

# Coastal Oregon Visitor Industry (Tourism) Workforce Needs Assessment 2018

By Miles Phillips, Oregon State University Extension/Sea Grant  
July 2018



(Susan Dimock)

# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	3
<b>Section 1: Results for Selected Key Metrics</b> by Location of Business .....	4
<b>Section 2: Analysis of Responses by Number</b> of Employees (Size).....	14
<b>Section 3: Overall Combined Results for Visitor</b> Industry Organizations along the Entire Oregon Coast .....	24
<b>Industry Comments</b> .....	35

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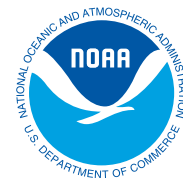
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## Executive Summary

THIS REPORT PROVIDES SUMMARIES OF THE OPINIONS of hotel/lodging and coastal visitor-industry representatives on issues and priorities related to workforce training and education. The results of this report should be helpful in prioritizing topics, formats, costs, and locations of visitor (tourism) industry workforce-training programs. This report is formatted for easy reference, with data presented primarily in tables and charts. The results are also presented in three sections: Section 1, by region of coast; Section 2, by company size; and Section 3, by all respondents.

Sections 1 and 2 present only the results for five key metrics: Training Topic, Cost, Location, Format, and Social Media. Section 3 presents results for all assessment metrics and includes representative written comments for open-comment questions.

The assessment was conducted by the Oregon Coast Visitors Association via an open invitation to complete an online form between February 7, 2018, and March 19, 2018. It was not a randomized sampling of a population and, as such, statistical evaluations represent only the respondents' opinions and data. This report cannot, therefore, provide a statistically robust representation of all coastal visitor industry businesses. However, as one indicator of general industry needs, it is useful in helping to inform planning of workforce education and training programs.

The information reported here was provided by individuals in a wide range of management positions (54 title variations in all), including owners, managers, and presidents.

Comments appear to indicate that the majority of organizations face difficulty hiring quality staff and that they desire staff training and workforce-development programs.



(Susan Dimock)

Results for all groupings of respondents indicate that the most-desired training program topics for employees are Customer Service, Housekeeping, Staff Management/Human Resource Issues, and Marketing. For those who identified Marketing as a program interest, the desired topics were Social Media and Online Reputation Management, with Facebook as the most desired training topic.

The probability of participation in training workshops was highest for the “On Site In Person” option. The other options were rated as roughly a 50 percent probability of attending, except for “Small” organizations and those on the south coast, which rated online programs almost equally to “In Person” programs, with approximately a 70 percent probability of participating.

The comments on cost indicate that a large percentage of respondents are unprepared to pay for training; however, those who are prepared indicated that a median cost of about \$50 for a four-hour training would be acceptable. This varied across groups.

## Section 1: Results for Selected Key Metrics by Location of Business

### North Coast, Central Coast, South Coast

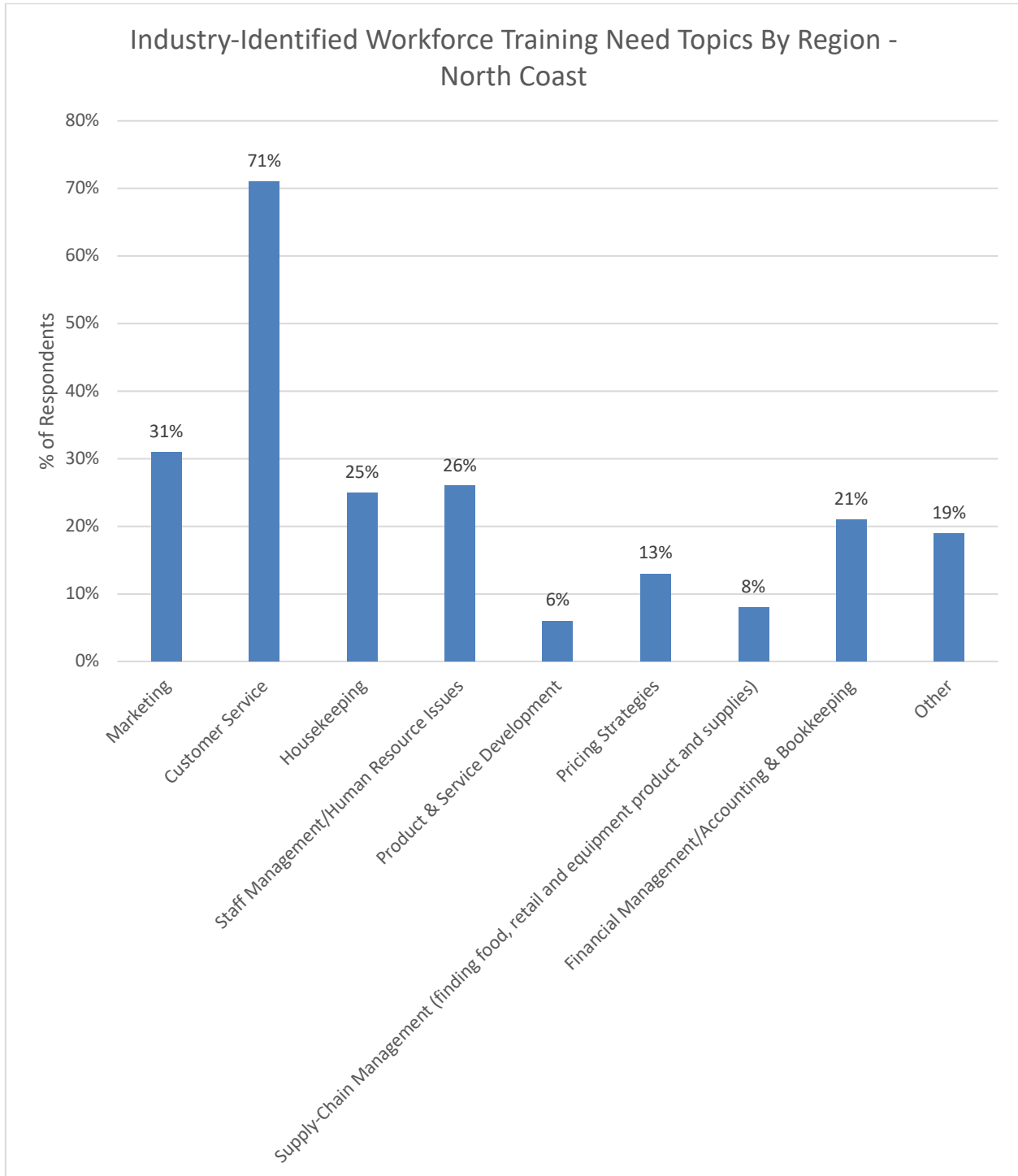
In order to address potential differences in needs for the three regions of the Oregon coast, selected key metrics were analyzed based on subgroups of respondents sorted by location as identified by reported ZIP Code. This should help in the customization of training-program offerings by region. The regions are the North Coast (from Astoria south to Neskowin), Central Coast (Lincoln City to Florence), and the South Coast (from Reedsport south to Brookings-Harbor).



