

Monterey Peninsula College

Employer Training Needs Survey

Spring 2007

Office of Institutional Research

Employer Training Needs Survey

Introduction

During spring 2007 we conducted an employer needs assessment. The purpose was to learn how we can better serve the training needs of businesses in our service area.

We conducted a literature review, which included employer needs assessments conducted by Pima Community College and Hartnell College, as well as business needs assessments conducted by the Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce and a study of small business needs in Silicon Valley. We developed a survey instrument and data collection methodology similar to those used in the studies we reviewed.

Survey

The survey asks about the number of employees that businesses currently have and expect to have in the future; the level of need for training in various skill areas; where, when, and how employers would like training offered; the type of support businesses would provide to their employees for training; and the level of familiarity and satisfaction with MPC job and career resources. Please see Appendix A for the survey instrument.

Methodology

We contacted InfoUSA, a firm that sells business and consumer leads, to determine the number of businesses in the ZIP codes in our service area. We were initially interested in collecting data from “medium to large businesses”. The breakdown, by businesses size, is as follows:

| <i>Business size (number of employees)</i> | <i>Number of businesses in MPC service area</i> |
|--|---|
| 1 – 4 employees | 4,987 |
| 5 – 9 | 1,300 |
| 10 – 19 | 674 |
| 20 – 49 | 417 |
| 50 – 99 | 127 |
| 100 – 249 | 41 |
| 250 or more employees | 26 |
| TOTAL | 7,572 |

After reviewing the table above, we decided to purchase leads for all businesses with five or more employees in the ZIP codes in our service area. This generated a database of 2,585 business leads.

We reviewed the list of leads and “cherry picked” a number of employers out of the list – restaurants as well as a few other employers.

Updated 2/27/2009

In early April 2007, the survey was sent to the remaining 1,389 employers in the list. A cover letter accompanied the survey. The cover letter explained the importance of the survey, and it invited employers to participate in one of two ways: (1) completing the enclosed survey and returning in the enclosed postage paid envelope, or (2) completing the survey online.

To ensure a greater response rate, we conducted a number of follow-up efforts: (1) postcard reminder, (2) pre-recorded phone reminder, and (3) live phone calls.

A postcard reminder was sent three weeks after we mailed the survey. The postcard was sent to 500 randomly selected employers who had not yet responded. We only sent the postcard to 500 employers due to monetary and other constraints.

Two weeks later, the college president recorded a phone message reminding employers about the importance and benefits of the training needs assessment. The phone message was delivered to the 1,271 with valid phone numbers employers that had not responded by that point.

The final follow-up effort involved “live” phone calls to businesses. In June 2007, we hired an individual to call each employer that had not yet responded. Our caller placed phone calls to 1,249 businesses.

Results

We gathered input from 108 employers, representing 70 different industries. The list of industries represented in this study are displayed in Appendix B.

We asked employers to indicate the number of full-time, part-time, and temporary/seasonal employees that their business has locally: (1) two years ago, (2) currently, and (3) expects to have a year from now. This information would tell us whether local businesses are growing or shrinking.

The results indicate that the number of employees has increased from two years ago but is expected to decline in one year. It should be noted that is based on the 108 employers who completed the survey and does not necessarily reflect employment trends on the Peninsula.

| Number of employees | Full-time | Part-time | Temporary/ Seasonal | TOTAL |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------------------|-------|
| Two years ago | 4,818 | 828 | 843 | 6,489 |
| Currently | 6,130 | 1,010 | 1,348 | 8,488 |
| One year from now | 5,800 | 727 | 1,327 | 7,854 |

The survey asked employers to list the primary qualities they seek in candidates. The responses varied greatly. They ranged from industry-specific qualifications (e.g., “Technician with RVT licensing – animal health technology” or “California water and wastewater operator certification”) to the traditional “3 R’s” (reading, writing, arithmetic) to computer skills and knowledge, to “soft skills” (customer service skills, verbal communication skills, honesty, reliability, and good work ethic).

As a follow up to the previous question, the survey asked employers to rate their level of need for training in a number of specific areas. The results, shown in the table below, indicate a strong need for English reading and writing skills, as well as oral communication skills. There appears to be less need for Spanish skills. The need for math and computer is fairly strong, though not as strong as for English and communication skills. The area where employers indicated the most need was in the “soft skills”, specifically customer service and interpersonal/people skills. Other soft skills—time management and organizational skills—are also areas of high need for employers. Finally, a number of employers indicated the need for industry specific skills. The survey did not provide employers with an opportunity to specify the industry specific skills in which employers need training; however, some employers volunteered this information in an earlier question. This is one area that requires follow-up.

