Assessing Workforce Recruitment Strategies of Local Hamilton Employers

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Contents

Executive Summary

The long-term sustainability of businesses is dependent on their ability to secure a workforce that satisfies their labour demands. The purpose of this research was to summarize and evaluate the effectiveness of the current workforce recruitment strategies used by local Hamilton employers. By discovering strategies that are effective for Hamilton employers, and probing why others may be ineffectual, the Industry Education Council (IEC) of Hamilton aims to collaborate with other industry stakeholders to bridge the divide between employment opportunities and the talent pool in the local community. This research used a mixed methods approach, collecting both survey responses (n= 24) and conducting follow-up interviews (n= 5) with local Hamilton employers regarding their current recruitment strategies and perceived efficacy.

We found the most common recruitment strategies were online recruitment, secondary and post-secondary school engagement, and employee referral programs. Online recruitment and school engagement strategies were considered the most effective, however, employers also identified key areas of improvement for these strategies. Specifically, there is a need for increased candidate (and community) awareness regarding industry jobs and advertisements that highlight what the job has to offer the candidate in addition to the company's image. In sum, this study provides critical insights into the perceptions and preferences of employers in the Greater Hamilton Area on their hiring processes.

Introduction

The Industry Education Council (IEC) of Hamilton is a non-profit organization with a mission to create and improve career exploration opportunities for youth in Hamilton. As a hub that connects Hamilton's education sector, industry, and broader community, the IEC of Hamilton facilitates collaborative conversations between students and potential employers to ensure that the pool of prospective employers remain connected with youth entering the workforce. This is particularly important considering that Statistics Canada reported nearly 12% of young people aged 15-29 were unemployed in 2018 (Statistics Canada, 2019). In addition, a recent Indeed Hiring Lab report found that it takes new entrants into the workforce nearly 10 weeks to find employment (Indeed Career Guide, 2020). These numbers stand to be exacerbated by COVID-19 and its economic implications (Bourbeau et al., 2019).

To further career exploration in Hamilton and to inform youth about local employment opportunities, the IEC of Hamilton has recently collaborated with Edge Factor to bring youth "contextual career information created cinematically and focused on Hamilton companies". Edge Factor has been working with Hamilton's school boards to bring cinematic career exploration opportunities to the classroom. However, Edge Factor is looking for more engagement from local industry. Increased industry engagement can help Edge Factor and the IEC of Hamilton understand workforce needs and the positions that are in high demand, as well as the recruitment and hiring challenges that are currently experienced by Hamilton employers.

This is necessary to continue to build a talent pipeline that addresses the workforce needs of Hamilton employers.

The IEC of Hamilton has partnered with a Research Shop team to better understand the workforce recruitment needs of Hamilton employers, which they will use to inform future marketing strategies for platforms like Edge Factor. This report provides an overview of the current study's research objective, methods and results for the IEC of Hamilton. The results highlight demographic information on employers in the Greater Hamilton Region, common workforce recruitment strategies, perceptions of effectiveness and areas of hiring at these companies that can be improved. Overall, this information was used by the Research Shop to provide key considerations for the IEC of Hamilton regarding future marketing strategies for workforce recruitment platforms, such as Edge Factor.

Research Questions

The research questions for this project are:
1. What outreach are local employers doing (if anything) to secure their future workforce?; and
2. How effective are employers' current outreach initiatives?
   - Are there any limitations to employer outreach efforts, and if so, what are these limitations?
   - Are there any factors that facilitate employer outreach efforts, and if so, what are these factors?

Methodology and Limitations

Methodology

A team of McMaster researchers conducted an online survey and interviews with small- to medium- sized businesses (defined as having approximately 10-50 employees) in the Greater Hamilton Region. An analytical framework was designed to guide the research team's data collection and analysis. See Appendix 1 for specific variables the research team was trying to evaluate and their measurable indicators.

Online survey

The research team conducted an online survey hosted on Google Forms. The survey was sent via email to a list of local employers provided by the IEC of Hamilton. The survey remained open for 4 weeks from October 26th to November 23rd, 2020.

At the start of the survey, participants received a brief description of the survey purpose and their role as a respondent. They provided informed consent by checking a box on the form. Contact information was stored separately from survey responses and was only used for the purposes of the gift card draw. All other information disclosed in the survey was kept

confidential and used only for the purpose of supporting IEC of Hamilton to develop strategies to help local employers with future workforce recruitment.

The survey consisted of 24 open- and closed-ended questions that involved describing the business' current workforce engagement strategy and its efficacy (see the analytical framework for an overview of questions asked in the survey). Survey participants were provided with the chance to win one of three $50 credits for food delivery service to promote participation.

The survey received 24 responses in the 4-week period. The research team used multiple methods to analyze the survey data, which incorporated both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Demographic survey questions were analyzed to determine the percentage of respondents in different industries (e.g., construction, manufacturing, utilities, etc.). Weighted average calculations were performed for questions surrounding the employer's current strategy and well as the efficacy of these strategies. Lastly, content analyses were performed to determine the respondent's satisfaction with current employee recruitment strategies. A research team member coded the data based on an existing coding framework, then the frequency of each code was calculated in addition to consensus of two team members regarding the interpretation of the coded unit.

Interviews
At the end of the survey, employers were asked if they would be willing to participate in a phone or Zoom interview. If participants responded "yes" they were asked to provide their contact email. Of the 24 survey responses, 9 participants (36%) indicated they would be interested in a follow-up interview, with 5 individuals (20%) participating in an interview led by a research team member.

