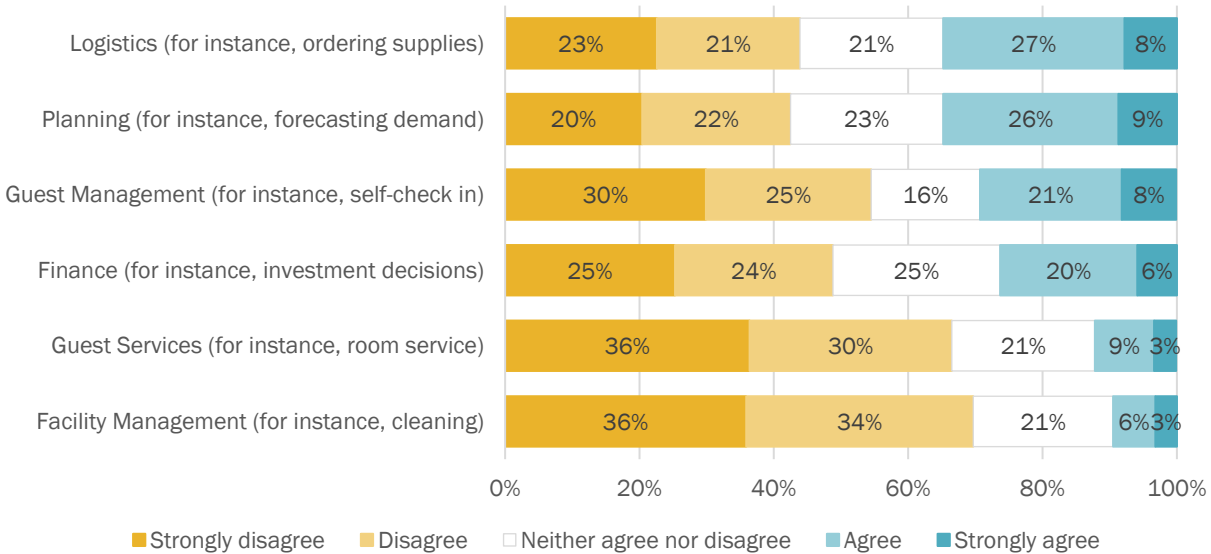
Automation

Automation was not identified as a significant factor or concern for the majority of survey and interview respondents. Most employer survey respondents did not think that automation would affect guest services (e.g., room service) or facility management (e.g., cleaning), as shown in Figure 45. Roughly half felt that guest management (e.g., check-in) and finance (e.g., investment decisions) are unlikely to be affected by automation, and over 40 percent did not think logistics or planning would be affected.

Employer respondents do not think automation will have a big impact on most tourism tasks

Figure 45. Percent of employers by their perspective on degree to which tourism tasks will be affected by automation

N varies 272 to 299



Data source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Employer interview respondents conjectured that hotel check-in may become automated in the future. Automation will be “good for business, but not good for jobs” as one interviewee characterized it. Industry support services, like bookkeeping and payroll, are increasingly automated, and having employees with the ability to operate a computer will continue to be important.

Similarly, among employee survey respondents, the vast majority (86%) did not think their job would be replaced by automation. Thirty-seven percent did not feel their job would require different skills as a result of automation, while 44 percent did. Employee respondents were evenly split on whether their jobs would be done more efficiently because of automation. Nearly half (46%) did not think their job would be easier as a result of automation, and 16 percent did.

The survey results may at first blush appear to contradict findings presented earlier that a significant portion of the industry’s workforce faces a significant risk of automation. We attribute this seeming contradiction to a number of factors. First, research-based estimates of automation risk typically refer to a relatively long time-horizon, whereas employee and employer responses may reflect near-term expectations based to some extent on technology already deployed and do not necessarily reflect the potential of technology under development or reasonably anticipated by experts in automation.

Second, the automation risk faced by employees in certain occupations in the tourism industry could differ from the average for the same occupation overall. For example, waitstaff at smaller,

local dining establishments attractive to tourists may face lower risk than waitstaff at large chain restaurants both because smaller employers might be slower to adopt automated solutions and because of greater expectations of personalized service by tourists that patronize smaller restaurants.

Overall, we synthesize the disparate findings as indicating that automation will in fact affect many occupations to a degree that is likely greater than most employees expect but also that, based on employer and employee perceptions, the resulting disruption will fall short, at least for the next few years, of the dire scenarios often described in popular reporting on automation.

Variation by Subgroup

In addition to conducting analysis on key workforce issues in the Oregon tourism industry overall, the project team also analyzed variation in response by several key subgroups of interest. This section highlights the subgroup variation that was identified through statistical analysis.

Sector. Agritourism respondents were least likely to agree that automation would affect work tasks, across all task categories, while destination marketing respondents were most likely to agree that automation would affect work tasks.

Employer Size. Large firms were more likely than small firms to agree that the following tasks would be affected by automation:

- Guest management
- Guest services
- Logistics
- Planning

Employment Status. Full-time employees were more likely than seasonal employees to believe that due to automation their job would require different skills, and that their job will be done more efficiently.

Best Practices and Connections with Other Research

Seasonality and the temporary nature of some of the work are well-known features of the tourism industry. Not investing in seasonal or short-term employees can lead to a missing sense of community and purpose, lower retention rates, and increased demand for training outside the organization (Ackehurst & Loveder, 2015). Migrant workers “are not always well integrated into the communities that they support, leaving them, the tourism industry, and tourism-dependent communities vulnerable” (Knollenberg et al., 2019). They, and the industry, would benefit from support around sociocultural adjustment and other obstacles to encourage long-term commitment (Kim, 2016; Janta et al., 2011; Joppe, 2012).

Automation trends will likely affect the industry in the long term. Employees with long, simple, and/or repetitive tasks would be affected by automation (Montgomery, 2017), but occupations with “computerization bottlenecks,” such as those that require social intelligence or perception and manipulation, are at a lower risk of computerization (Frey & Osborne, 2013). The tourism industry is human-centric and relatively difficult to automate (Ivanov et al., 2017), and its occupations that require interpersonal interaction will continue to grow (Deming, 2017).

9. What workforce recommendations emerged from the research?

Recommendations resulting from this workforce assessment are described below in three categories: education and training, job quality and stability, and industry-specific opportunities. A key question to consider with each is, who is responsible? When asked who they thought was responsible for developing the tourism workforce in general, interviewed employers answered as follows:

- *Employers:* First and foremost, most employers interviewed felt they were responsible for training their workforce. Several interviewees expressed that this perception may reflect the lack of career pipeline programming; employers are used to people coming in without skills or experience and being wholly responsible for their training.
- *DMOs and trade associations:* Interviewees cited the role of DMOs in providing training content or courses for the larger tourism industry.
- *Primary and secondary education:* Stakeholders saw the opportunity to improve soft skills training in K-12 education, as well as offer more career-technical education so students can find out early whether they like real-life, hands-on work. There was substantial agreement that the tourism industry could do better at informing high school students of the career possibilities within the industry.
- *Postsecondary education:* Interviewees expressed interest in postsecondary programs playing a bigger role. One stakeholder expressed it well:

“I would love to see the community college take charge of developing programs that reach [the tourism industry]. I’ve seen them do a lot with nursing due to the shortage. There needs to be some awareness of tourism as a top employer, as a professional capacity. The industry has such a huge impact in coastal towns.” *Retail and Attractions employer.*

- *Government:* Government plays the role of setting standards to be upheld, such as different levels of certification required for different fields.

The recommendations below should be considered with this list of potential actors in mind; suggested actors—or lead actors—are noted for each. Travel Oregon could play a number of roles across the recommendations, such as leader, communicator, facilitator, or convener. In a

number of areas, tourism employers could benefit from ways to share lessons learned with each other through methods such as technical assistance or workgroups (for example, Travel Oregon’s launching of the Oregon Agritourism Network in 2015). Many stakeholders cited Travel Oregon’s strengths in communication, brand messaging, and marketing, which could play a role in several of the efforts recommended below.

Education and Training

- **Build and market a more formal pipeline (cross-sector).** Word of mouth was a key recruitment strategy among tourism employers and was also the key method by which employees had heard about their current or most recent positions. Few survey respondents and employer interviewees perceive a strong pipeline for developing tourism workers, which suggests a need to build a stronger pipeline as well as do a better job marketing the training resources and certifications that already exist.

The best practices research presented earlier in this report echoes the perception of employer interviewees. A survey of outdoor recreation workers conducted by Oregon State University found that only 29 percent of respondents agreed that “each job position has a clearly defined path for career advancement” (“Outdoor Workforce Survey Key Findings,” 2019).

Greater public outreach campaigns to market tourism workforce opportunities and more intentional relationships with secondary and postsecondary institutions could create a stronger pipeline of workers. Such efforts could also help address employers’ primary noted barrier to recruitment: lack of qualified applicants.

Stakeholders had many ideas for what a more formal pipeline might look like:

- *Look for specific ways to influence high school career-technical curriculums* in the way Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) proponents have. Integrate competencies into pipeline coursework and ensure educators view tourism as a career choice and understand the opportunity in tourism.
- *Build a state-backed, certification-granting technical education program for tourism* that could be housed at a local university or postsecondary institution. If the state cannot commit independently, tourism advocates could pursue a public-private partnership designed to be affordable. For example, a James Beard cooking school for aspiring cooks to get more formal certifications in the industry, or an interpretive guide certification to demonstrate the ability to effectively and appropriately give interpretive information, along the lines of Travel Oregon’s We Speak program.
- *Bridge the gap between industry and education* by actively engaging employers in schools and training. For example, employers can hold campus recruitment

events and offer on-the-job training (Batra, 2016; Nachmias & Walmsley, 2015) and educational institutions can ensure that teaching methods and curricula are up to date with industry standards (Ahmad, 2018). Ultimately, creating a formal pipeline and fostering better skills development depends upon collaboration across traditional boundaries for educational institutions, businesses, government entities, and other organizations.