(Erik Urdahl)

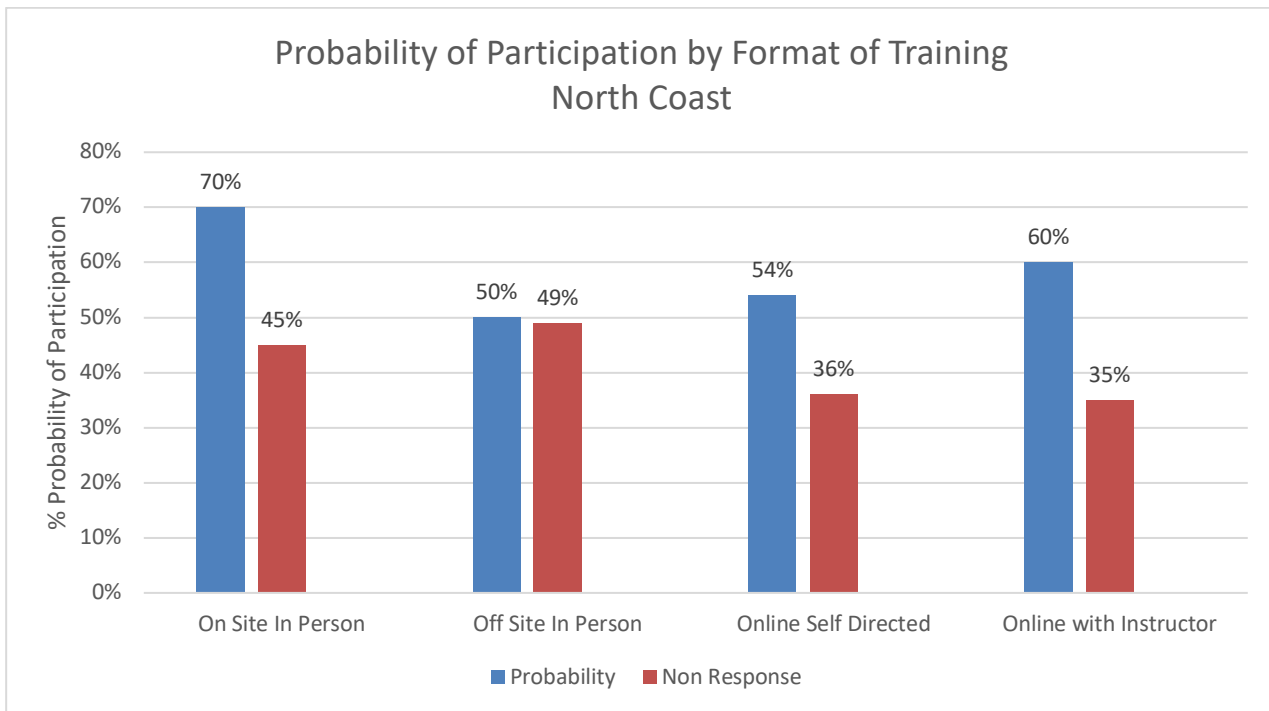
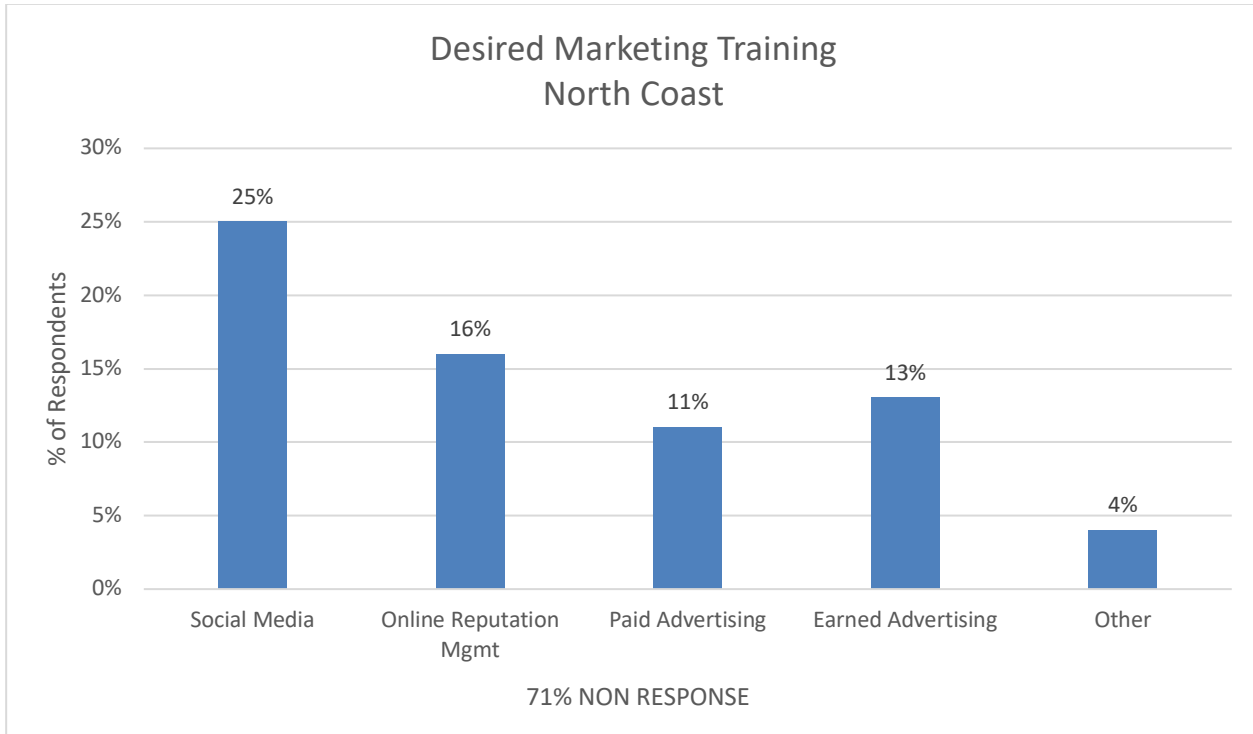
**Results for Selected Key Metrics by Location of Business** *continued*