| | Extensive | | Strong | | Moderate | | Minimal | | N/A – Not Needed | | TOTAL |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----|--------|-----|----------|-----|---------|-----|------------------|----|-------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N |
| Spanish | 5 | 6% | 10 | 13% | 28 | 36% | 27 | 35% | 7 | 9% | 77 |
| English | 50 | 50% | 35 | 35% | 11 | 11% | 3 | 3% | 1 | 1% | 100 |
| Reading | 44 | 44% | 33 | 33% | 19 | 19% | 2 | 2% | 3 | 3% | 101 |
| Writing | 40 | 40% | 32 | 32% | 25 | 25% | 3 | 3% | 1 | 1% | 101 |
| Oral communication | 49 | 49% | 41 | 41% | 10 | 10% | 1 | 1% | 0 | 0% | 101 |
| Customer service | 60 | 59% | 26 | 26% | 11 | 11% | 4 | 4% | 0 | 0% | 101 |
| Math computation | 16 | 16% | 33 | 33% | 37 | 37% | 12 | 12% | 3 | 3% | 101 |
| Interpersonal/ People | 60 | 59% | 28 | 28% | 10 | 10% | 3 | 3% | 0 | 0% | 101 |
| Time management | 46 | 46% | 37 | 37% | 13 | 13% | 3 | 3% | 1 | 1% | 100 |
| Organizational | 46 | 46% | 41 | 41% | 12 | 12% | 1 | 1% | 1 | 1% | 101 |
| Computer | 26 | 26% | 32 | 32% | 32 | 32% | 9 | 9% | 2 | 2% | 101 |
| Industry specific | 44 | 44% | 31 | 31% | 18 | 18% | 6 | 6% | 1 | 1% | 100 |

The survey then presented a series of questions related to the logistics of training – *where, how, when, and how long*. For these items, we asked employers who indicated an interest in training to mark all the options that applied. (Employers could select more than one option, so the total number of responses is greater than the number of employers.)

The first question in this series provided several options for the location and modality of course offerings.

| Where and how employers would like classes offered | N | % |
|---|----------|----------|
| At the work site | 40 | 22% |
| Online | 41 | 22% |
| On campus at MPC | 63 | 34% |
| At the MPC Education Center at Marina | 29 | 16% |
| Other | 12 | 6% |

The next question in the series asked employers to indicate what *time of day* and *days of the week* they would like classes offered.

| | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Early morning (before 8:00) | 15 | 16 | 15 | 16 | 15 | 14 | 10 |
| Morning (8:00 – 12:00) | 23 | 25 | 24 | 24 | 22 | 33 | 16 |
| Afternoon (12:00 – 5:00) | 19 | 20 | 20 | 21 | 17 | 28 | 16 |
| Evening (after 5:00) | 62 | 66 | 66 | 62 | 56 | 19 | 14 |

The next question asked employers to indicate *how long* they would like courses to run

| How long employers would like courses to run | N | % |
|---|----------|----------|
| Less than 1 week | 27 | 24% |
| Between 1 week and 4 weeks | 34 | 30% |
| Between 4 weeks and 16 weeks | 23 | 20% |
| Full semester (17 weeks) | 18 | 15% |
| Other | 11 | 10% |

Finally, we asked employers to indicate what type of support they are willing to provide employees for training.

| Type of support employers are willing to provide | N | % |
|--|----------|----------|
| Tuition reimbursement for classes taken on employee's own time | 55 | 29% |
| Pay for textbooks or other class materials | 41 | 22% |
| Pay cost of on-site training | 36 | 19% |
| Release time from work | 34 | 18% |
| None | 9 | 5% |
| Other | 13 | 7% |

The results from the series of questions suggest that businesses do want their employees to receive training and are willing to provide some level of financial support to their employees for training. However, the results also suggest that businesses would like their employees to receive the training on their own time, rather than during the typical work day. Furthermore, they would like employees to receive training at MPC or online, rather than at the work site. We did not survey employees directly; therefore, we do not know whether employees share the same views about class times and locations as their employers.

We asked employers whether they would like someone from MPC to contact them regarding their training needs. Although the majority of employers are not interested in being contacted by MPC, there were 36 employers that would like MPC to contact them. This provides MPC with concrete leads to expand its workforce training program.

| Employer interest in contact from MPC regarding Training needs | N | % |
|---|----------|----------|
| Yes, immediately within the next 6 months | 3 | 3% |
| Yes, within 6 months to a year | 19 | 19% |
| Yes, no timeframe specified | 14 | 14% |
| No | 63 | 64% |

We wanted to understand the types of resources that employers need and use. We asked them to indicate the sources they use to recruit workers. (Employers could select more than one option, so the total number of responses is greater than the number of employers.)

| Sources used to recruit workers | N | % |
|---|----------|----------|
| Newspaper ads | 66 | 28% |
| Recruiter | 20 | 9% |
| Job placement employment agencies | 26 | 11% |
| MPC College Placement Office | 22 | 9% |
| Online job service sites (Monster, Hotjobs, Craigslist) | 58 | 25% |
| Other | 41 | 18% |

The table above indicates that employers use a variety of resources to recruit workers, most frequently newspaper ads and online job service sites. It should be pointed out that less than 10% of the responses were for MPC's Placement Office. The following survey item addresses use of the MPC's job placement services, as well as other resources at MPC.