- *Create more interactive training programs* – as opposed to online self-study only – as a means of improving the quality of certificates/certifications and to build more prestige in the industry. Costa Rica was held up by a stakeholder as a model for recreation workforce training, for example. Students have formal education to become guides and, consequently, there is more respect for the profession. A practice described in the literature is for regional agencies to run professional development and retraining programs that provide employees with necessary on-the-job skills (Yumatov et al., 2017).
- *Provide scholarships for training programs* for students who commit to working in Oregon for a certain period of time.
- **Improve coordination, communication, and data sharing between employers and educators (employers and educators).** The primary and best practices research for this assessment found that certain skills, such as soft skills, digital skills, organizational and management skills, and tourism-specific knowledge, were lacking among tourism job applicants and employees (Phillips, 2018). Conversations about addressing such skill problems should happen at the “micro-market” level over short time horizons, where hiring actually takes place and employers can communicate closely with educators about their shifting needs. Data can help support development of consistent language about the nature of the skills problems. Interviewees cited the example of outdoor recreation’s successful coordination and development of curriculum with community colleges.
- **Communicate clearer, structured opportunities for advancement (employers and DMOs/trade associations).** Employer respondents suggested opportunities for increased transparency and communication around career paths and opportunities for advancement. Clear guidelines regarding career trajectories and criteria could help employees, students, career counselors, and supporting family members better understand and pursue advancement opportunities, and could help counter the perception described in the research that the industry lacks career opportunities and pathways to higher-paying positions (Brown et al., 2015; O’Leary & Deegan, 2005; Dogru et al., 2019).

Job Quality and Stability

- **Create pooled benefit programs (Employers and DMOs/trade associations).** The tourism industry is perceived in this assessment as providing a positive, welcoming, and balanced workplace by both employers and employees. Opportunities to improve the perception of the industry among prospective employees include increasing tourism wages, to the extent possible, and providing more employee benefits. Although these factors are affected by external market forces, there may be opportunities to make benefits more affordable for employers through a pooled benefit program to facilitate greater employee coverage.
- **Develop complementary off-season businesses to reduce seasonality challenges (employers).** The seasonality of many tourism businesses affects employers' ability to recruit and retain workers. According to Ackehurst and Loveder (2015), not investing in seasonal workers can lead to lower retention rates and increased demand for training opportunities outside the organization. Tourism business operators who have developed or bought complementary off-season businesses are in a better position to retain employees year-round by cross-training employees to serve in multiple roles, depending on the season. A salient local example of this strategy that was cited by interviewees was Mt. Bachelor Ski Resort's purchase of Sun Country Tours, providing ski-related employment in the winter and river-related employment in the summer.
- **Consider other ways to address real or perceived job quality issues (employers).** Half of employer respondents cited difficulty retaining employees over the past five years. To help address retention issues employers could consider providing benefits such as automatic wage increases tied to experience, or opportunities for flexible hours. One stakeholder suggested a company set-aside fund that an employee can apply for and use flexibly for continuing education, networking, or even other experiential uses that may or may not have a direct connection to the employee's job but could serve as a way to recharge and boost retention. Stakeholders reported that the tourism industry has begun to adopt this concept on a limited basis. Employees are also interested in and sensitive to non-monetary benefits such as flexibility and workplace culture.

Stakeholders' suggestions aligned well with recommendations made in the reviewed research: that employers increase employee compensation, provide more benefits and flexible work hours, allow employees to take more ownership roles, offer more educational and transitional programs, and encourage welcoming and inclusive company cultures ("Best Practices in the Hospitality Industry," 2019; Fuller et al., 2014; Fuller, 2014).

Industry-Specific Opportunities

- **Focus on branding to raise awareness of tourism as a career path (DMOs/trade associations).** Stakeholders noted a need for better brand messaging to connect with the workforce and generate interest and described an opportunity for better industry data to demonstrate the need for training programs and attract workers. Prospective employees are looking for career, cause, and community. Tourism needs to develop the “cause” pitch – why do people want to do this and in what ways is it rewarding and satisfying?

For example, one study shows that millennials represent 44 percent of the country’s hotel and lodging industry (American Hotel & Lodging Association, 2017), but many are hesitant to stay in the industry due to real and perceived challenges, such as low pay and poor work-life balance (Grobelna, 2017). Employers could adapt their managerial approach to better attract young people (Grobelna & Marciszewska, 2016).

Oregon employers did report that hotels have done a better job than some sectors at getting over “the image problem.” For example, Hilton was recently ranked the number one Fortune best company to work for and Kimpton was fifth. Other sectors of the tourism industry are still struggling to confront negative perceptions.

Several employers expressed that Travel Oregon does a great job marketing to tourists to visit Oregon, which stakeholders value because more tourists equals more industry success. Given Travel Oregon’s marketing skill and experience, respondents felt the organization would be well-positioned to apply the same skills to marketing to the potential workforce in Oregon (e.g., high schoolers and young adults through secondary and postsecondary programs) and nationwide or even worldwide. There was substantial stakeholder alignment around the idea of Travel Oregon partnering with ORLA to create a marketing campaign targeted at educators and students, that may, in turn, filter to parents, as well.

“I don’t know what PR has to be done to get over the perception that this is a horrible industry [in which] to work. I started as a dishwasher and now oversee six restaurants. That opportunity isn’t necessarily available in other industries. Education has to catch up with this.”
Food and Beverage employer

“People forget about the types of careers that can be found. Accounting, marketing, revenue audit positions. People need more information about career pathways.”
Attractions employer

“Back in the day, before my time, working in the hospitality industry was fun and hip and we even had people refer to it as sexy at one point and we need people to think of it like that again. As an industry we need to be proactive in education programs in high school and early college years.”
Accommodation and Food and Beverage employer

“It is staggering to me the growth in our industry and yet not a single person graduating from high school or college thinks, ‘I can be in tourism.’”
Accommodation and Food and Beverage employer

“We need the kinds of marketing efforts that are trying to get visitors here to be put into careers, showing people the path it took them to become a great chef. For example, ‘I started as a dishwasher and now I am a celebrated chef.’ That is our industry, but we have not done a good job of communicating that externally.”
Destination Management Organization representative

Part of the campaign could include an industry branding day at the convention center to showcase career opportunities – including less-well-known careers, such as finance and analytics jobs– and build awareness of the industry among young people and their families.

- **Continue supporting small businesses and employers (DMOs/trade associations).** Stakeholders expressed support for Travel Oregon continuing its role in providing small businesses and employers with training, promotions, and ideas for supporting staff in providing positive customer service experiences. Smaller businesses were less likely to offer promotion or career advancement opportunities to retain staff when compared to mid- or large-sized businesses. They were also less likely to consider there to be clearly defined opportunities for career advancement and promotion, suggesting an opportunity to provide targeted technical assistance on developing career ladders and build more intentional career advancement infrastructure and support among small businesses in the industry. For example, one stakeholder noted the lack of management training programs at smaller hotels for students straight out of college and suggested that Travel Oregon and/or ORLA could potentially offer such a program, along the lines of Guest Service Gold.
- **Advocate with state and federal agencies for the recreational use of public lands (DMOs/trade associations and government).** There is a role for DMOs to advocate with state and federal agencies for the recreational use of public lands; current permitting regulations are convoluted and time-consuming such that outfitters are operating illegally because there is no enforcement. This places an unfair burden on recreation outfitters since it is easier for hunters and forestry companies to get permits.
- **Continue seeking out opportunities to build Oregon’s agritourism market (cross-sector).** Oregon can continue to strengthen the links between the state’s agricultural offerings and tourism. Ongoing efforts of the Agritourism Working Group and others could result in increased opportunities and activities such as overnights on working farms and agritourism apprenticeships as well as increased expertise in and promotion of Oregon specialties (wine, hazelnuts, etc.) in tourism more broadly.
- **Focus on rural tourism development (cross-sector).** Respondents noted the need for greater promotion and branding of rural areas and the ability to leverage some of the historical tension against outsiders to help native Oregonians see tourism opportunities themselves before outsiders do. These efforts could partner with higher education to up-skill the workforce and deliver a brand-message.

“The Forest Service makes a concerted effort to reach out to socioeconomically disadvantaged people, working with nonprofits to have youth crews do field work, for example. Government agencies are more likely than private agencies to take this approach because when one considers productivity versus cost, it is not as efficient, but we do it to connect people to the land, help raise awareness of public land management, and [provide] opportunities for careers in resource management.”
Recreation stakeholder

10. Conclusion

This workforce assessment provides Travel Oregon with a deeper understanding of employment trends and stakeholders' perceptions about and experience in the tourism industry in Oregon. Its key findings can help inform discussion and shape policymaking for workforce-related issues for the tourism industry in Oregon. With this assessment in hand, employers, educators, and tourism stakeholders can better understand Oregon's tourism workforce needs and design strategies to meet them.

11. Bibliography

- “Best Practices in the Hospitality Industry.” Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association. May 2019. <https://www.oregonrla.org/workforcepractices.html>
- “Drivers of Change in Hospitality.” The Hotel School Cornell, SC Johnson College of Business. April 2019. <https://scholarship.sha.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1268&context=chrpubs>
- “Millennials in the Hotel Industry.” American Hotel & Lodging Association, 7 May 2019, www.oregonrla.org/uploads/9/7/9/8/97983354/millennial_retention_survey_ahla.pdf
- “Outdoor Workforce Survey Key Findings.” Oregon State University. April 2019.
- Oregon Talent Assessment*. Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission, Workforce and Talent Development Board. September 2018.
- Ackehurst, M. & Loveder, P. “Building the capabilities of the travel, tourism, and hospitality workforce.” ERIC Institute of Education Sciences. February 2015. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED561390.pdf>
- Ahmad, S. Z., Bakar, A. R. A., & Ahmad, N. (2018). An evaluation of teaching methods of entrepreneurship in hospitality and tourism programs. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 16(1), 14-25.
- Batra, A. (2016). Bridging the gap between tourism education, tourism industry and graduate employability: intricacies and emerging issues in Thailand. *ABAC Journal*, 36(2), 78-89.
- Bonifaz, A., Hawkins, D., & Israel, R. Guide to Assessing and Designing Tourism Workforce Development Programs. US Agency for International Development (USAID). 2010. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2151/Tourism_Workforce_Development_Toolkit_130318.pdf
- Brown, E. A., Thomas, N. J., & Bosselman, R. H. (2015). Are they leaving or staying: A qualitative analysis of turnover issues for Generation Y hospitality employees with a hospitality education. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 46, 130-137.
- Buzzetto-Hollywood, N., & Quinn, K. (2019). Faculty and Student Perceptions of the Importance of Management Skills in the Hospitality Industry. *Interdisciplinary Journal of E-Learning and Learning Objects*, 15(1), 21-41.
- Cappelli, P. (August 2014). Skill Gaps, Skill Shortages, and Skill Mismatches: Evidence for the US. National Bureau of Economic Research. Cambridge, MA.
- Deming, D. (May 2017). The Growing Importance of Social Skills in the Labor Market. Harvard University. Cambridge, MA.