**North Coast**



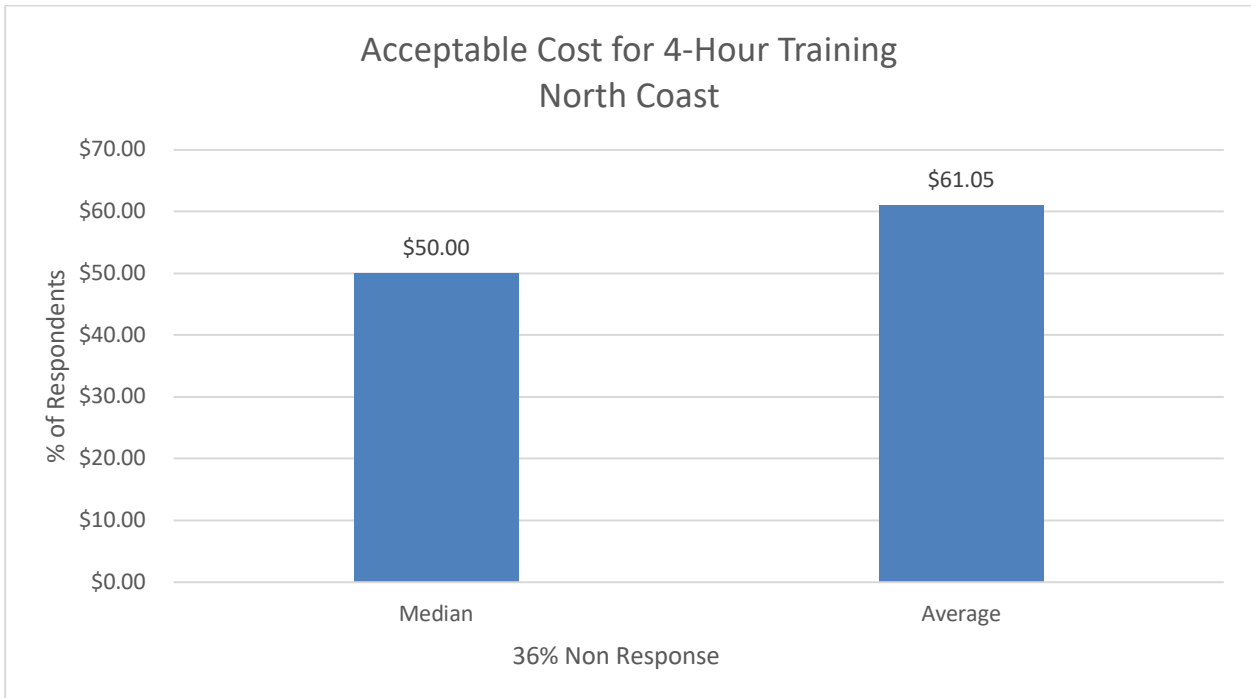
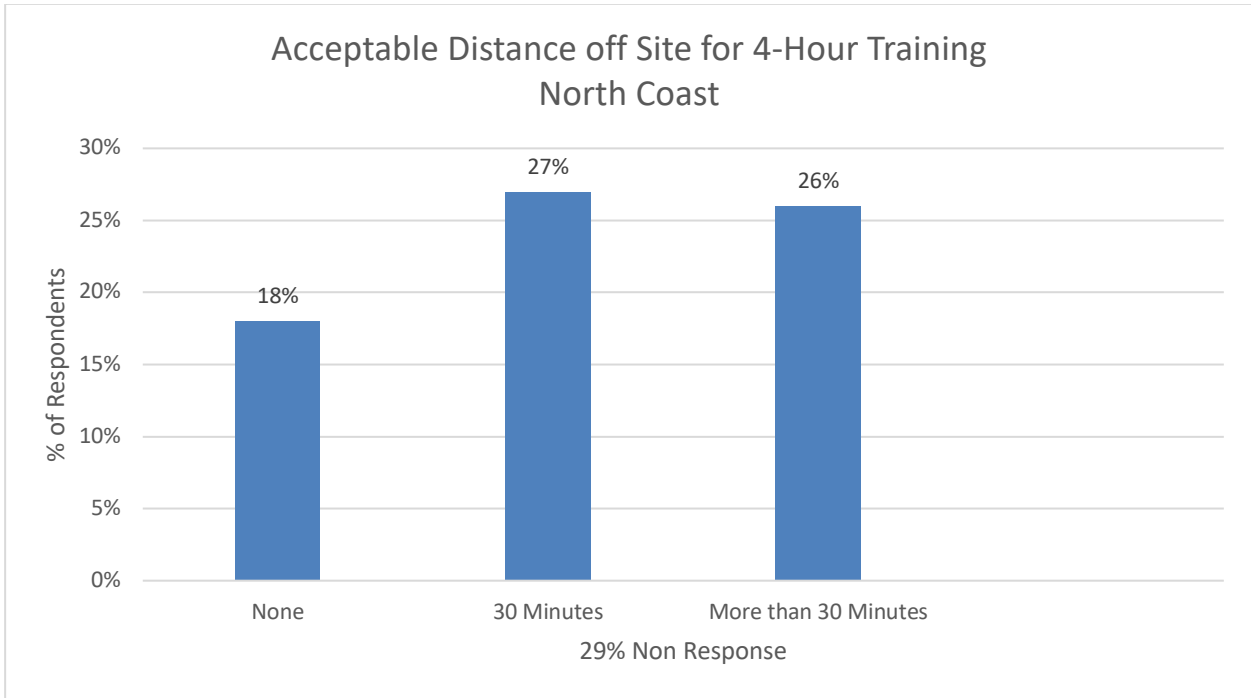
**Results for Selected Key Metrics by Location of Business** *continued*