To start each interview, participants received a brief description of the survey purpose and provided verbal consent. The interview consisted of nine open- and closed-ended questions to probe how the employer utilized their current workforce engagement strategies, as well as to examine limitations and facilitators for effective employee recruitment (see the analytical framework for an overview of questions posed in the interviews).

All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and stored on a secure Microsoft Teams folder, before they were thematically coded. The research team created a coding framework, open coded the transcripts, and finalized codes through group consensus. Findings are integrated with our quantitative survey results below. For the complete qualitative analysis, refer to Appendix 2 which contains the coding framework, detailing all primary and sub-themes.

Limitations
Bias can occur at any phase of research and can encourage one research outcome over others. As some degree of bias is present in nearly all studies, it is important to consider the sources of bias, how they may influence the study conclusions, and how they can be prevented. The following are some important considerations when interpreting this report's data:

i. Survey and interview results are limited by sampling bias. Because all participants were recruited from the IEC of Hamilton's directory, the sample is not completely random. Thus, survey and/or interview samples are not representative, and results cannot be generalized to all businesses in the Hamilton-area. Additionally, businesses who had a positive experience with the IEC of Hamilton are more likely to respond to the research invitation. However, contacting only local businesses/ industries partnered with the IEC of Hamilton helps our community partner better understand their audience's specific needs and allows the research team to create more personalized recommendations.

ii. It may be difficult for respondents to recall past hiring experience since their last hiring cycle may be a long time ago due to the current worldwide pandemic and its economic impact. The study participant also may not be involved throughout the hiring process. Lastly, participants may bias their accounts of the hiring process depending on what they expect the research team is trying to gather.

Due to the above limitations, the following report should be interpreted with caution.

Findings

In this section, we report results from the survey and interview analyses. First, we review I demographics and hiring logistics. Then we evaluate the frequency and efficacy of various recruitment strategies. Finally, we review considerations for effective recruitment and introduce suggestions to improve current recruitment strategies.

Participant Demographics

Twenty-three businesses in the Greater Hamilton Region provided information about their organization. The majority of survey respondents (66.67%) indicated their organizations were involved with construction. The second most common field (12.50%) was professional, scientific and technical services. Finally, the remaining fields included company management (4.17%), manufacturing (4.17%), manufacturing representatives (4.17%), administrative and support, waste management and remediation (4.17%), and property management and company growth. These companies were medium (37.50%) to large (45.83%) with 10-50 and greater than 50 employees, respectively. Company compositions had little variation as most indicated primarily full-time employees (79.17%) compared to a mix of full-time, part-time and seasonal (16.67%) or primarily seasonal (4.17%). Survey respondents held various positions in their companies, ranging from Human Resources and Talent Acquisition (33.33%), to Presidents and Directors (16.67%) and company owners and partners (12.50%). Similarly, all interview participants were either business owners, held upper management roles or were involved in Human Resources and recruitment at their organizations.

Hiring Logistics

To probe the personnel resources used by each company, survey respondents were also asked who was responsible for hiring. As seen in Figure 1, most companies relied on management teams (37.77%) and Human Resources departments (24.44%). Other personnel commonly involved in hiring included company and business owners (20%) and recruiting teams or departments (15.56%). Less common personnel involved in hiring included department heads (2.22%).

Figure 1. Hiring responsibility of local Hamilton businesses.
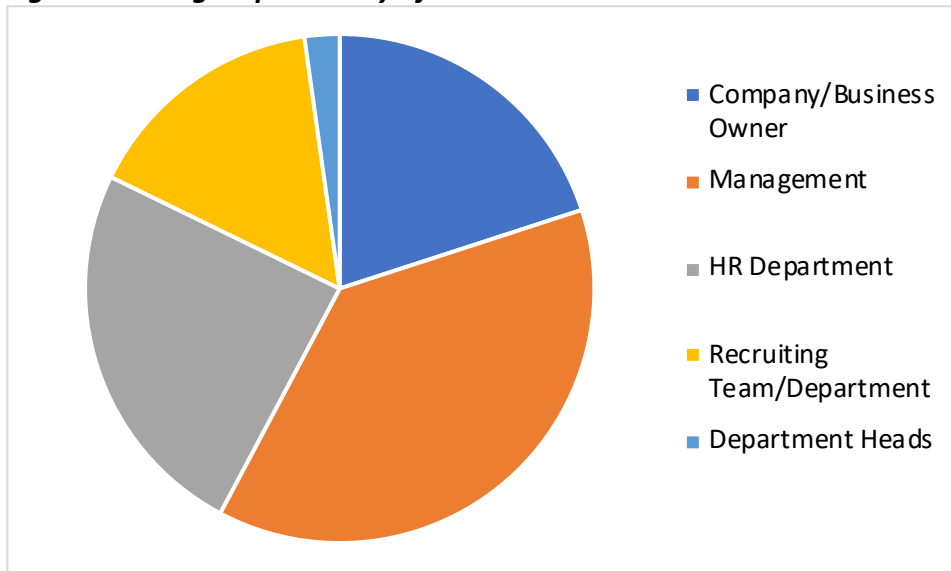
Most respondents indicated that their current recruitment strategy (i.e., use of recruitment websites, social media, or school engagement) had been in place for more than five years (58.33%). One third (33.33%) of respondents indicated that their strategy had been in place between one and five years, and a few respondents indicated their strategy was relatively new, being in place for less than a year (8.33%).