- Dogru, T., McGinley, S., Line, N., & Szende, P. (2019). Employee earnings growth in the leisure and hospitality industry. *Tourism Management*, 74, 1-11.
- Frey, C. & Osborne, M. (September 17, 2013). *The Future of Employment: How Susceptible are Jobs to Computerisation?* University of Oxford. Oxford, UK.
- Fuller, J. B., Burrowes, J., Raman, M., Restuccia, D., & Young, A. (November 2014). "Bridge the Gap: Rebuilding America's Middle Skills." Report, U.S. Competitiveness Project, Harvard Business School. Report authored jointly by Accenture, Burning Glass Technologies, and Harvard Business School.
- Fuller, J.B. (September 2014). Workforce Skills, in *An Economy Doing Half Its Job: Findings of Harvard Business School's 2013-14 Survey on U.S. Competitiveness* (Porter, M. & Rivkin, J.). Harvard Business School.
- Grobelna, A. (2017). The Perception of Job-related Motivators When Choosing a Career in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry—A Comparative Study Between Polish and Spanish Students. *International Journal of Management and Economics*, 53(2), 84-106.
- Grobelna, A., & Marciszewska, B. (April 2016). Work motivation of tourism and hospitality students: implications for human resource management. In *Proceedings of the 8th European Conference on Intellectual Capital, ECIC* (pp. 95-103).
- Ivanov, S. H., Webster, C., & Berezina, K. (2017). Adoption of robots and service automation by tourism and hospitality companies.
- Janta, H., Ladkin, A., Brown, L., & Lugosi, P. (2011). Employment experiences of Polish migrant workers in the UK hospitality sector. *Tourism Management*, 32(5), 1006-1019.
- Joppe, M. (2012). Migrant workers: Challenges and opportunities in addressing tourism labour shortages. *Tourism Management*, 33(3), 662-671.
- Kim, W. G., Choi, H. M., & Li, J. J. (2016). Antecedents and outcomes of migrant workers' sociocultural adjustment in the hospitality industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 58, 1-12.
- Knollenberg, W., Brune, S., Harrison, J., & Savage, A. (2019). Strategies to facilitate the integration of Hispanic migrants in a tourism-dependent community. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure, and Events*.
- Montgomery, Todd. "Hospitality Industry Labor Shortage Study: Executive Summary." Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association. May 19, 2017.
https://www.oregonrla.org/uploads/9/7/9/8/97983354/labor_shortage_study_-_executive_summary.pdf
- Mosalev, A. I., Shpilina, T. M., Shcheglova, O. G., & Gizyatova, A. S. (December 2018). Human Resources Management for Tourism and Hospitality Industry in Russia. In *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* (Vol. 204, No. 1, p. 012031). IOP Publishing.

- Nachmias, S., & Walmsley, A. (2015). Making career decisions in a changing graduate labour market: A hospitality perspective. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 17, 50-58.
- O'Leary, S., & Deegan, J. (2005). Career progression of Irish tourism and hospitality management graduates. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 17(5), 421-432.
- Pani, A., Das, B., & Sharma, M. (2015). Changing Dynamics of Hospitality & Tourism Education and its Impact on Employability. *Parikalpana: KIIT Journal of Management*, 11(1).
- Phillips, Miles. "Coastal Oregon Visitor Industry (Tourism) Workforce Needs Assessment 2018." Oregon Sea Grant, https://seagrant.oregonstate.edu/sites/seagrant.oregonstate.edu/files/s-18-001print_coastal_needs_assessment_2018.pdf
- Sidorov, V. (2018). Individual Aspects in Professional Training of Tourism Specialists in the UK. *Comparative Professional Pedagogy*, 8(2), 43-50.
- Yumatov, K. V., Kiriyanova, L. G., Yakimova, N. S., Zaitseva, N. A., Larionova, A. A., & Korsunova, N. M. (2017). Problem-based learning methods for training staff for tourism and hospitality clusters. *Eurasian Journal of Analytical Chemistry*, 12(5b), 803-812.

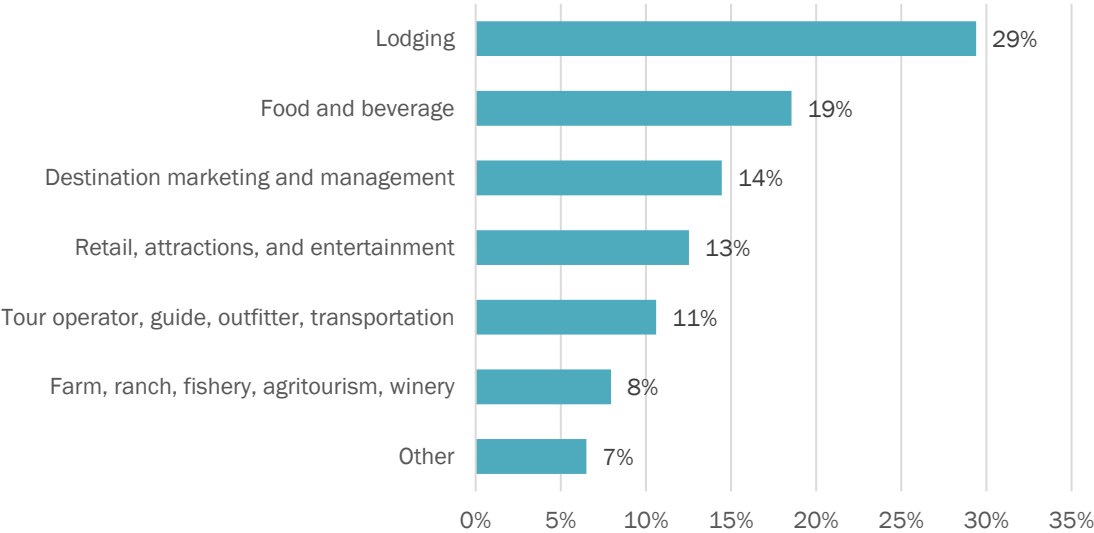
12. Appendix A. Survey Respondent Demographics

Employer Respondents

What is your firm’s primary sector?

Nearly one-third of employer respondents were from the Lodging sector, followed by Food and Beverage and Destination Marketing and Management.

Figure 46. Primary sector of employer respondents¹⁷
N=415



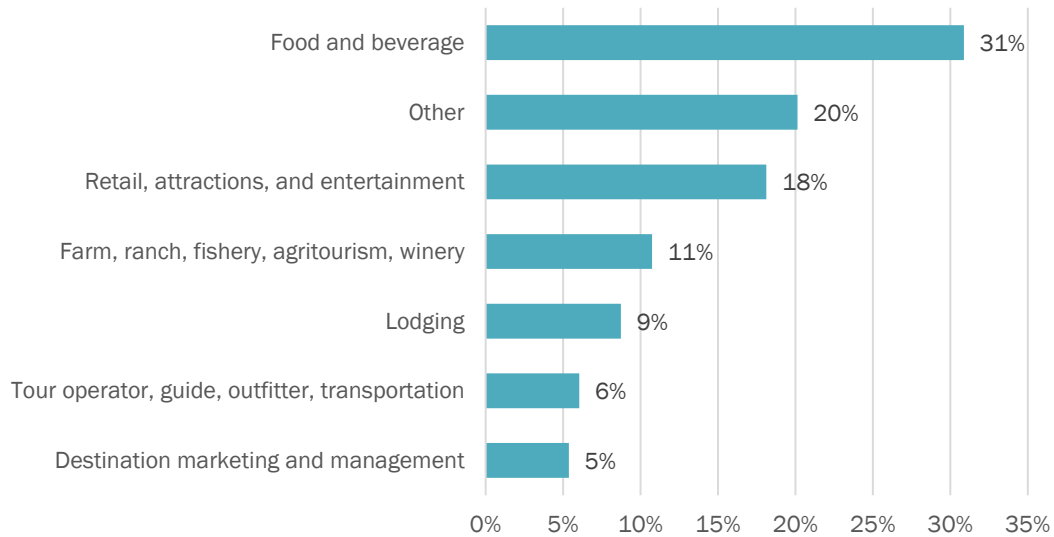
Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Please identify your firm’s secondary sector (among those who identified as having a secondary sector).

Among those who identified a secondary sector, one-third identified Food and Beverage, and roughly one-fifth each identified Other or Retail, Attractions, and Entertainment.

¹⁷ Sectors included in “Other” include labor, local government, and employment services, among others.

Figure 47. Secondary sector of employer respondents¹⁸
N=149

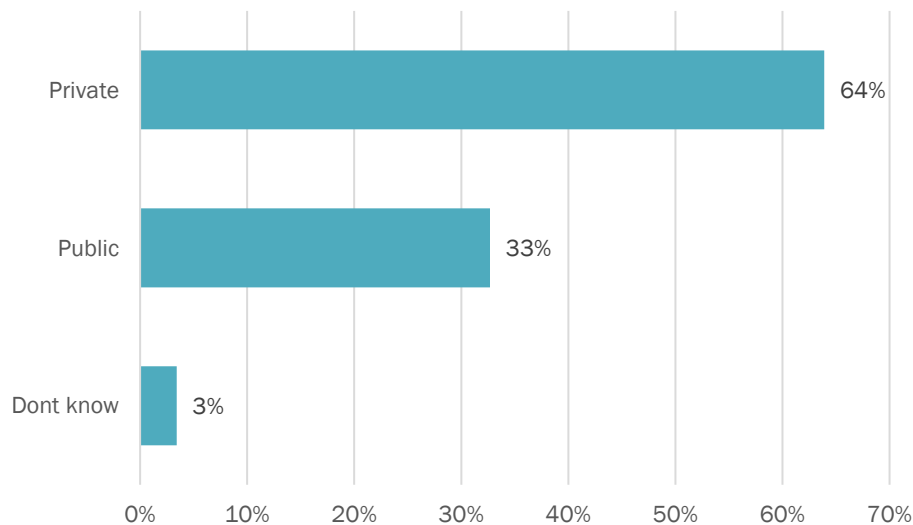


Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Is your organization public or private?

Most employer respondents worked in private organizations (64%), and the vast majority (87%) worked for for-profit organizations.