**North Coast** *continued*



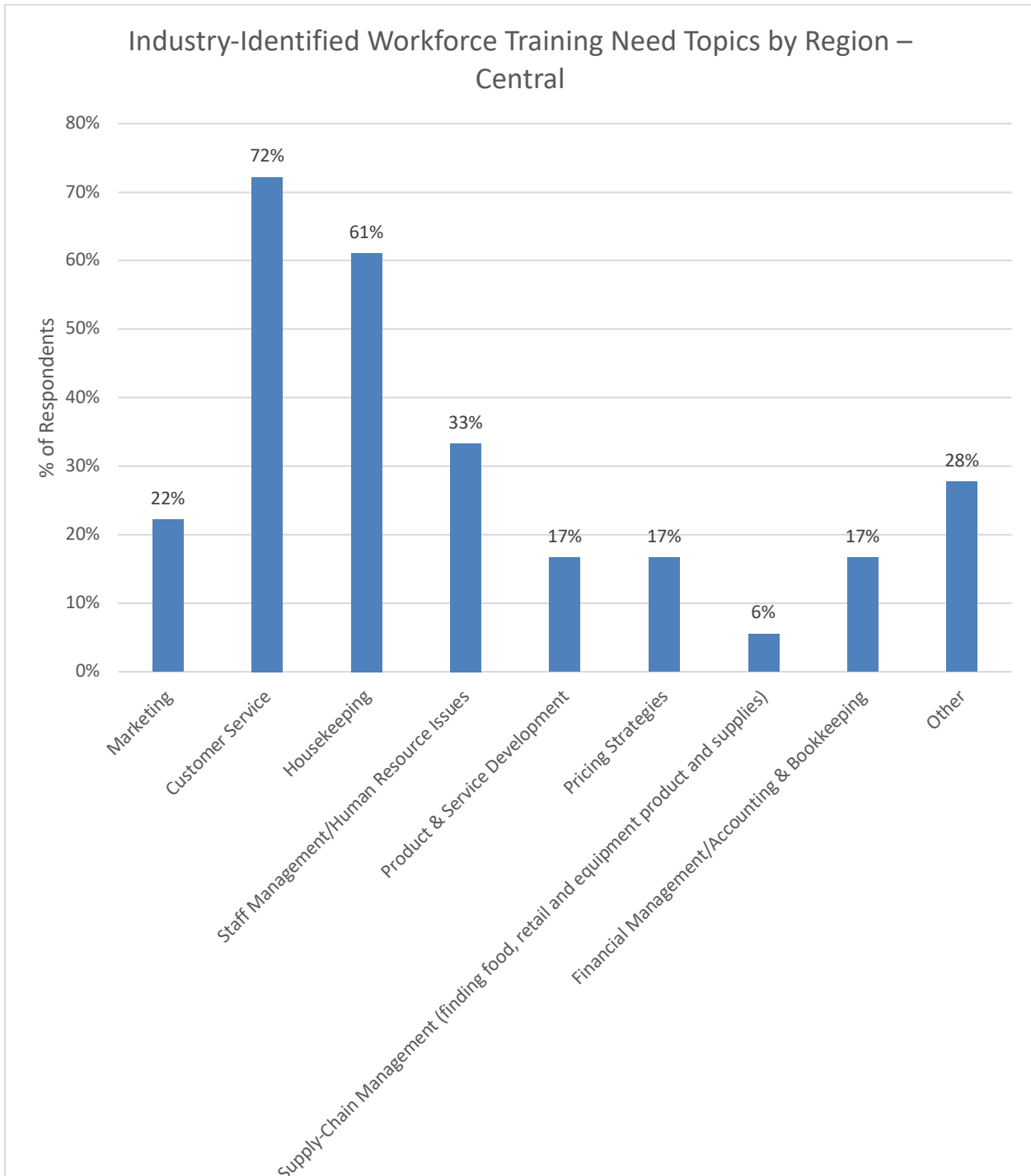
**Results for Selected Key Metrics by Location of Business** *continued*

**North Coast** *continued*



**Results for Selected Key Metrics by Location of Business** *continued*

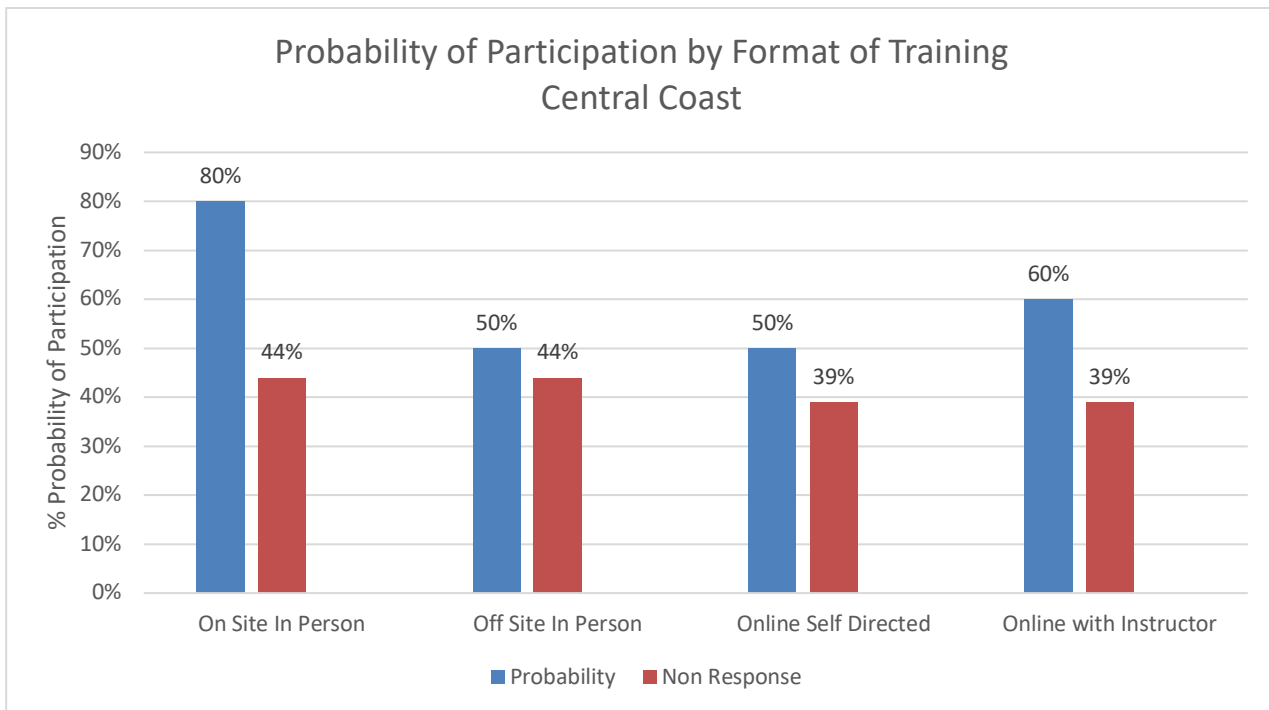
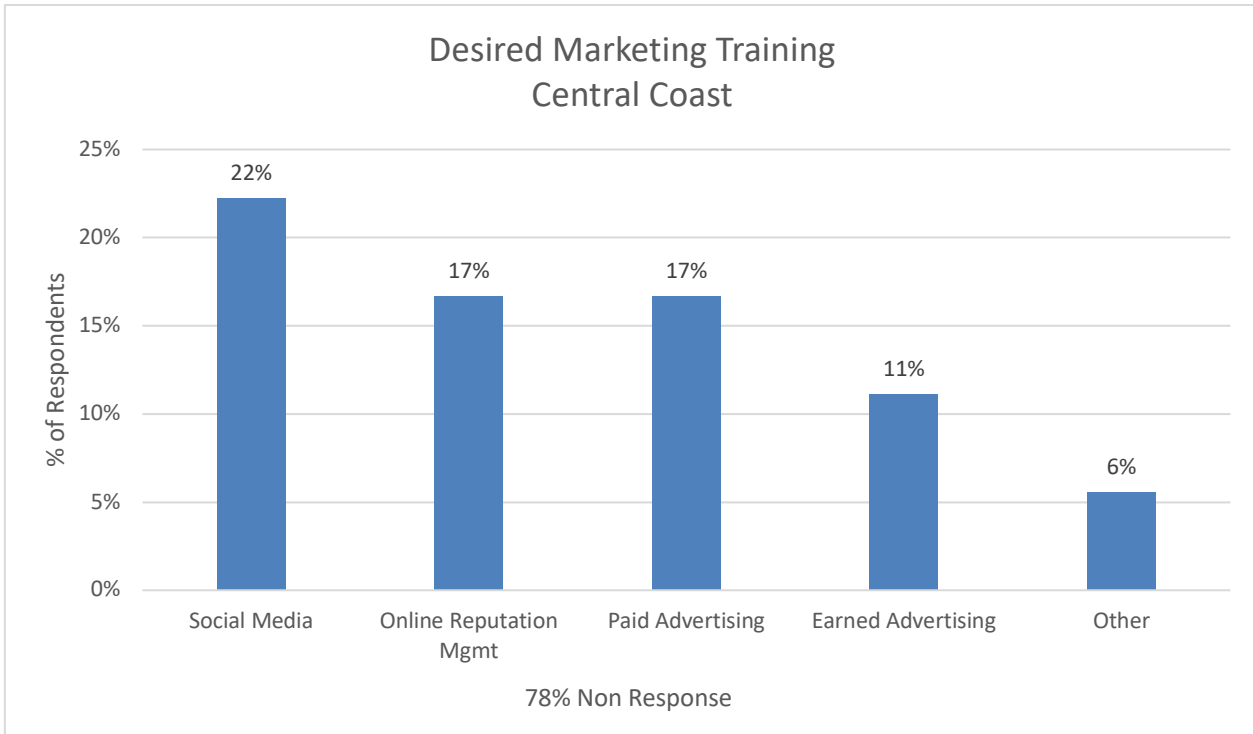
**Central Coast**