As seen in Figure 2, the types of employees searched for the most are experienced candidates (29.23%), with college students and college graduates falling close behind (27.69%). Entry-level candidates were also common candidates (23.08%). Other candidates included graduate or professional education (10.77%), high school education (7.69%), and union members (1.54%).

Figure 2. Types of employees recruited by local Hamilton businesses.
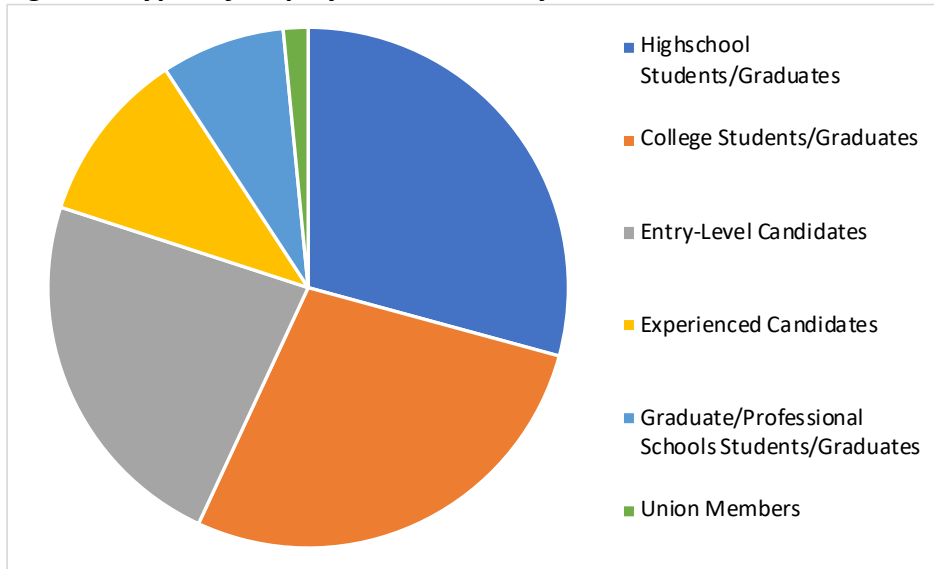
When asked if participants agreed or disagreed that their organization experienced a high turnover rate (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree), the average response was that employers experienced a low turnover rate (Average = 2.04, Standard deviation = 0.86). Additionally, for more than half of the employers surveyed, it takes an average of one to two months (54.17%) from the time it takes to for a position to be open in their workplace to the time a successful candidate accepts an offer. A third of employers take less than a month (33.33%) and very few employers take more than two months (12.50%) to fill a position.
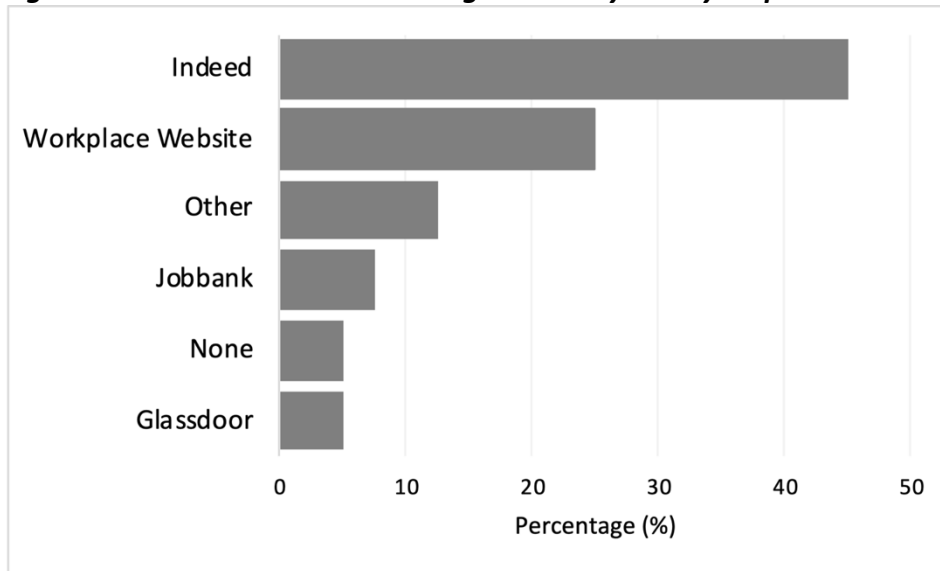
Recruitment Strategies

In our survey, we evaluated how frequently workplaces used online, social media, secondary and post-secondary recruitment, employee referral and other recruitment strategies. In the interview, participants were further probed about the effectiveness of the various strategies used by their workplace. Here we present the frequency and efficacy results for each outreach strategy probed.

Online Outreach
Online recruitment was the most common form of recruitment with a weighted average of 2.92 (Standard deviation = 1.11) on a scale from 1 to 4 (1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Very often). As seen in Figure 3, the job hiring website, Indeed, was the most used online outreach platform (45%). Company workplace websites were the second most common (25%), while Jobbank (7.5%) and Glassdoor (5%) were used less frequently. A few companies reported not using online recruitment strategies (5%) and the remaining 'other' sources of online employee recruitment included Kijiji, Landscape Ontario Job Boards, Internal Management, Referrals, College/University Career Portals and LinkedIn (12.5%).