Figure 48. Private / public status of employer organization
N=410



Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

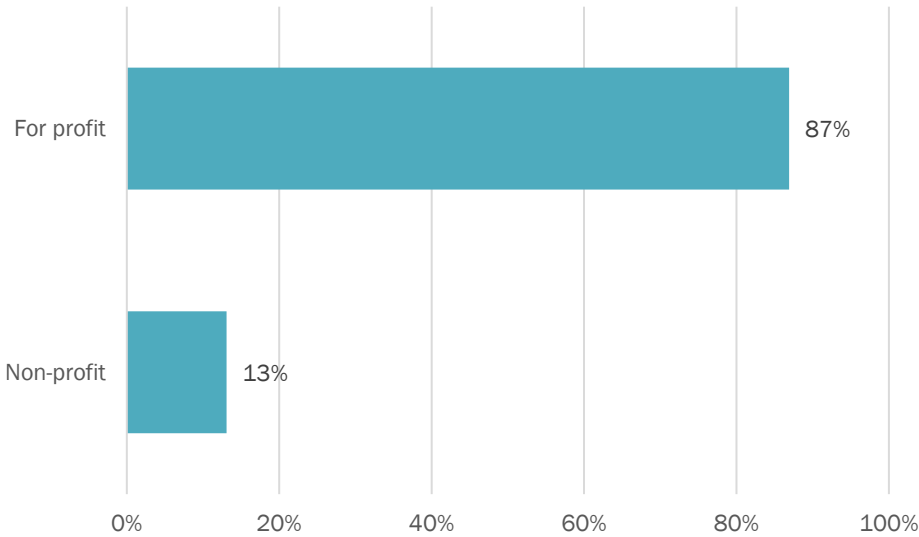
¹⁸ Secondary sectors included in “Other” include economic development, bicycle repair and service, financial education, government, and marina, among others.

Is your workplace for profit or non-profit (among those who identified as private organizations)?

Most employer respondents (87%) worked for for-profit organizations.

Figure 49. Nonprofit status of employer organization

N=275



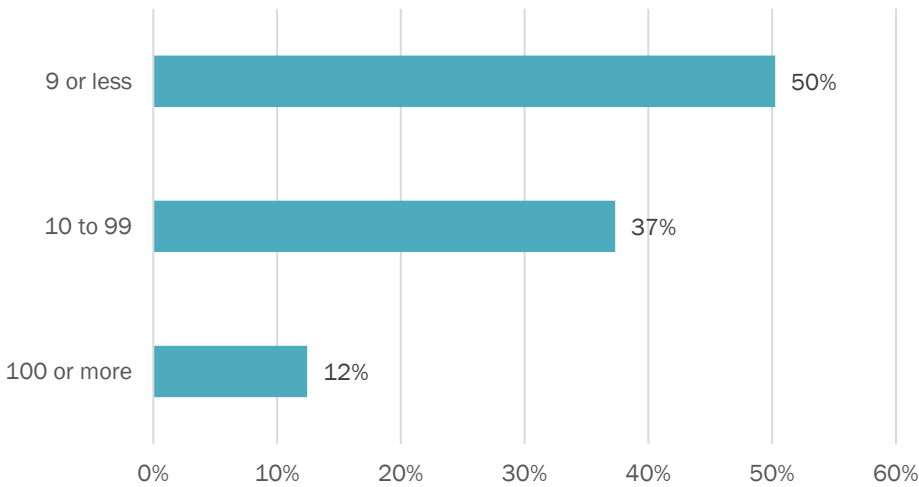
Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

How many employees currently work at your firm?

Employer respondents tended to work for small organizations. Half of employer organization were 9 employees or less, and 37% were between 10 and 99 employees.

Figure 50. Size of organization

N=402



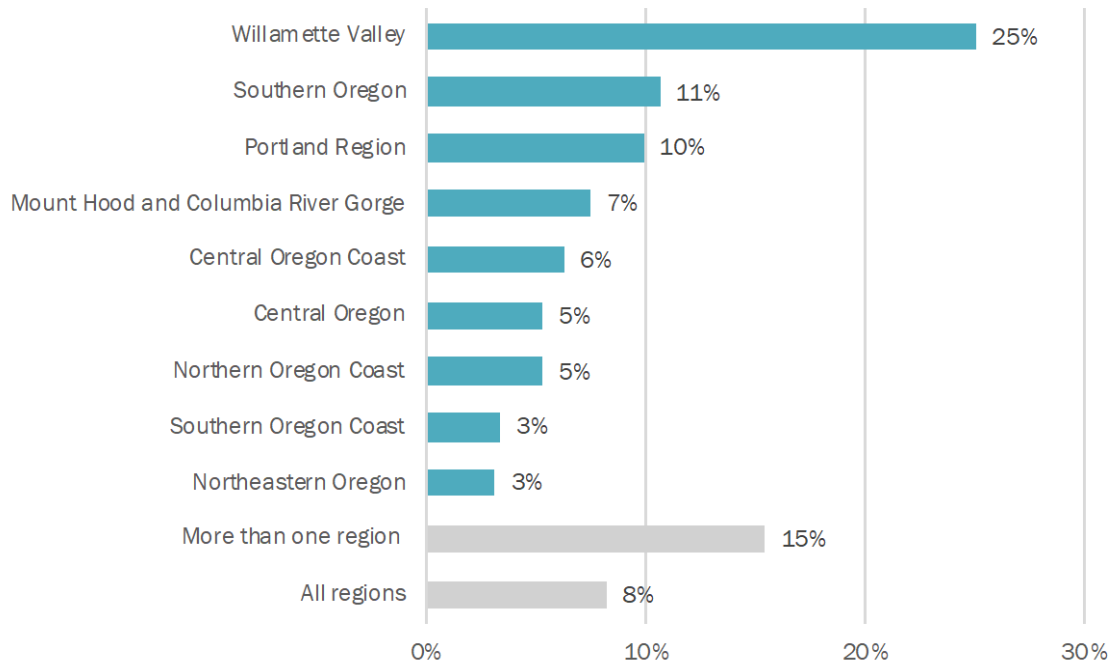
Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Please select all the regions your business operates in from the checklist below.

One-quarter or employer respondents operated in the Willamette Valley, followed by 15% that worked in more than one region, and 11% that operated in Southern Oregon.

Figure 51. Geographic location of employer survey respondents

N=415

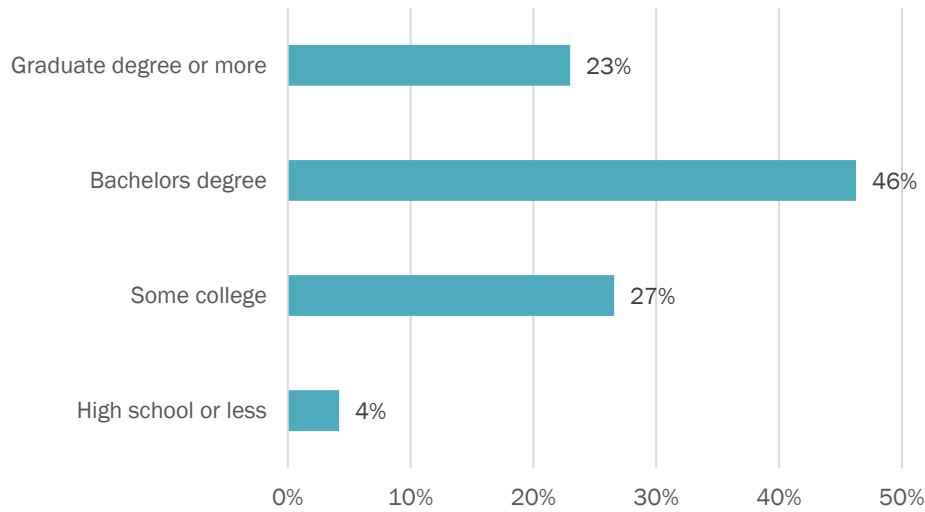


Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

What is your highest level of education?

Employer respondents were highly educated, with nearly 70 percent holding a Bachelor's or graduate degree.

Figure 52. Highest education level of employer respondents
N=335

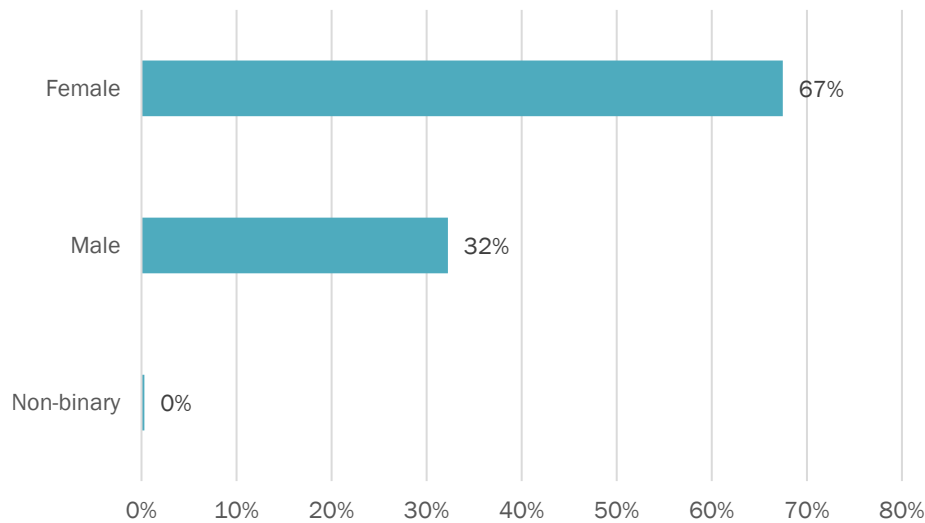


Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

What is your gender?

Most employer respondents (67%) were female.

Figure 53. Employer respondent gender
N=335

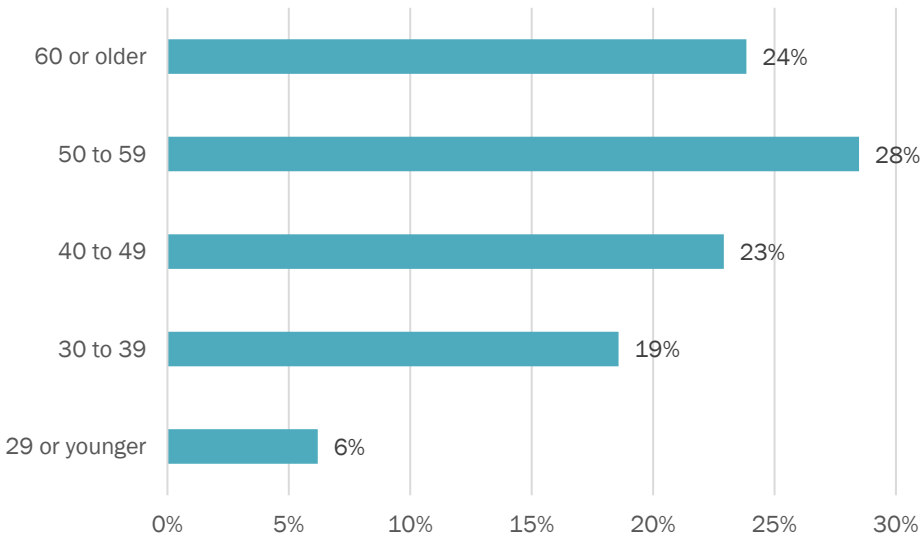


Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

In what year were you born (calculated as age in years)?