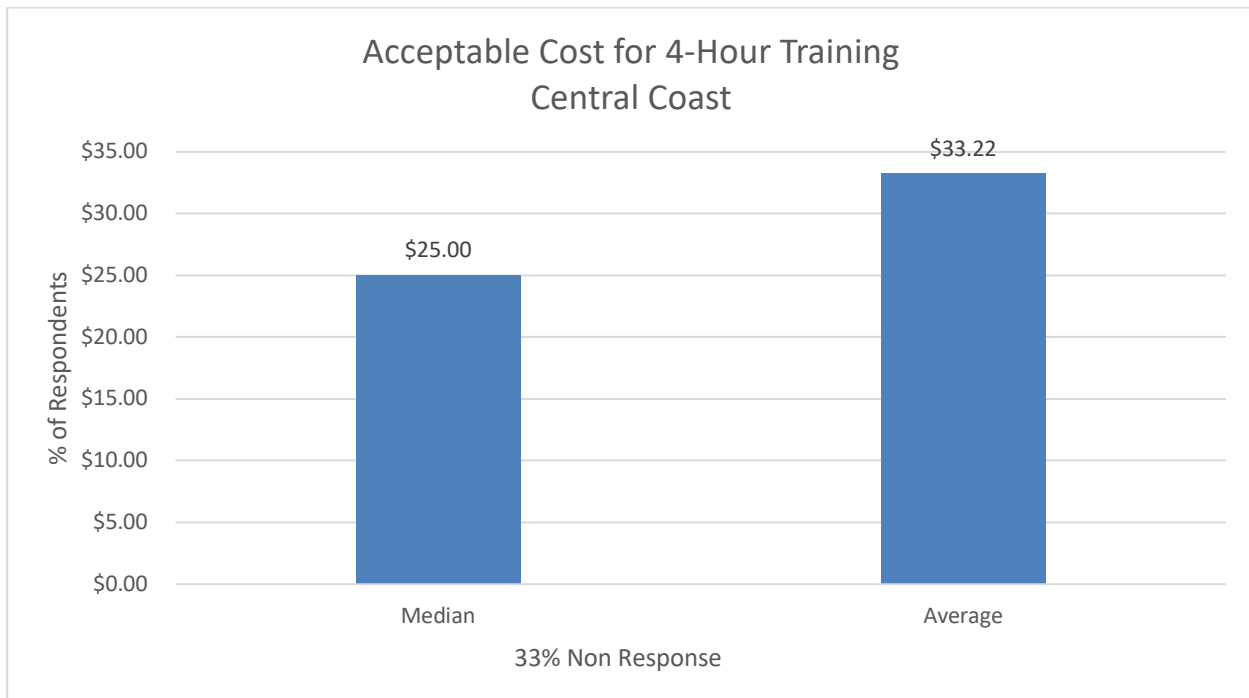
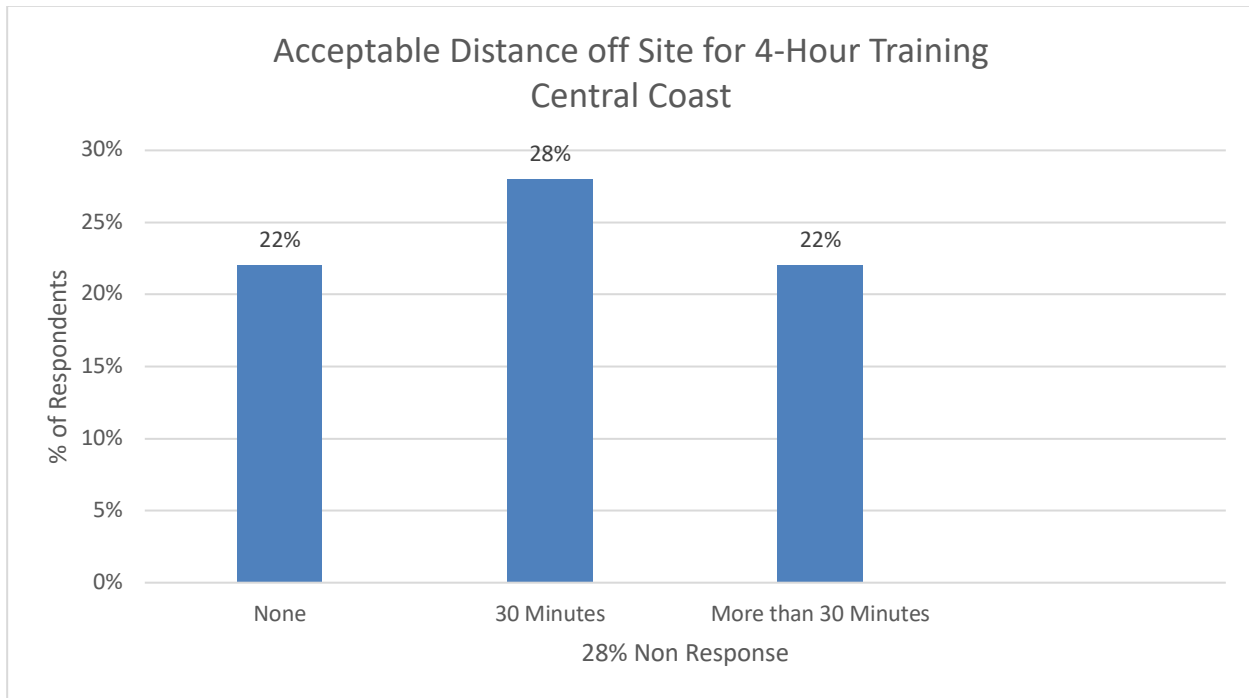
**Results for Selected Key Metrics by Location of Business** *continued*