*Figure 3. Online recruitment strategies used by survey respondents.*

Based on survey responses, online recruitment was considered to be the most effective outreach strategy with a weighted average of 2.29 (Standard deviation = 0.60) on a scale from 1 to 3 (1 = Not effective, 2 = Somewhat effective, 3 = Very effective). In the interview, we further probed the efficacy of online advertising and found a drawback to be a lack of connection between the job requirements and applicants (n= 1). One participant stated, "you put ads in the 'want ads' or on the equivalent, now the electronic thing and you get everybody and his brother just looking for a job, not necessarily a career", which highlighted a challenge associated with these postings. Another interview participant noted the webpages can be somewhat ineffective as they can be difficult to navigate and are often confusing for potential applicants (n= 1).

Secondary and Post-Secondary School Outreach

Results from the survey indicated that most employers participated in some form of school recruitment as it was the second most common form of recruitment with a weighted average of 2.42 (Standard deviation = 0.95) on a scale from 1 to 4 (1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Very often). In this outreach category, the most common recruitment method was hosting school placements (29.27%), which included internships and cooperative education positions. Advertising on school recruitment websites (19.51%), attending job fairs (17.07%), and engaging in school visits, workshops and seminars (12.20%) were also common among survey respondents. Other secondary and post-secondary recruitment methods noted by respondents included participation in 'Take Your Kids to Work' day (2.44%) and enrollment in engineering and drafting contests at local colleges and universities (2.44%). As seen in Figure 4, some respondents (17.07%) indicated that they did not use school recruitment methods.

Figure 4. Secondary and post-secondary recruitment strategies used by survey respondents.
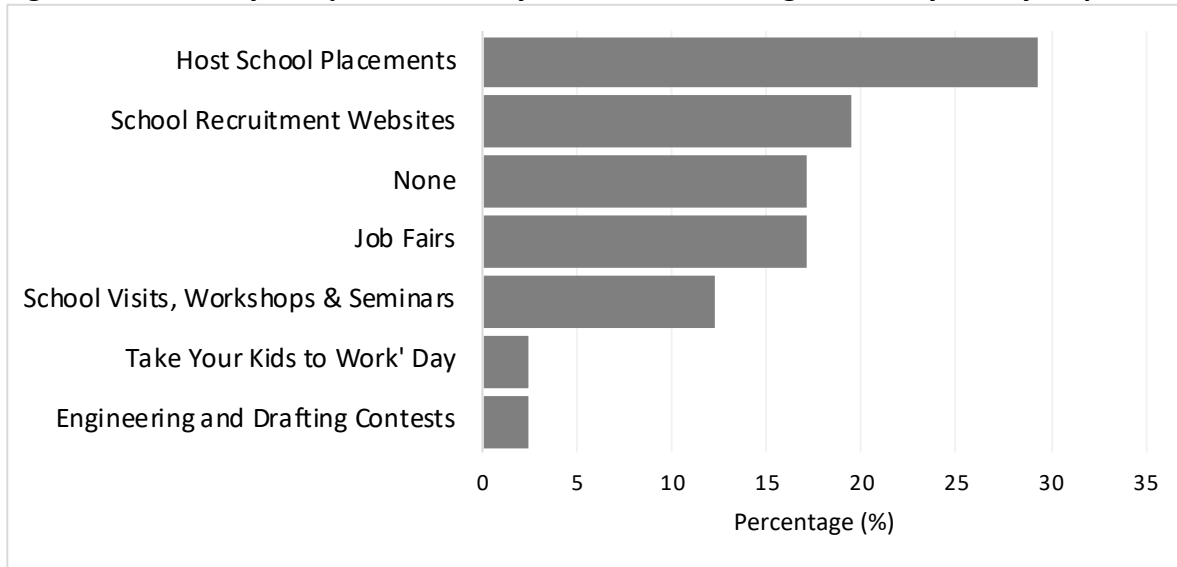
Similar to the frequency of use, school engagement outreach was considered the second most effective recruitment strategy, with a weighted average of 1.92 (Standard deviation = 0.69) on a scale from 1 to 3 (1 = Not effective, 2 = Somewhat effective, 3 = Very effective).

Employee Referral Outreach

Just over half of survey respondents (59.1%) indicated that their companies used employee referral programs for recruitment, making it the third most common form of recruitment with a weighted average of 2.21 (Standard deviation = 1.26) on a scale from 1 to 4 (1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Very often).

This outreach strategy was also considered somewhat effective with a weighted average of 1.75 (Standard deviation = 0.72) on a scale from 1 to 3 (1 = Not effective, 2 = Somewhat effective, 3 = Very effective). In our interviews, the efficacy of this strategy was further evaluated. Participants discussed the importance of referrals from a company's professional network, as it creates a sense of responsibility for trusted individuals to recommend qualified candidates (n= 4). One participant noted, "people who recommend [candidates] to us also don't want to be known as recommending bad apples". Further, the interviews revealed that referrals can come in a variety of forms including recommendations from past and present staff members, and internal postings, where staff members receive automatic notifications about new position opportunities.

Social Media Outreach

Social media recruitment was a relatively popular form of recruitment with a weighted average of 2.17 (Standard deviation = 1.18) on a scale from 1 to 4 (1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Very often). As seen in Figure 5, LinkedIn was the most common social media platform used and included both the use of company profiles (29.73%) and employee profiles (16.22%). Company Facebook (10.88%) and Twitter (10.88%) profiles were the next highest use of social

media for recruitment, followed by Instagram (5.41%) and the company website (2.70%). Some respondents (24.32%) indicated they did not use social media as a platform for workforce recruitment.