Roughly half of employer respondents were 50 or older, and half were younger than 50.

Figure 54. Age of employer respondents
N=323

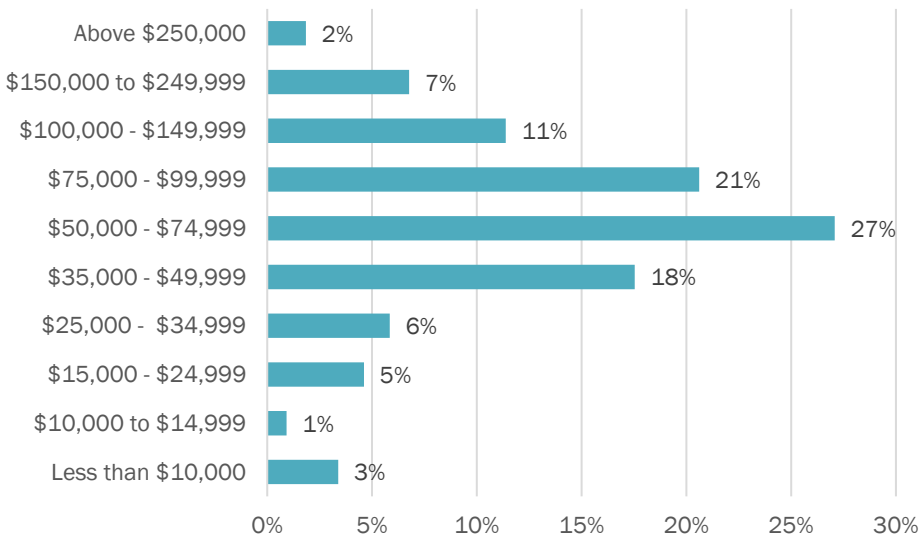


Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

What is your estimated annual income?

Approximately half of employer respondents made between \$50,000 and \$99,999. Twenty percent made above \$100,000, and 9% made below \$25,000.

Figure 55. Employer respondent income
N=325

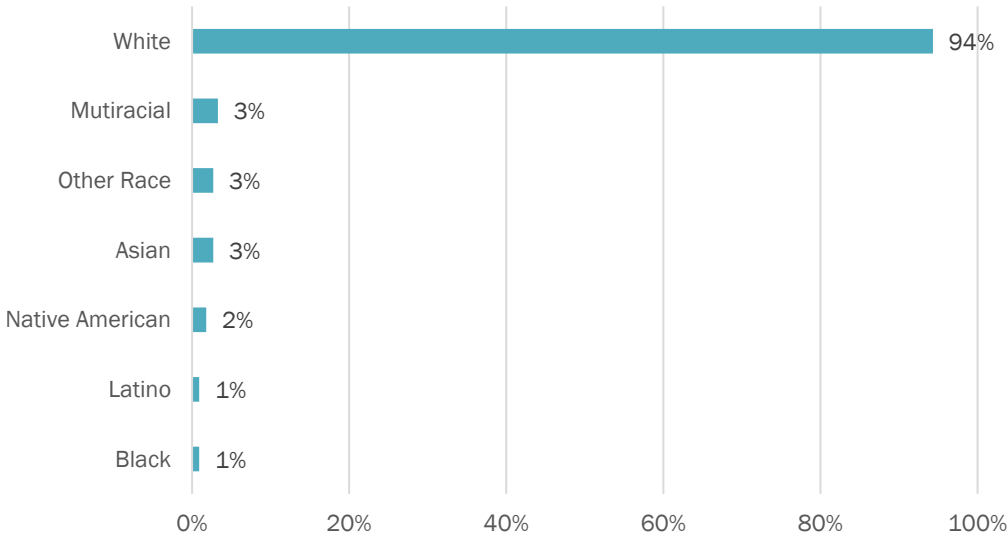


Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

What is your race/ethnicity?

Almost all employer respondents (94%) were white, with 3% each reporting race as multiracial, Asian, or as a different race.

Figure 56. Employer race / ethnicity
N=334



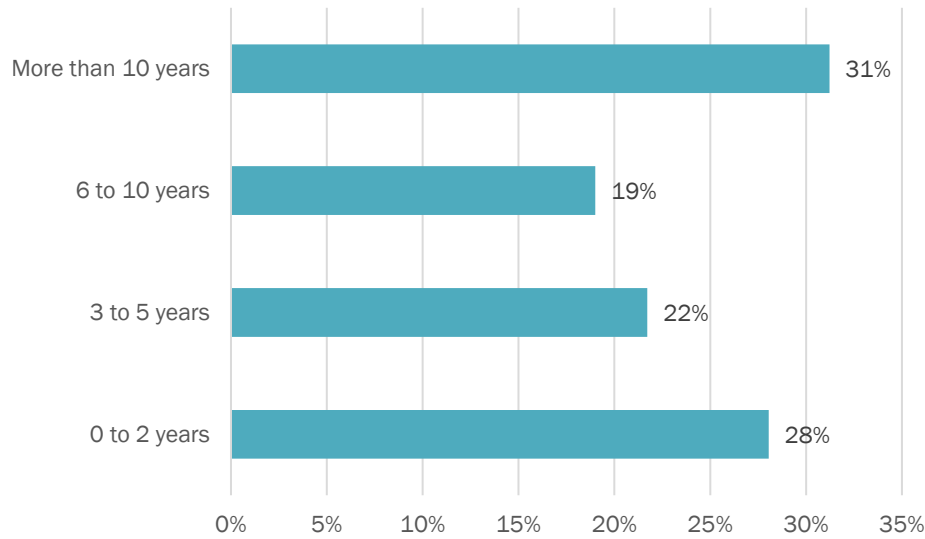
Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Employee Respondents

How long have you worked in tourism, including your current job and any other tourism-related job?

Employee respondents were fairly easily distributed across tenure, with nearly 30% each working in tourism for less than 2 years or more than 10 years.

Figure 57. Employee survey respondent tenure in tourism
N=221

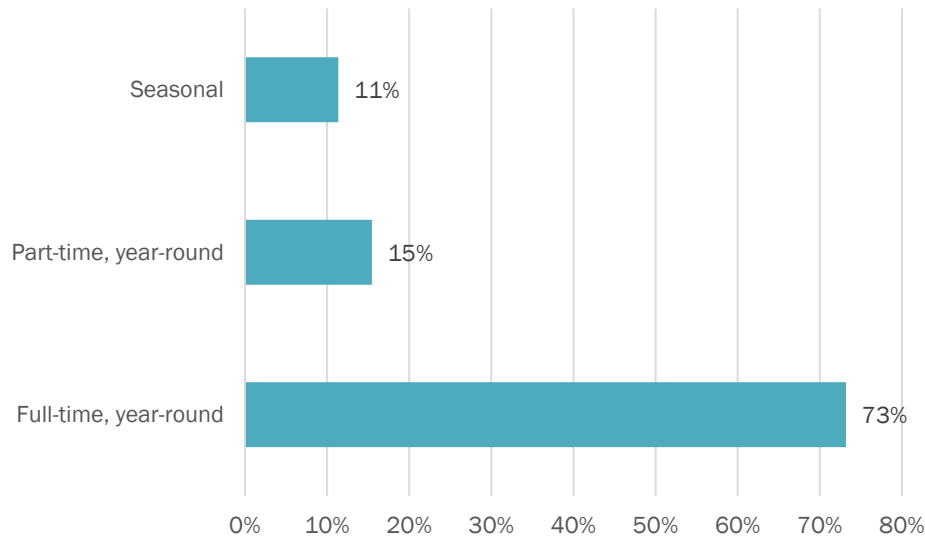


Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

Which of the following best describes your employment at your current or most recent tourism related job?

Most employee respondents were full-time, year-round workers (73%).

Figure 58. Employment status of employee respondents
N=220



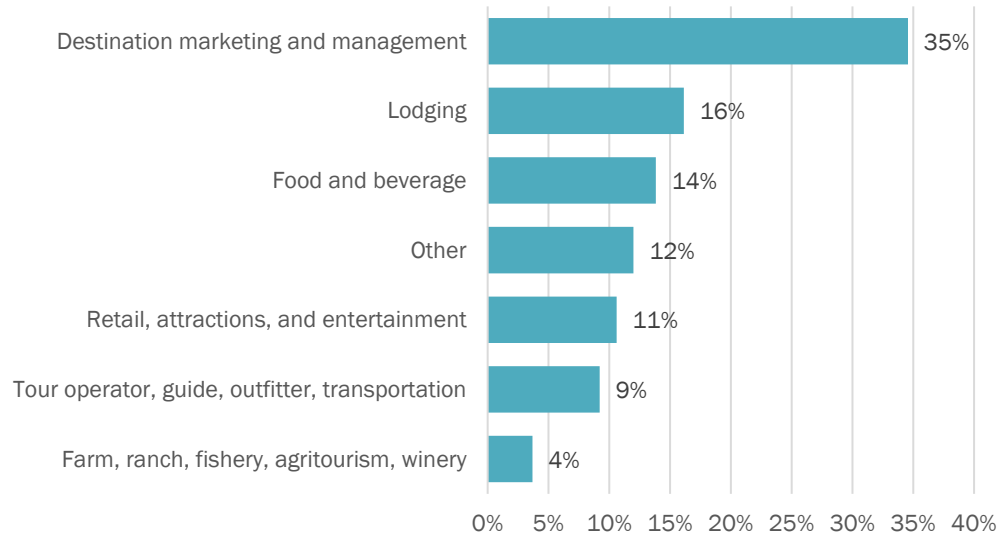
Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

In which sector of the tourism industry do you work?

One-third of employee respondents were from the destination marketing and management sector, followed by lodging and food and beverage.