**Central Coast** *continued*



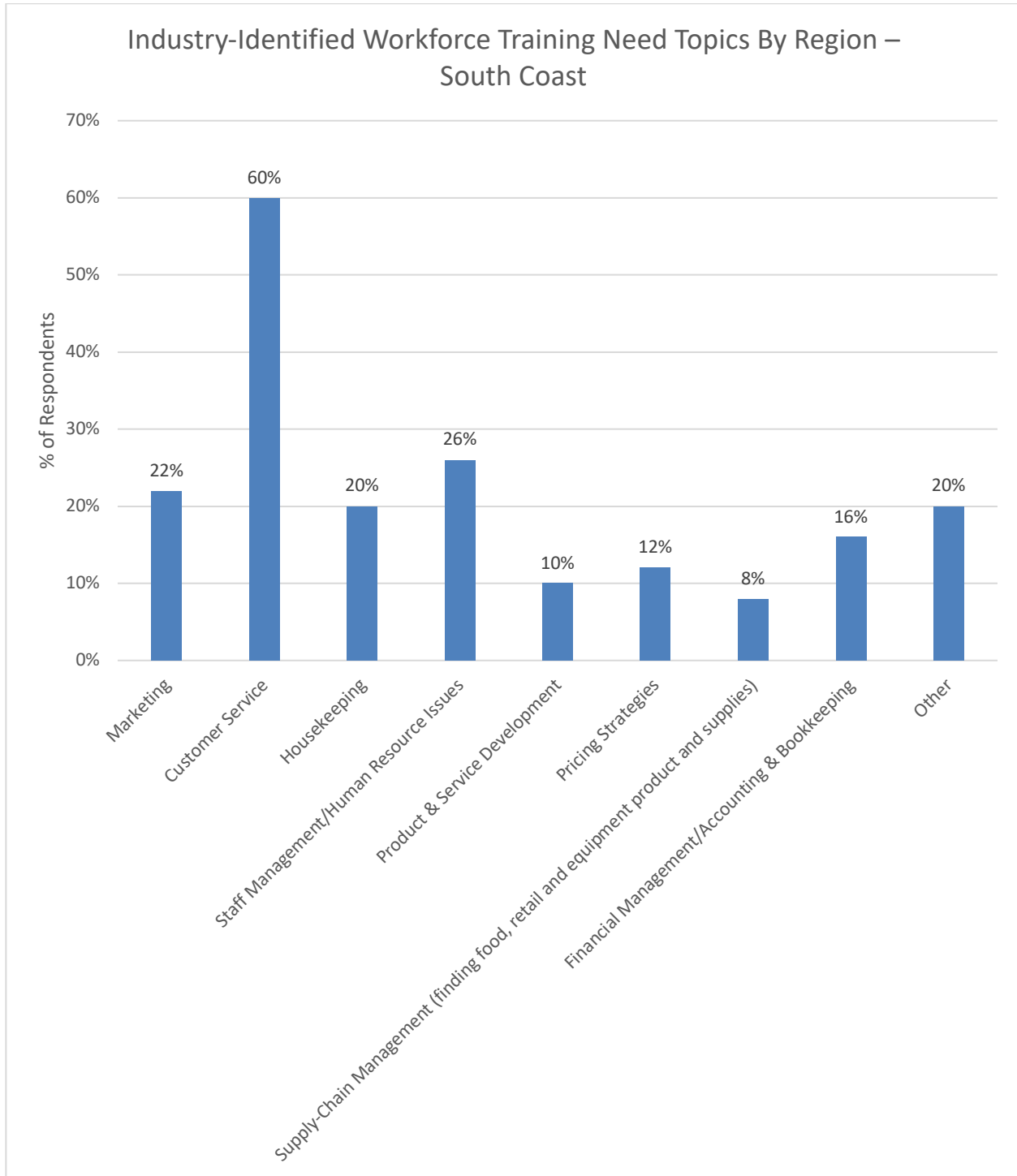
**Results for Selected Key Metrics by Location of Business** *continued*