Figure 5. Social media recruitment strategies used by survey respondents.
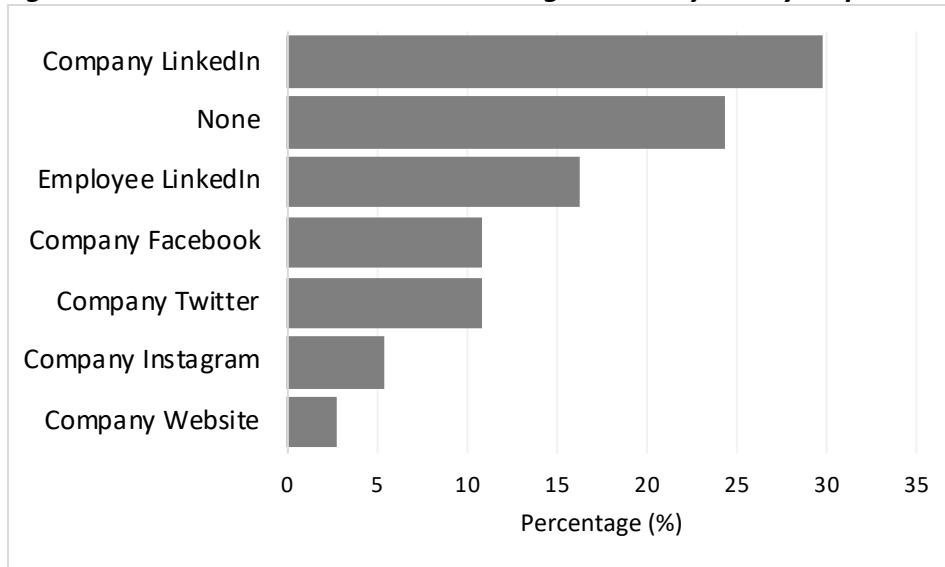
Despite popularity in use, survey respondents considered social media to be the second least effective recruitment strategy with a weighted average of 1.58 (Standard deviation = 0.58) on a scale from 1 to 3 (1 = Not effective, 2 = Somewhat effective, 3 = Very effective). Although in comparison to other strategies social media did not rank highly, interviews revealed that there were some benefits to this outreach method. Specifically, automatic social media distribution, in which recruitment posts are shared on various social media sites following an initial website post and promoting positions that offer competitive wages was also identified as an important factor contributing to effective recruitment (n= 2)

Other Outreach
In the survey, respondents were probed to see if their workplace used other recruitment strategies that were not previously listed. Other strategies identified by survey respondents included word of mouth (9.1%), hiring halls (4.55%) and unions (4.55%). Overall, this category of outreach was relatively uncommon with a weighted average of 1.75 (Standard deviation = 1.02) on a scale from 1 to 4 (1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Very often). However, it remains unclear these strategies are not used by the companies or the survey respondents did not think of these outreach strategies during the time of their survey.

The efficacy of other outreach platforms was not measured qualitatively in the survey, however, during the interviews the research team was able to get a better idea of perceived efficacy. Specifically, during the interview process most participants described sharing job postings by word of mouth to be the most effective recruitment strategy (n= 5).

Print and Other Media Outreach

Print and other media (i.e., radio) was the least common outreach platform with a weighted average of 1.21 (Standard deviation = 0.57) on a scale from 1 to 4 (1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Very often). Of the respondents who indicated using these platforms, phone calls (4.17%), radio (4.17%), and magazines (4.17%) were mentioned specifically. Overall, the majority of respondents indicated that they did not use print or other media platforms for recruitment.

In line with the low popularity, print and other broadcast media platforms were also reported to be the least effective, with a calculated weighted average of 0.79 (Standard deviation = 0.63) on a scale from 1 to 3 (1 = Not effective, 2 = Somewhat effective, 3 = Very effective). In our interviews, participants identified all forms of print media, including postings in local newspapers, engineering magazines, and sponsorship newsletters, as the least useful recruitment strategy for their workplace (n= 2). One participant stated, "we've looked at advertising in a lot of different print media in the last couple months...the viewership and the readership is nowhere near where we get if we were to invest that money online or anything like website postings". This highlights the lack of reach this form of recruitment is able to receive in comparison to online methods.

Considerations for Effective Recruitment

When asked about their overall satisfaction with recruitment strategies (1 = Very dissatisfied, 3 = Neutral, 5 = Very satisfied), the average response was that relatively impartial to their current recruitment strategies (Average = 3.29, Standard deviation = 1.08). Of the 24 survey responses collected, 21 respondents provided a rationale to their satisfaction level. Most respondents who were satisfied with their current recruiting methods attributed it to finding qualified candidates who met their needs (58.33%). Respondents also noted their organization has a good recruitment method by working through multiple levels of hiring (4.17%), a high volume of applicants (4.17%), and good employee retention rates (4.17%).

We probed participants' perceived reasons for successful recruitment further in our interviews and found several factors that were broadly categorized into company and advertisement factors:

i. Company Factors: Participants identified brand recognition, positive company image, and the company's time investment into the recruitment process as important factors influencing recruitment effectiveness. For example, one participant stated, "I think the best strategy is the company itself in the way it promotes itself".

ii. Advertisement Factors: Participants discussed the importance of advertisements that describe how the company will provide candidates with a variety of opportunities and explicitly outline the reciprocal employee-company relationship, in which the company can learn from candidates while also providing them with opportunities to develop as professionals in the organization. For instance, a participant described the importance

of "looking at people from all walks of life and understanding that there's value with them and we provide that value back" when creating advertisements. In addition, advertisements seeking experienced and long-term employees who will grow with the organization led to a greater number of qualified applicants.