Figure 59. Sector of employee respondents¹⁹

N=217



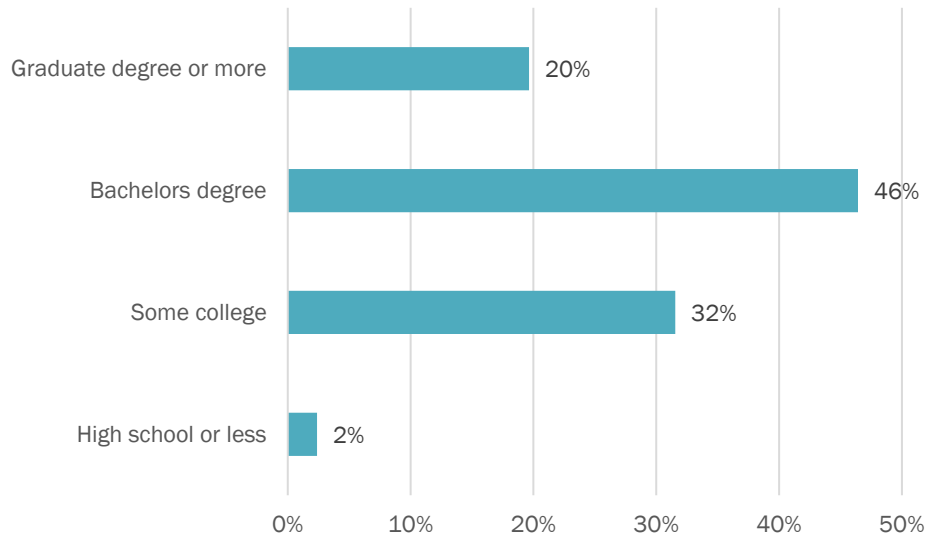
Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

What is your highest level of education?

Employee respondents were highly educated, with two-thirds holding Bachelor's or graduate degree.

¹⁹ Sectors included in "Other" include newspaper, education, photography, and recreation development, among others.

Figure 60. Employee respondent education level
N=168

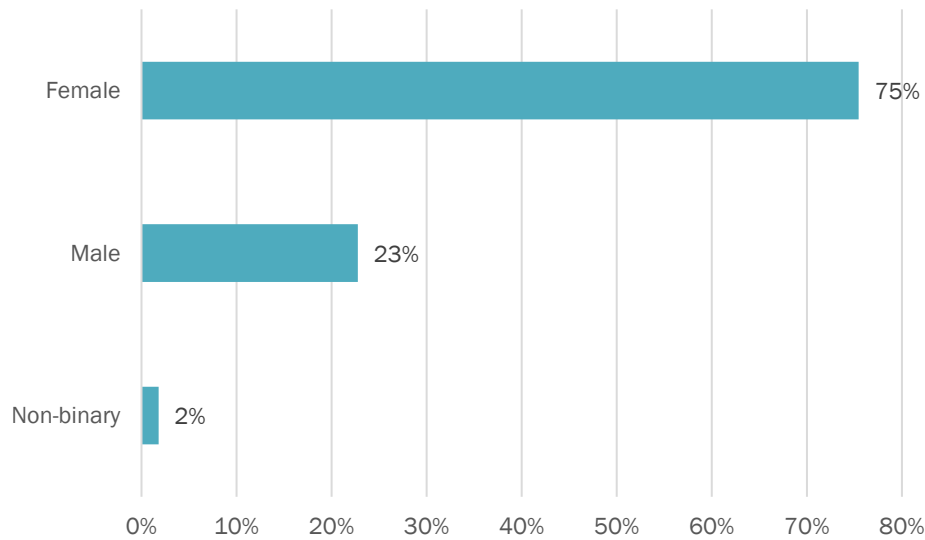


Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

What is your gender?

Three quarters of employee survey respondents were female.

Figure 61. Gender of employee respondents
N=167

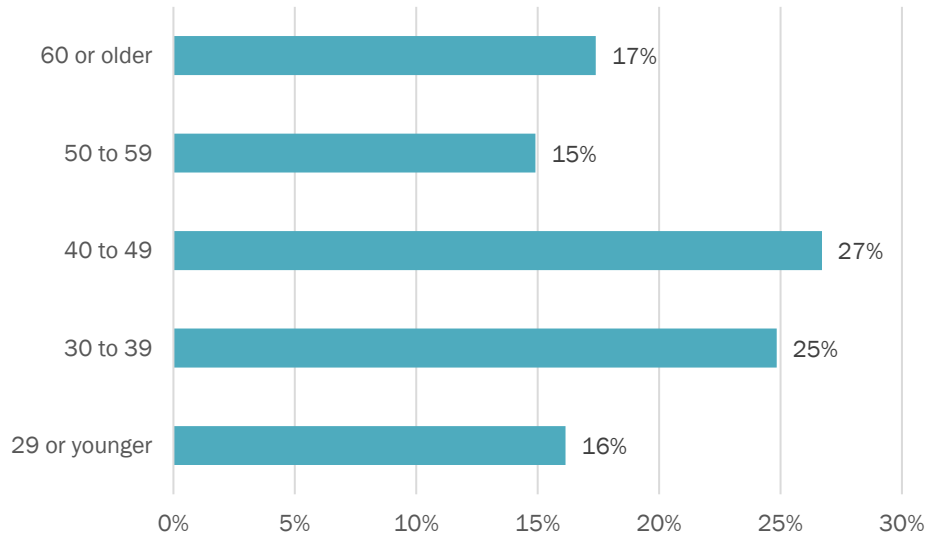


Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

In what year were you born (*calculated as age in years*)?

One-third of employee respondents were over 50, and 16 percent were under 30.

Figure 62. Age of employee respondents
N=161

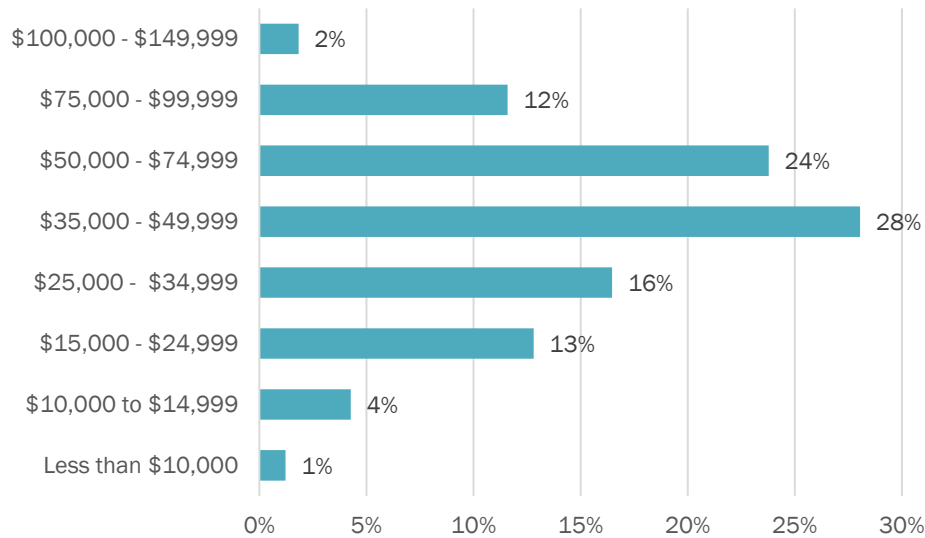


Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

What is your estimated annual income?

Fifty percent of employee respondents reported incomes between \$35,000 and \$74,999.

Figure 63. Income of employee respondents
N=164

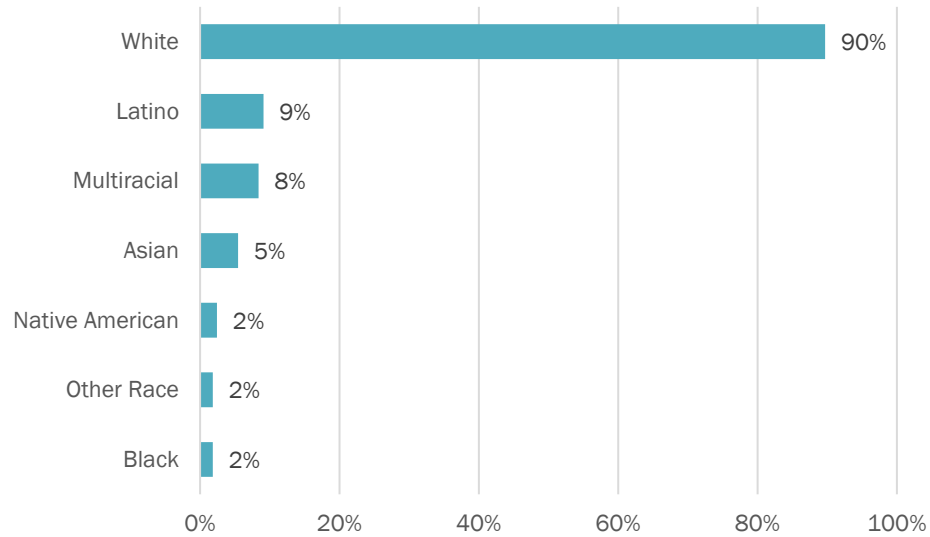


Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

What is your race/ethnicity?

Ninety percent of employee respondents were White, and nearly 10% were Latino or Multiracial.

Figure 64. Race / ethnicity of employee respondents
N=165



Data Source: Oregon Tourism Workforce Assessment Survey

13. Appendix B. Variation by Subgroup

In addition to conducting analysis on key workforce issues in the Oregon tourism industry overall, we also analyzed variation in response by several key subgroups of interest, including:

- Tourism sector, by employer and employee respondent
- Regions in which the tourism organization operates
- Size of tourism organization by number of employees
- Public versus private ownership of organization
- Length of tenure in tourism among employee respondents
- Employment status of employee respondents

The ability to discern differences by subgroup requires sufficient sample size in each of the subgroup response categories. It may not have been statistically feasible to assess differences by subgroup for response categories with small sample sizes. These groups may still differ from other groups in meaningful ways despite lack of statistically identified variation.

Sector

Variation in perspective and experience were noted across different sectors of the tourism industry. This section describes variation by sector.

Lodging. Employers from the Lodging sector were less likely to view the industry as reflecting career orientation characteristics compared to other sectors. They were also more likely to have identified difficulty recruiting qualified applicants compared to other sectors, and more likely to have hired a less qualified applicant to address challenges to recruitment. Furthermore, employers in the lodging sector indicated that retaining staff was difficult.

In addition, Lodging employers were more likely, when compared to Destination management, to have increased overtime hours for current workers in response to hiring difficulties. This may reflect flexibility in the more typical shift schedules prevalent in lodging and food and beverage sectors. Lodging employers were also more likely than employers from Retail and attractions to have raised wages in response to hiring difficulties.

Employers from lodging were more likely to identify a lack of qualified applicants as a key barrier to hiring compared to employers from the Retail and attraction sector. Furthermore, employer respondents from the Lodging sector were more likely to identify job-specific occupational skills as a need compared to several other sectors. Lodging employees, on the other hand, were less likely to cite graphic design as an essential skill for their job, and like Destination management, and Tour operators, were more likely to consider tourism marketing or management knowledge as critical to their positions.