**Central Coast** *continued*



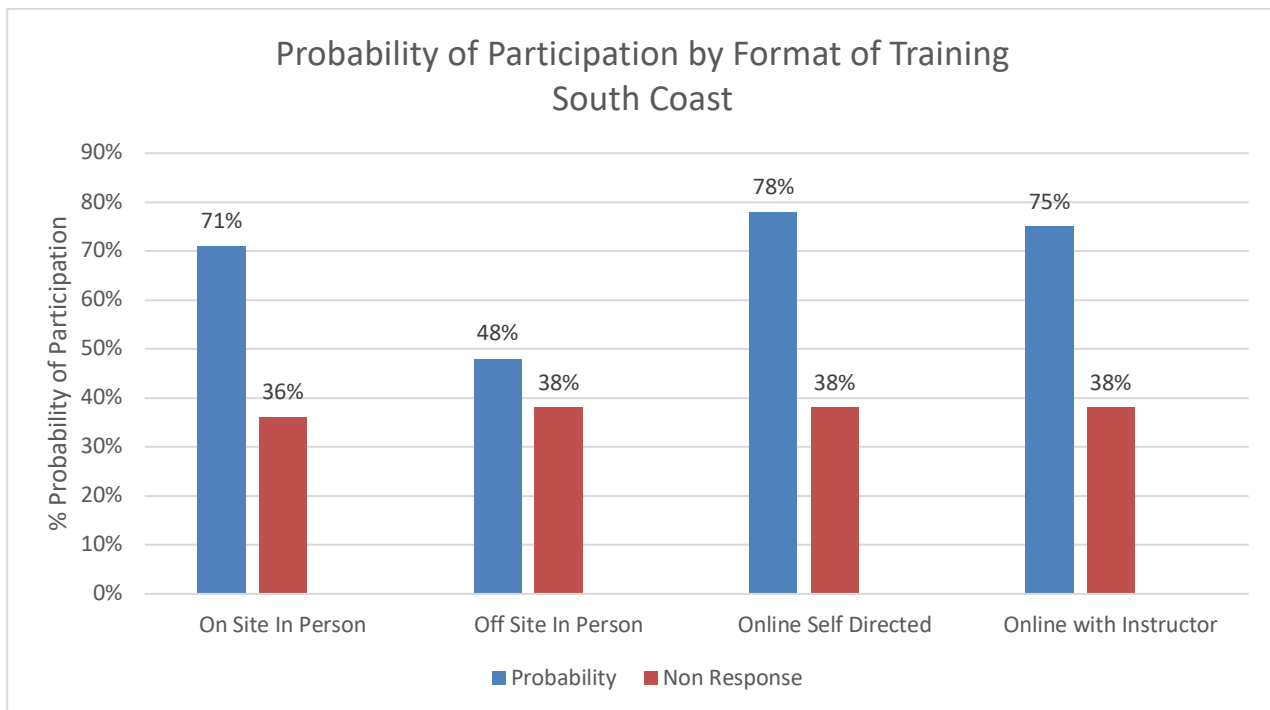
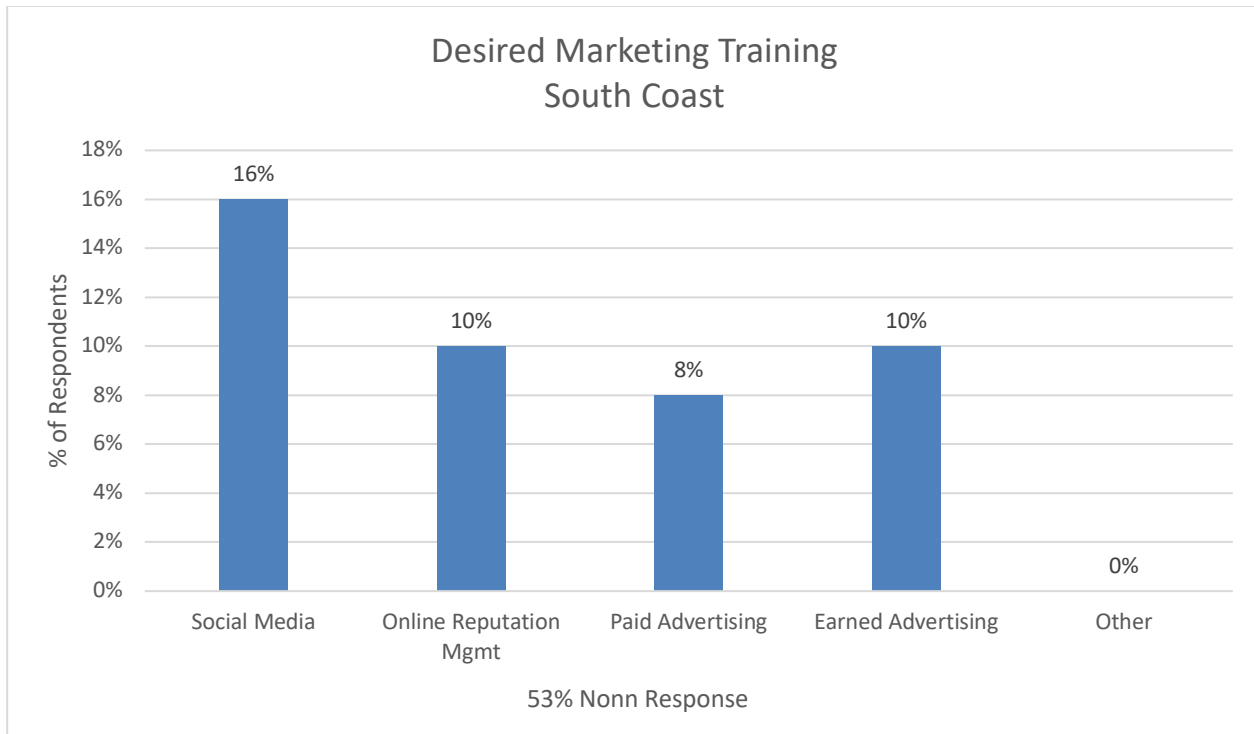
**Results for Selected Key Metrics by Location of Business** *continued*

**South Coast**



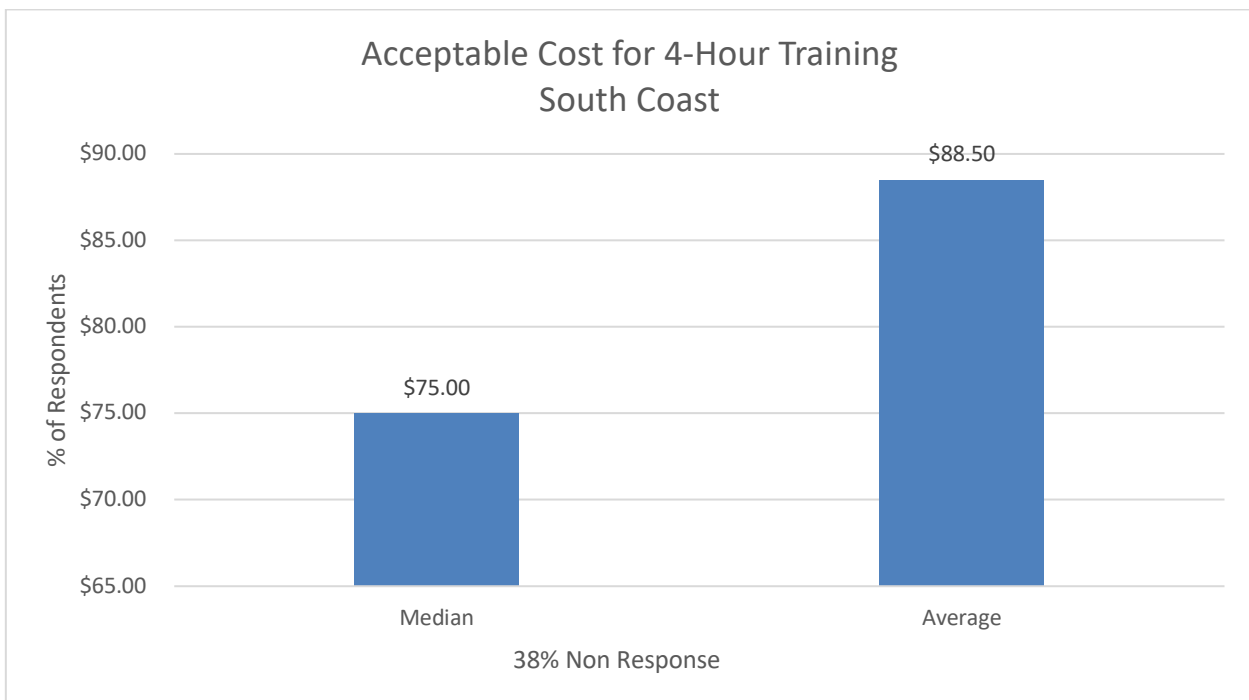
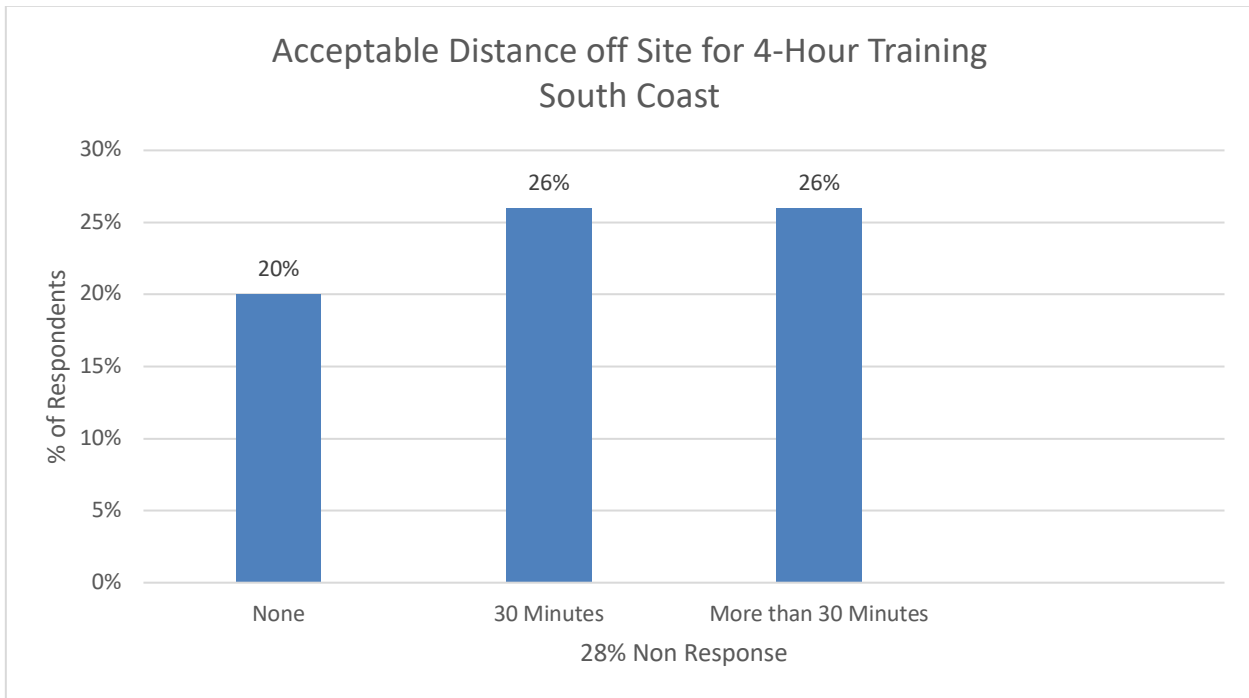
**Results for Selected Key Metrics by Location of Business** *continued*