Conversely, when considering effective recruitment, survey respondents who were dissatisfied with their current recruiting methods mentioned issues with their hiring process timing: one responded hiring is too rushed (4.17%) and others responded the process to find qualified applicants was very lengthy and slow (8.33%). Many observed that the pool of qualified applicants who meet their needs in the local area is very low (16.67%). A few respondents reasoned they could use in-house resources for recruitment, but they frequently outsource this role to third parties (8.33%). Others agreed that they see room for improvement in their current strategy (12.50%): one respondent specified they want to improve the diversity of their applicant pool but are unsure how (4.17%).

Similar to efficacy, we probed participants' perceived reasons for unsuccessful recruitment further in our interviews and found several factors that were, again, broadly categorized into company and advertisement factors:

i.   Company Factors: Participants identified lack of internal company communication, insufficient details about the hiring process, delays in posting job applications, and internal time constraints as challenges for recruiting employees. For example, one participant described the difficulties of long-term hiring processes: "So you could pick an applicant, but maybe take two months before they like finally sealed the deal... Sometimes people have moved on".

ii. Advertisement Factors: Participants noted lengthy, time-consuming applications, releasing applications without listing specific job expectations, and redundancy in the questions asked throughout hiring to be limitations in the recruitment process. For instance, one participant stated, "we want you to fill out this like pages and pages of the same thing that's in your resume that seems to be a little bit cumbersome to some... what they expect from people with regards to filling out data online seems to be a bit like a deal breaker". Moreover, the need for multiple application cycles, general lack of applicants, and high numbers of unqualified candidates were noted when using the least effective strategies defined above.

Additionally, mass hiring was noted as an independent ineffective hiring strategy (n= 1). It refers to periods in which many employees are recruited to meet a short-term workforce demand, were identified as ineffective for recruiting eligible applicants. The participant noted, "when you need 250 workers, you're not reviewing the herd the same way you would if you were looking for five...Otherwise, you can't fulfill the need of the industry".

Suggestions for Improving Outreach Engagement

In our survey, some respondents suggested alternative recruitment platforms that those currently implemented by their workplace. These suggestions included exploring comprehensive web-based platforms (4.17%), co-op student placement sites (4.17%), and immigration settlements (4.17%).

In the interviews, the research team further investigated how participants believed their outreach could be improved through increased community engagement. Their responses were again categorized, and were found to fall under company, advertisement, and candidate and outreach factors.

i.   Company Factors: Participants identified the use of external hiring agencies and increased internal communication as key factors for candidate engagement in recruitment. When considering improvements in their current strategies, participants indicated a need for faster recruitment processes to reduce the loss of possible candidates during recruitment, increased company follow-up with candidates, and a shift toward proactive hiring that anticipates the needs of the company's workforce. One participant stated, "a lot of times in the business, we're reactive to things. Some people leave the organization... and all of a sudden, we're scrambling to try to recruit as quickly as possible", reinforcing the value of a proactive recruitment approach. In addition, participants indicated the need for greater support with reviewing and filtering applications, diverse recruitment by partnering and engaging with external organizations, and personable interviewing during the application process. Finally, specific to the company, participants noted offering a competitive pay and acknowledgement of the current shortage of skilled trade workers were important areas of change when recruiting employees.

ii.   Advertisement Factors: Specific strategies to increase engagement, as identified by participants, included increasing the aesthetic appeal of promotional materials, highlighting the benefits of working with a specific company, and instilling a sense of pride for work in trades. One participant commented, "you should know what the role is when you look at an advertisement, but good successful job advertisements for larger organizations... typically try to focus that back on the candidate and what [the company] can do for them". Suggestions for promoting improved engagement in this category included circulating postings that provide clear expectations in the job description.

iii.   Candidate Factors: In general, participants indicated a need for greater pre-apprenticeship training with high-school students, and increased trades knowledge and awareness. One participant noted, "I would like to see more emphasis in the educational system... right from grade school through high school and generating interest in the trades". They highlighted that these programs could prepare high school students for hiring opportunities in trades, as well as translate to greater field-specific knowledge. Additionally, language barriers for jobs requiring English was noted as a

limitation. One participant mentioned, "[candidates] need to understand what the workplace looks like, it's not enough to have an education", highlighting the value of pre-work training and preparation.

iv.   Outreach Factors: Participants indicated the importance of expanding recruitment to immigration settlements and hiring reform to support immigrants working in Canada.

Conclusion

Through our surveys and interviews, we investigated the workplace recruitment strategies of businesses in the Greater Hamilton area. We found that companies in the Greater Hamilton area use a wide variety of recruitment methods, including online job boards, school engagement, referral programs, social media and word of mouth. Of these, online outreach efforts are the most effective, and print media the least effective. We found that within these strategies there were both internal (i.e., company) and external (i.e., advertisement) factors that either facilitated or prevented effective workforce recruitment. Internal factors that facilitated recruitment included a company's brand or public image, whereas poor internal communication and delays in the hiring process were viewed as internal barriers. External factors that facilitated hiring included postings focused on candidate growth and postings for long-term positions. However, some external factors that also limited recruitment included time-consuming applications and repeat application cycles. Suggestions for improving future workforce recruitment focused on proactive hiring (internal) and increasing public education on industry jobs (external). Overall, although employers in the Greater Hamilton area identified effective recruitment strategies, they also clearly identified areas for improvement to further enhance public engagement and awareness.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: IEC of Hamilton Survey and Interview Analytical Framework