A majority of employees in the Lodging sector did not receive health insurance, similar to employees in Food and Beverage and Tour Operations. Compared to other sectors, lodging employer respondents were more likely to identify difficulty retaining staff. Lastly, to address seasonality, Lodging employers adjusted employee numbers, cross-trained employees, and reduced employee hours.

Food and Beverage. Food and beverage employees were less likely to consider tourism to offer career orientation. They were also more likely to have identified difficulty recruiting qualified applicants compared to other sectors. Similar to Lodging, Food and beverage employers were more likely, when compared to Destination management, to have increased overtime hours for current workers in response to hiring difficulties. As noted above, this may reflect flexibility in the more typical shift schedules prevalent in lodging and food and beverage sectors.

Similar to Lodging, employers from Food and beverage were more likely to identify a lack of qualified applicants as a key barrier to hiring compared to employers from the retail and entertainment sector. Regarding skills, Food and beverage employees were more likely to identify supply chain management and procurement as essential to their jobs, and less likely to consider online scheduling as essential to their jobs.

Not surprisingly, Food and beverage employees, like those in agritourism, were more likely to consider knowledge about local food and wine as essential to their job functions. Knife handling was also an important industry-specific skill that interviewees identified. In addition, employers in the Food and beverage sector were more likely than employers in any other sector to give preference to applicants and employees with certifications and certificates.

A majority of employees in this sector did not receive health insurance, and 40 percent of employees reported receiving paid vacation.

Food and beverage employers were somewhat more likely to identify a career pipeline compared to peer sectors. Food and beverage employers were also more likely to have offered job security, increased wages, and provided paid training as a means of improving retention. In response to seasonality, Food and beverage employers were more likely to cross-train employees, reduce employee hours, and reduce business hours.

Tour operator. Employers from the Tour operator sector were less likely to view the industry as reflecting career orientation characteristics compared to other sectors. They also were less likely to hire a less qualified candidate in response to recruitment challenges. Employer respondents from the tour operation sector were most likely to cite a knowledge gap in applicants about the local environment including plants and animals.

Tour operator employees, in turn, were more likely to identify facilities and equipment maintenance as needed skills compared to other sectors, and similar to Lodging and Destination management, were more likely to consider tourism marketing or management knowledge as critical to their positions. Tour operator employees were also more likely to consider knowledge

about the local environment (identified as lacking among Tour operator employers, as noted above), including plants and animals, as essential to their work.

Respondents from the Tour operator sector were least likely to provide benefits to any employee across all benefit categories, and a majority of employees reported not receiving health insurance. Twenty-four percent of employees reported receiving paid vacation.

Tour operator employers did not believe that lack of the right skills contributed to retention challenges--more than half of tour operator respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that this was a factor in retention. Very few employer respondents indicated that they offered subsidized housing to retain staff, with the exception of tour operators, where 20 percent identified this option. Tour operator respondents were less likely compared to other sectors to identify promoting the personal or career development of employees or improving the morale of employees as motivations for providing training.

Almost all employer respondents from the Tour operator sector consider their business seasonal (97%), while just 20% of respondents from Destination marketing agencies, for example, considered their business seasonal. Tour operators pursued a number of strategies in response to seasonality, including adjusting employee numbers and establishing agreement to rehire the same employees across seasons.

Farm, ranch, and agritourism. Agritourism employees were less likely, when compared to employees from the Destination marketing sector, to consider tourism to offer full-time, permanent positions. Respondents from Agritourism were also less likely to find knowledge about local environment and plants and animals lacking in applicants. Agritourism employees were more likely to identify machine operation as an essential technical skill, compared to other sectors. Agritourism employees, similar to those in Food and beverage, were also more likely to consider knowledge about local food and wine as essential to their job functions.

Like Lodging and Destination management, Agritourism employers were less likely to cite difficulty in retaining workers compared to other sectors, however, in response to any retention challenges, like Destination management and Food and beverage, employer respondents from Agritourism were more likely to have offered or paid for training opportunities as a retention strategy. To address seasonality, most Agritourism employers adjusted employee numbers. Agritourism employer respondents were less likely to think that automation would impact their work.

Retail and attractions. Retail employees were less likely to consider tourism to offer career orientation. They were also less likely, when compared to employees from the Destination marketing sector, to consider tourism to offer full-time, permanent positions. In terms of skills, Retail employer respondents were more likely to identify digital skills to be in need.

More than half of Retail and attraction employer respondents were somewhat more likely to identify a pipeline for workers for their sector; however, they were less likely to feel there were clearly defined advancement and promotion opportunities for typical positions at their

organization. Retail and attraction employers were more likely to reduce business hours in response to seasonality.

Destination marketing and management. Respondents from Destination management sector were more likely to view the tourism industry as career oriented. Employees within this sector were more likely to consider tourism to offer full-time, permanent positions, compared to agritourism and retail employees. Destination marketing employees were also more likely to consider tourism jobs to offer sufficient benefits. They also were less likely to hire a less qualified candidate in response to recruitment challenges, and less likely, compared to Lodging and Food and Beverage, to have increased overtime hours for current workers, perhaps reflecting more traditional work hours in the Destination management sector.

Respondents from Destination marketing were far less likely to identify seasonality of their sector as a barrier to hiring, especially when compared to respondents from the Tour operation sector, perhaps reflecting the year-round stability of most Destination marketing employers.

In terms of needed skills, Destination marketing employer respondents were more likely to identify digital skills to be in need, while lodging and tour operation employers were less likely to cite this. Destination marketing employees, like those in Lodging and Tour operators, were more likely to consider tourism marketing or management knowledge as critical to their positions. Destination marketing employees were also more likely than other sectors to consider capacity to use online productivity software as essential to their job performance.

Employer respondents from Destination marketing agencies were more likely to cite provision of benefits across all benefit categories. Likewise, Destination management employees were more likely to cite dental or vision insurance and contribution to retirement.

Similar to Lodging and Agritourism, Destination management employers were less likely to cite challenges retaining staff. Destination management responses also did not feel that there were clearly defined opportunities for career advancement within the typical position at their firm. Like Agritourism and Food and beverage, employer respondents from Destination marketing were more likely to have offered or paid for training opportunities as a retention strategy.

Among employee survey respondents, Destination marketing respondents (69%) were most likely to consider 4-year college training as important to acquiring needed skills. Destination marketing employees (68%) were also most likely to indicate that their employer had paid for industry, business, or professional organization training, compared to other sectors.

Destination management employers were least likely to identify responses to seasonality, perhaps reflecting the decreased impact of seasonality on Destination management operations. They were also most likely to think that automation would impact their work tasks.

Geography

Perspective on the tourism industry varied somewhat by geographic region as well. Like sectors, the ability to discern differences is impacted by the sample size of respondents; some geographic regions may still differ from other regions in meaningful ways, despite lack of statistically identified variation.

Northern Oregon Coast. Employers from the Northern Oregon Coast differed from other regions in several way. They were more likely to:

- Agree that cost of living was a factor in difficulty to hire;
- Have offered subsidized housing as a strategy to retain employees;

They were less likely to:

- Agree that tourism offers permanent, full-time positions
- Agree that applicants had the needed soft skills compared to their employer peers in the Willamette Valley

Central Oregon Coast. Central Oregon Coast respondents were more likely to:

- Agree that cost of living was a factor in difficulty to hire
- Consider cost of housing a factor, when compared to Portland or Willamette Valley employers
- Post positions on WorkSource Oregon job boards and in local newspapers,

They were less likely to:

- Agree that tourism offers permanent, full-time positions
- View the tourism industry as one of skilled workers

Portland Region. Employers from the Portland region were less likely to think that housing options impacted hiring compared to Central Oregon Coast respondents. Portland area employers were less likely to use WorkSource Oregon job boards and local newspapers as recruitment strategies compared to the Oregon Coast, and were less likely to use recruiting agencies when compared to employers in Southern Oregon. Employer respondents from the Portland region were more likely to provide health, dental, or vision insurance compared to their peers in other regions.

Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge. Mt. Hood area employers were less likely to use career fairs, WorkSource Centers, and recruiting agencies compared to Southern Oregon employers.

Willamette Valley. Respondents from Willamette Valley, like Southern Oregon and Northeastern Oregon, were less likely to identify cost of living as a factor in recruitment challenges. They were also less likely to consider cost of housing a factor compared to the

Northern Oregon Coast, Central Oregon Coast, and Central Oregon. Employers from the Willamette Valley were also the least likely to express difficulty retaining staff. They were less likely to use career fairs and WorkSource Centers as recruitment resources compared to peers in Southern Oregon.

Southern Oregon. Like respondents from Willamette Valley and Northeastern Oregon, employers from Southern Oregon were less likely to identify cost of living as a factor. They were also more likely to use career fairs, WorkSource centers, and recruiting agencies as recruitment strategies.

Central Oregon. Employer respondents were more likely to consider cost of housing a factor when compared to Willamette Valley employers.

Northeastern Oregon. Respondents from Northeastern Oregon, like Willamette Valley and Southern Oregon, and were less likely to identify cost of living as a factor in recruitment challenges.

All Regions. Employers with staff/businesses in all regions were more likely to identify tourism as career oriented compared to those in the Central Oregon Coast or Southern Oregon.

Employer Size

Small Organizations. Employer respondents from organizations with nine employees or less were more likely to perceive tourism industry jobs as not providing sufficient benefits compared to other sectors. Perceptions regarding the culture and characteristics of the tourism industry varied little otherwise by organization size.

Respondents from small businesses of nine employees or less were also less likely to cite difficulty recruiting qualified applicants (55% versus 73% and 88% among larger businesses). In addition, they were less likely to indicate that they had not filled the job opening, had hired a less qualified applicant, or had increased overtime for current workers compared to their peer in other size agencies. This experience may reflect less hiring demand—and therefore, less hiring challenges—among the smallest employers.

By size, smaller businesses were less likely to offer promotion or career advancement opportunities to retain staff when compared to mid or large sized businesses. They were also less likely than large organizations to perceive a clearly identified pipeline for tourism workers. Similarly, more than half of all small business employer respondents did not consider there to be clearly defined opportunities for career advancement and promotion, compared to roughly one-third of mid-sized businesses and one-quarter of large businesses who did not identify career advancement opportunities within the typical position at their firm. However, Employers from smaller businesses (nine or fewer employees) were more likely (78%) to give preference to applicants with certifications or certificates than were larger businesses (100 or more employees) (55%).

Small firms may have less tools at their disposal to respond to seasonality. They were less likely than mid-sized and large firms to adjust employee numbers and cross-train employees in response to seasonality, and they were less likely than respondents from large firms to identify tasks that would be impacted by automation.