The table below indicates a high level of lack of awareness of MPC’s resources that are available to employers. It is difficult to draw conclusions about employers’ level of satisfaction with services because the N is too small; however, it would behoove the college to address those areas where employers rated the resource as “poor”.

| Satisfaction with resource | | | | | Resource | If you have not used resource, why not? | | | |
|----------------------------|------|------|------|-----|---------------------------------------|---|----------------|-----------|-------|
| Great | Good | Fair | Poor | N/A | | Not appropriate | Not accessible | Not aware | Other |
| 3% | 13% | 0% | 0% | 84% | Self-paced courses in computer skills | 16% | 0% | 76% | 8% |
| 5% | 9% | 1% | 1% | 83% | Industry or job skills training | 10% | 1% | 83% | 5% |
| 0% | 11% | 8% | 9% | 73% | Job placement services | 7% | 7% | 82% | 4% |
| 3% | 5% | 6% | 2% | 85% | Cooperative Work Experience | 8% | 0% | 88% | 4% |
| 2% | 5% | 2% | 0% | 92% | Career counseling | 8% | 3% | 80% | 9% |
| 0% | 2% | 0% | 2% | 96% | Facilities rental for training | 16% | 0% | 84% | 0% |

Discussion

The major limitation of this study was the low response rate. The results only tell us about the training needs of the 108 employers that did complete the survey. However, we cannot make generalizations about the training needs of employers on the Monterey Peninsula. This is not to say that the results are of little or no value. We plan to use the results to pilot new classes geared towards those employers who responded and showed an interest in training. We also plan to use the contact information to develop better relationships with interested employers.

An additional challenge was learning that a number of employers already offer their own training or use other resources. This is partly due to lack of awareness of our college’s resources and course offerings. We learned that we cannot shift into a workforce provider mode overnight.

To be continued...

For more information, please contact

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Employer Training Needs Survey

Appendix A – Survey Instrument

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Appendix B – Participating Industries

| Industry | N | Industry | N |
|---|----|----------------------------------|---|
| Accountants | 1 | Insurance | 1 |
| Air Balancing | 1 | Lasers (Wholesale) | 1 |
| Airports | 1 | Marriage & Family Counselors | 1 |
| Amusement & Recreation Nec | 1 | Nurserymen | 1 |
| Animal Hospitals | 2 | Nursing & Convalescent Homes | 2 |
| Architects | 2 | Package Designing & Development | 1 |
| Attorneys | 1 | Packaging Machinery-Wholesale | 1 |
| Attorneys Service Bureaus | 1 | Physical Therapists | 2 |
| Automobile Dealers-New Cars | 2 | Physicians & Surgeons | 4 |
| Automobile Repairing & Service | 2 | Plumbing Drain & Sewer Cleaning | 1 |
| Banks | 2 | Preschool & Kindergartens | 1 |
| Bed & Breakfast Accommodations | 1 | Printers | 1 |
| Building Contractors | 3 | Public Relations Counselors | 1 |
| Bus Lines | 1 | Publishers-Book | 1 |
| Caterers | 1 | Quilting Materials & Supplies | 1 |
| Child Care Service | 2 | Real Estate | 2 |
| Collection Agencies | 1 | Residential Care Homes | 2 |
| Community Services | 1 | Resorts | 2 |
| County Government | 1 | Restaurants | 1 |
| Day Care Centers-Adult | 1 | Retirement Communities & Homes | 1 |
| Dentists | 1 | Roofing Contractors | 1 |
| Department Stores | 1 | Sanitation Services | 1 |
| Electric Contractors | 2 | Security Systems Consultants | 1 |
| Electric Equipment & Supplies-Wholesale | 1 | Senior Citizens Service Org | 1 |
| Electronics-Consultants | 1 | Services | 1 |
| Engineers-Civil | 3 | Shopping Centers & Malls | 1 |
| Engineers-Systems | 1 | Spas-Beauty & Day | 1 |
| Environmental & Ecological Services | 1 | Surveyors-Land | 1 |
| Environmental Conservation/Ecologcl Org | 1 | Tax Return Preparation & Filing | 1 |
| Excavating Contractors | 1 | Trade Fairs & Shows | 1 |
| Fire Departments | 1 | Translators & Interpreters | 1 |
| Health Clubs Studios & Gymnasiums | 1 | Veterinarians | 2 |
| Home Health Service | 3 | Water & Sewage Companies-Utility | 1 |
| Hotels & Motels | 13 | Water Supply Systems | 1 |
| Humane Societies | 1 | Unknown | 8 |