	IEC of Hamilton Analytical Framework	
Indicator	**Method**	**Item**
Demographics	Survey	What is the name of your current workplace/place of employment?
		What industry/field is your workplace in?
		How would you describe the positions at your workplace?
		How many people are employed at your workplace (includes part-time and full-time employees)?
		What is your current job title at your workplace?
		Are you involved with hiring/workforce development in your position?
	Interview	Could you start by elaborating on what your company does?
		Could you elaborate on what your daily duties are within the company?
Current Strategy	Survey	What online recruitment platforms, if any, does your workplace currently use to promote employee recruitment?
		What social media platforms, if any, does your workplace currently use to promote employee recruitment?
		What print and/or broadcast media, if any, does your workplace currently use to promote employee recruitment?
		What does your workplace currently do, if anything, to promote employee recruitment from secondary and/or post-secondary schools?
		Does your workplace use an employee referral program to promote employee recruitment?
		Does your workplace promote employee recruitment using a source or activity that was not previously listed?
		If you indicated 'yes' to the previous question, please indicate the strategy.
		Who is responsible for hiring employees at your workplace?

IEC of Hamilton Analytical Framework		
Indicator	**Method**	**Item**
		How long has/have your current hiring strategy/strategies been in place?
		Please indicate how often your workplace uses online recruitment platforms for recruitment.
		Please indicate how often your workplace uses social media platforms for recruitment.
		Please indicate how often your workplace uses print and/or broadcast media for recruitment.
		Please indicate how often your workplace uses secondary and/or post-secondary schools for recruitment.
		Please indicate how often your workplace uses an employee referral program.
		Please indicate how often your workplace uses another recruitment strategy previously defined.
		Who does your workplace typically recruit for positions? Please check all that apply.
Efficacy of Current Strategy	Survey	From your perspective, please rate how effective online recruitment platforms are in terms of their usefulness in recruiting suitable employees for your workplace.
		From your perspective, please rate how effective social media platforms are in terms of their usefulness in recruiting suitable employees for your workplace.
		From your perspective, please rate how effective print and/or broadcast media are in terms of their usefulness in recruiting suitable employees for your workplace.
		From your perspective, please rate how effective secondary and/or post-secondary schools are in terms of their usefulness in recruiting suitable employees for your workplace.
		From your perspective, please rate how effective Employee referral programs are in terms of their usefulness in recruiting suitable employees for your workplace.
		Do you agree or disagree that your workplace experiences high employee turnover?
		On average, how long does it take to fill an open position within your workplace? Consider the

IEC of Hamilton Analytical Framework		
Indicator	**Method**	**Item**
		position to be open from the time the position is made known to the public (i.e., online posting, job fair, etc.) to the time a successful candidate accepts an offer.
		How satisfied are you with your workplace's current employee recruitment outreach strategy (i.e., what your workplace does to advertise positions and solicit applications from qualified candidates)?
		Please elaborate on your satisfaction level with your workplace's current employee recruitment outreach strategy. Why do you feel this way?
	Interview	In the survey we asked about different ways to promote employment opportunities at your organization, in other words your recruitment strategies. In your opinion, what would "a lot" of engagement look like for your recruitment strategies?
		In your opinion, what strategy is the most effective for recruitment and what makes it effective?
		In your opinion, what strategy is the least effective for recruitment and why?
		What do you think is needed, if anything, to increase engagement with your current recruitment strategies?
		If you had a magic wand, what are three things you would change to help your organization secure the workforce it needs to thrive?

Appendix 2: Qualitative Coding Framework with Primary and Sub Themes

IEC of Hamilton Interviews Coding Framework	
Node Name	*Node description*
Company Activities	Main parent node for any references daily/routine company activities
Mechanical contracting	Main child node for any references to the participant working in Mechanical contracting (includes Plumbing, Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, Sprinkler Systems, Fire Protection, Control Systems, Refrigeration, Insulation, Specialized Process Systems, Medical Gases, Hydronics, Site Services, and Welding).
Construction	Main child node for any references to the participant working in construction, which includes supplying labor and materials for various project types (i.e., residential, commercial projects, etc.)
Capital Works	Main child node for any references to the participant working capital works, which involves renewing, building, and maintaining city-owned assets.
Construction Subcontractor	Main child node for any references to the participant working in a subcontractor construction company (includes utilities, hydro, nuclear, infrastructure, industrial construction, conventional construction, code generation, automotive work, civil expertise).
Position Activities	Main parent node for any references to the participant's daily activities in their position/role.
Construction tenderer	Main child node for any references to the participant position/role as a construction tenderer.
Advisor	Main child node for any references to the participant position/role as an advisor.
National manager	Main child node for any references to the participant's role as a manager working in Canada.
Training manager	Main child node for any references to the participants role as a manager who conducts employee training and develops training programs.
Professor	Main child node for any references to the participant's role as a teacher/professor in a related field.
Project manager	Main child node for any references to the participant's role as a project manager for municipal (and other) projects.

IEC of Hamilton Interviews Coding Framework	
Node Name	*Node description*
Public Facilitation Leader	Main child node for any references to a participant's role as a public facilitation leader, who seeks feedback from public municipal groups.
Recruitment Leader	Main child node for references to a participant's role as a company recruitment leader.
Human Resources Business Partner	Main child node for references to a participant's role as a Human Resources partner, who works in recruitment, training, and payroll services.
Defining Engagement	Main parent node for any references to the participant's thoughts about what 'a lot' of recruitment engagement is for their company.
Cooperative education/ apprenticeship	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating community college and/or high school cooperative education/ apprenticeship applicants.
Referrals	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating referrals from quality people (i.e., government education coordinators, professional network)
Immediate Social Media Engagement	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating immediate social media engagement following recruitment posts (i.e., 5000 applications on the first day of recruitment for one position).
Most Effective	Main parent node for any references to the participant's insights on what strategy they find to be most effective.
Word of mouth	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating word of mouth.
Internal Postings	Main child node for any references to the participant posting job positions internally with automatic notifications about new listings.
Online Postings with Specific Qualifications	Main child node for any references to the participant posting job opportunities online with specific qualifications/ job prerequisites clearly listed.
Referrals	Main child node for any references to the participant recruiting employees by referrals from past and present staff members.
Social Media	Main child node for any references to the participant recruiting employees via social media websites.