Large Organizations. Employer respondents from the largest size agencies (100 employees or more) were more likely to cite increasing internal advancement and external recruitment in response to hiring challenges when compared to smaller organizations. Larger companies (10 to 99 employees and 100 or more employees) also used more diverse and extensive recruitment strategies; they were more likely than smaller organizations to use the following recruitment resources:

- Internet postings on WorkSource Oregon job boards
- Internet posting on company job boards
- Postings on career sites

The largest of companies were more likely than the smallest companies to recruit on social media, and more likely than small or midsize companies to recruit at career fairs, recruit with local or regional online classified ads, recruit via WorkSource Career Centers, and recruit at community or 4-year colleges, or via a recruiting agencies.

Similar to hiring experience, respondents from the largest companies (100 employees or more) were more likely to identify difficulty retaining employees—86 percent of respondents from large companies compared to 55 percent from mid-sized companies and 42 percent from small companies.

Factors that impacted retention varied by company size:

- Mid-sized businesses were more likely to cite poor job performance and lack of the right employee skills compared to small or large businesses;
- Large businesses were more likely to identify external factors like cost of living or accommodation.

Larger companies were more likely to consider there to be a clearly identifiable pipeline for workers (54% for some or most jobs) compared to small (20%) and mid-sized (30%) businesses. Mid and large sized businesses were also more likely to perceive clearly identified opportunities for advancement compared to respondents from smaller businesses.

The majority of respondents across firm size had offered training, from 68 percent of small firms to 78 percent of mid-sized and 90 percent of large firms. Mid-sized firms were more likely to identify improving the quality of output as a motivating factor for providing training, and large firms were more likely than small firms to cite legal requirements as motivation for providing additional training. Large firms were more likely to provide in-house training and offer self-study or online training compared to small firms.

Companies with 100 or more employees were also more likely to offer benefits across all benefit categories, and companies with nine or fewer employees were least likely to offer these options, across all benefit categories.

As noted above, mid-sized and large firms were more likely to adjust employee numbers and cross-train employees in response to seasonality when compared to small firms. Large firms were also more likely than small firms to agree that the following tasks would be impacted by automation:

- Guest management
- Guest services
- Logistics
- Planning

Public versus Private Company Status

Private organizations. Private employer respondents were more likely to cite difficulty recruiting qualified applicants (72%) compared to public employer respondents (56%). They were also more likely to have hired a less qualified applicant (61% versus 41%) or raised wages (33% versus 19%), possibly reflecting less flexibility to adjust qualifications or wages among public sector employees.

Public organizations. Public employers were more likely to agree or strongly agree that applicants had the needed general occupation skills compared to private employers (67% versus 57%), needed digital skills (53% versus 39%), and needed tourism-specific skills (47% versus 36%).

Employee Tenure in Tourism Industry

Workers with less tourism tenure. Employee respondents who had been at their job less than one year were less likely to consider basic skills as essential to their jobs. There was little other variation in responses to required skills based on employee time in the industry.

Workers with more tourism tenure. Employee respondents who had been in the industry greater than 6 years were more likely than those who had been in the industry less than one year to receive dental insurance, vision insurance, paid time off, and paid sick leave.

Employment Status

Seasonal staff. Seasonal staff were less likely to view the following as essential to their jobs:

- Digital skills
- Organizational skills

- Soft or interpersonal skills
- Tourism specific knowledge

Seasonal staff were also much less likely than full-time and part-time tourism workers to expect to remain in the tourism industry over the next five years. They were also less likely to have received increased salaries and paid training opportunities as efforts to increase retention, and they were less likely than full-time employees to believe that their job would require different skills due to automation.

Full-time workers. Full-time workers were more likely to consider the tourism industry to be career oriented, compared to both part-time and seasonal workers. Full-time workers were also more likely than part-time or seasonal employees to receive benefits across all benefit categories. As noted above, full-time (82%) and part-time (74%) employees were much more likely than Seasonal employees (43%) to expect to remain in the tourism industry over the next five years. Full time employee respondents were also more likely than Seasonal employees to have received increased salaries and paid training opportunities as efforts to increase retention.

As noted above, Full-time employees were more likely than Seasonal employees to believe that due to automation their job would require different skills, and that their job will be done more efficiently.

14. Appendix C. Stakeholder Interview Protocols

Tourism Workforce Assessment: High Level Stakeholder Interview Protocol

Travel Oregon has retained ECONorthwest and Program and Policy Insight to conduct research on workforce-related needs and barriers in the tourism industry. The tourism industry is being defined in this research as people working and providing services in leisure and hospitality, including: retail; air and ground transportation; arts, entertainment, and recreation; travel arrangement services; and accommodation and food services. Our research will include a literature review, economic data analysis, an online survey, and over 30 interviews with key stakeholders. We are seeking your input in the early phases of this research in order to inform the focus of our data collection. It is important that the research we conduct is timely and germane to the experience of people working in the tourism industry, and that the results will be as informative and useful as possible.

Introduction

- 1) Can you tell me about your background and role in the tourism industry in Oregon?

Workforce Development Issues in Oregon Tourism

- 1) What are key workforce development issues facing the tourism industry in Oregon? How does this vary by sector? By region?
- 2) Where/how does the Oregon tourism sector typically find talent? How does this vary by sector or region?
- 3) What are the greatest barriers to finding a qualified workforce in the tourism industry in Oregon?
- 4) What contextual issues (housing, cost of living, education system, etc.) impact workforce development in the tourism industry in Oregon? How so?
- 5) How does the Oregon tourism industry typically train and develop its workforce? (Prompt: Internal training and career ladders; external training programs (public workforce agencies, sector-focused vocational programs, secondary education providers, etc.) How does this vary by sector?

Promising Practices and Recommendations

- 1) Are any tourism sectors in Oregon leading on workforce issues? If so, how?
- 2) What are promising practices, from Oregon or beyond, in workforce development for the tourism industry?

- 3) Can you think of recent research or publications that explore or contribute to workforce development issues in the tourism field? If so, what are they.
- 4) What do you think are the most important areas for us to focus our research?
- 5) Who else would you recommend we speak with to better understand workforce development issues in the tourism industry in Oregon?

Tourism Workforce Assessment: Key Stakeholder Interview Protocol

Hello, my name is _____. I am working with Program and Policy Insight and ECONorthwest to assess workforce development needs of the Oregon tourism industry for Travel Oregon. I would like to ask you some questions about your perceptions of industry access to skilled labor in Oregon, contextual and structural factors that impact workforce recruitment and retention in tourism, and recommendations for improvement.

This interview should take approximately 30 minutes. Your participation is voluntary, and your responses will be kept confidential. Do you have any questions about the interview process or the assessment? Do you agree to participate in the interview?

Introduction

First, I would like to learn a little bit about you, your industry, and your company.

1. In what sector of the tourism industry do you work?
2. What is your role at your company?
3. Where is your company located in Oregon?
4. How long have you worked in the tourism industry in Oregon?
5. How many employees does your company have?

Oregon's Skill Market

I am going to start by asking questions about key workforce skills in the tourism industry, and whether and how you have experienced gaps, shortages, or mismatches in skills in the workforce.

1. What do you view as the key skills needed in the tourism industry? *Prompt as needed:* Basic skills (such as reading and writing), Occupational skills (technical and know how that directly apply to the job); Soft skills (such as communication and relationship building); Digital skills (software use or programming); Organizational management skills (supervisory experience); Tourism specific knowledge) Do these skills vary based on tourism industry sector?

- a. Which are hardest for you to fill in prospective or current employees? Which are most lacking in the existing labor pool?
2. How do you typically find workers?
 - a. Who develops your job descriptions?
 - b. What resources do you use in your recruiting efforts? *Prompt, as needed:* Conference attendance, word of mouth, internet postings on job boards, social networking, local newspapers, WFD Career Centers, Community or Technical colleges, 4-year colleges, temp agency, other.
 - c. Do you have any policy around diversity and inclusion when hiring?
3. How do you typically train and develop your workforce?
 - a. Tell me about resources you use to meet the skill needs of your workforce. *Prompt as needed:* (Internal training and career ladders; external training programs (public workforce agencies, sector-focused vocational programs, industry associations, post-secondary education providers, secondary education providers, etc.)
 - b. How effective are these training resources in supporting your training and workforce development goals?
4. Who do you think is responsible for developing the needed skills in the tourism workforce? For example, what is the role of industry/business, versus educators, versus government?

Barriers to Recruitment and Retention

1. In your experience, what are key barriers to recruiting employees in the tourism industry? What makes it hard to find qualified staff?
2. In your experience, what are key barriers to retaining staff in the tourism industry, if different than above? What makes it hard to retain qualified staff? Do you collect data on retention and reasons for job departures?
3. Are there factors that feel outside of your control, such as lack of affordable housing, high cost of living, perception of the tourism industry as a career, transportation options or the education system, that impact your ability to recruit and retain staff? If so, are these substantial issues or secondary to other barriers we discussed? Oregon?
4. What key strategies have you used to recruit or retain staff? How has your business responded to difficulty in recruiting qualified employees?
 - a. (Prompt as needed: increased efforts to promote from within, increased training opportunities, increased salaries/benefits, modified recruitment efforts, hired less qualified applicant, increased overtime for current workers, outsourced or contracted with another firm, etc.)

Employment Trends and Industry Responses

Now I'd like to talk more employment trends and industry responses.

1. Are your employment needs impacted by seasonality? In what way(s) and during what time(s) of year specifically? Have you made any adjustment to workforce practices as a result of this?
2. Does your company/sector have defined career pipelines for workers? If so, please describe. How visible are these pipelines to workers or prospective workers?
3. Are your hiring needs impacted by automation? In what way? Which occupations or skills are most impacted by automation (*Probe: Which occupations or skills are most replaced by automation? Which occupations require more advanced or specific technical skills in response to automation?*)
4. What do you view as the advantages and disadvantages of tourism and hospitality jobs compared to other industries?
5. Are there other employment trends in Oregon that we are not focusing on that are impacting your work?

Recommendations

1. Do you have any examples of promising practices, from Oregon or beyond, in workforce development for the tourism industry?
2. What strategies can best improve workforce recruitment and retention in the tourism industry?
3. How can Travel OR best support workforce development for the tourism industry?

Closing/Thank You

Thank you for your time and input into this assessment.

1. Is there anything else we should know about tourism workforce issues in Oregon?

We are also collecting information from tourism businesses and staff through an online survey. We would appreciate your help getting the word out about the survey to ensure we hear from as many voices as possible, including yours! We will send you the link to the survey when it is launched and would appreciate your sharing with your network.

15. Appendix D. Survey Instrument