IEC of Hamilton Interviews Coding Framework	
Node Name	*Node description*
Most Effective Rationale	Main parent node for any references to the participant's explanation on why a specific strategy is effective.
Brand Recognition	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating their company is well-know and nationally recognized.
Company Image	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating the positive perception/ view of the company to employees.
Variety of opportunities	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating they provide employees with a variety of opportunities.
Invest time in recruiting	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating they invest time in recruiting.
Sense of responsibility	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating people have a sense of responsibility when referring others for a job.
Competitive Pay	Main child node for any references to the participant's company promoting positions that offer competitive wages.
Reciprocal Employee-Company Relationship	Main child node for any references to the company indicating they can learn a lot from new employees and want new employees to know they will grow/ learn with the company.
Employee Retention	Main child node for any references to the company seeking long-term employees who will grow with the company.
Experienced Candidates	Main child node for any references to the company using certain strategies to recruit experienced employees.
Automatic Social Media Distribution	Main child node for any references to the company having recruitment posts automatically distributed on various social media sites (i.e., LinkedIn, Indeed, etc.).
Least Effective	Main parent node for any references to the participant's insights on what strategy they find to be least effective.
Online and media advertisements	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating online and media advertisements.
Mass Hiring	Main child node for any references to the participant hiring a large amount of people at one time based on a current demand/need.

IEC of Hamilton Interviews Coding Framework	
Node Name	*Node description*
Website Postings	Main child node for any references to the participant posting job opportunities on their municipal website.
Print Media	Main child node for any references to the participant posting job opportunities in print media (i.e., local newspapers, engineering magazines, sponsorship newsletters).
Least Effective Rationale	Main parent node for any references to the participant's explanation on why a specific strategy is not effective.
Low quality	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating low quality applicants.
Lack of Prerequisites	Main child node for any references to releasing applications without requiring specific prerequisite skills or time expectations.
Time Constraints	Main child node for any references to releasing applications under a shortened timeframe.
Slow Hiring Speed	Main child node for any references to a slow hiring process.
Length of Application	Main child node for any references to the participant discussing a long application.
Application Redundancy	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating redundancy with questions on the application and/ the application process.
Lack of Internal Communication	Main child node for any references to the participant discussing lack of internal communication regarding the hiring process and timeline.
Delayed Posting Times	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating delay for posting job applications.
Multiple Trials	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating a need for multiple application periods/ trials.
Lack of Applicants	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating a lack of applicants when using the least preferred recruitment option.
Increase Engagement	Main parent node for any references to the participant's insight as to how their workplace can increase recruitment engagement.

IEC of Hamilton Interviews Coding Framework	
Node Name	*Node description*
Pre apprenticeship training	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating pre apprenticeship training for high school students.
Knowledge and awareness	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating need for knowledge and awareness of the trades.
Sense of pride or accomplishment	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating need for awareness of the sense of pride or accomplishment from the work done in the trades.
Immigration settlement recruitment	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating recruiting from immigration settlements (and introducing immigration reform).
Increase Internal Hiring Communication	Main child node for any references to participant indicating a need for more internal hiring communication surrounding strategies and timelines.
Support from External Agencies	Main child node for any references to participant indicating a need for greater use/ support of external hiring agencies.
Advertisement Appeal	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating a need for greater advertisement appeal and more aesthetic postings.
Highlight Company Benefits	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating a need to showcase company benefits (i.e., what the company can do for the applicant).
Change 3 Things	Main parent node for any references to the participant's suggestions for change to help your organization secure the workforce it needs to thrive.
Pre apprenticeship/ job training	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating pre apprenticeship/ job training for high school students.
Knowledge and awareness	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating need for knowledge and awareness of the trades.
Language barrier	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating need for applicants to learn to speak English.
Trade worker shortage	Main child node for any references to the participant indicating a trade worker shortage.

IEC of Hamilton Interviews Coding Framework	
Node Name	*Node description*
Clear Expectations	Main child node to any references about the participant's company defining clear employee expectations using appropriate phrasing of the job description.
Increased Hiring Speed	Main child node to any references to the participants suggestion for increasing hiring speech to reduce loss of possible candidates.
Competitive Pay	Main child node to any references to the participant's suggestion for postings with competitive salaries.
Company Follow-Up	Main child node to any references to the participant's suggestion to follow-up with candidates.
Support with Filtering Applications	Main child node to any references to the participant's suggestion to have greater support with reviewing and filtering through applications.
Personable Interviewing	Main child node to any references to the participant's suggestion for more personable interviewing that is tailored to the applicant.
Proactive Hiring	Main child node to any references to the participant's suggestions for greater proactive hiring (i.e., that anticipates the needs of the growing workforce).
Diverse Recruitment	Main child node to any references to the participant's suggestions for engaging with organizations that promote diversity and creating new partnerships.