**South Coast** *continued*



**Results for Selected Key Metrics by Location of Business** *continued*

**South Coast** *continued*



## Section 2: Analysis of Responses by Number of Employees (Size)

### Results for Selected Key Metrics by Number of Company Employees (Large, 100+; Medium, 21–99; Small, 1–20)

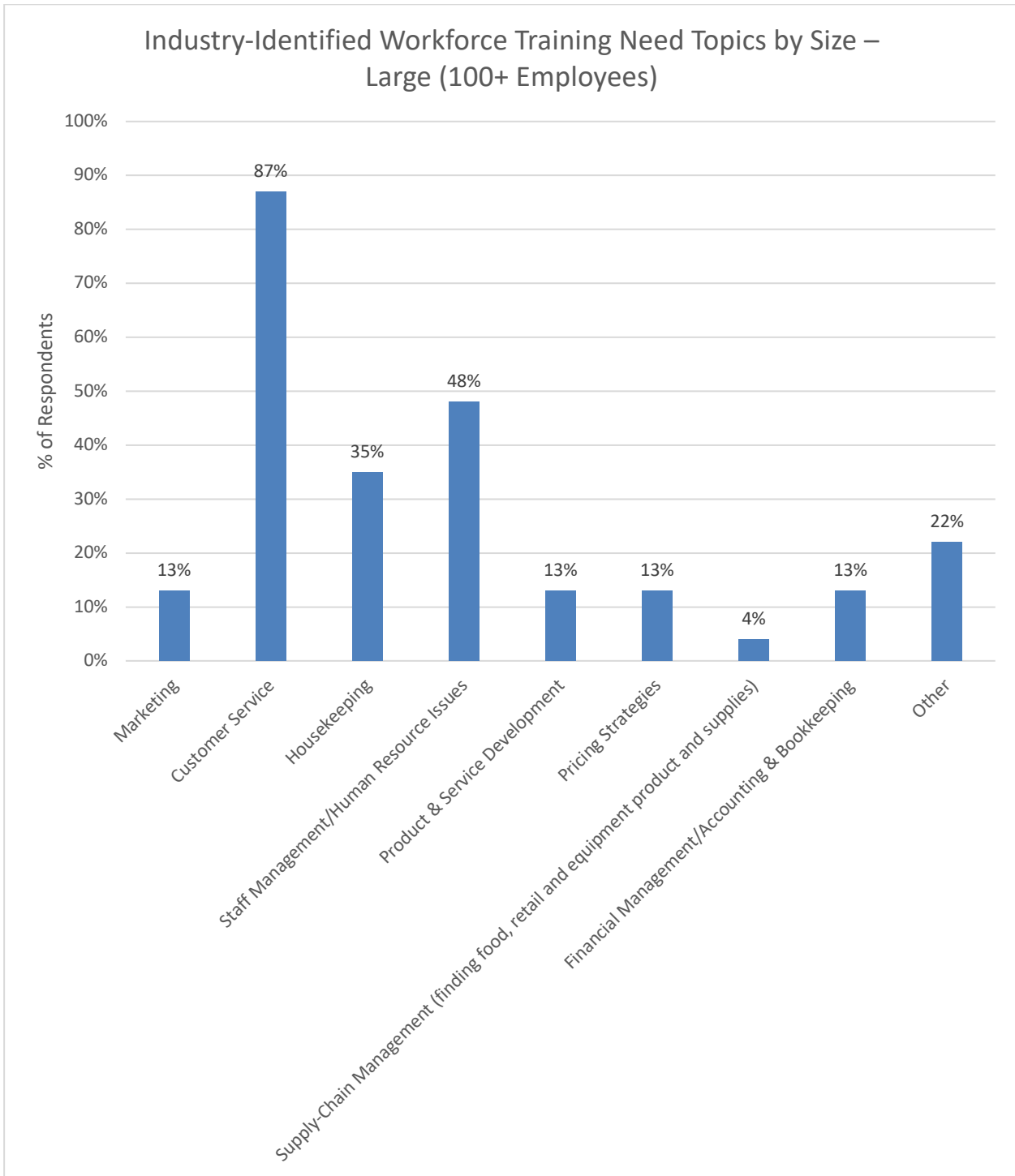
In order to address potential differences in needs for different-sized companies along the Oregon coast, selected key metrics were analyzed based on subgroups of respondents sorted by the number of reported employees in peak season. This should help in the customization of training-program offerings by company size. The size classifications used were Large = 100+, Medium = 21–99, Small = 1–20 employees.



(Erik Urdahl)

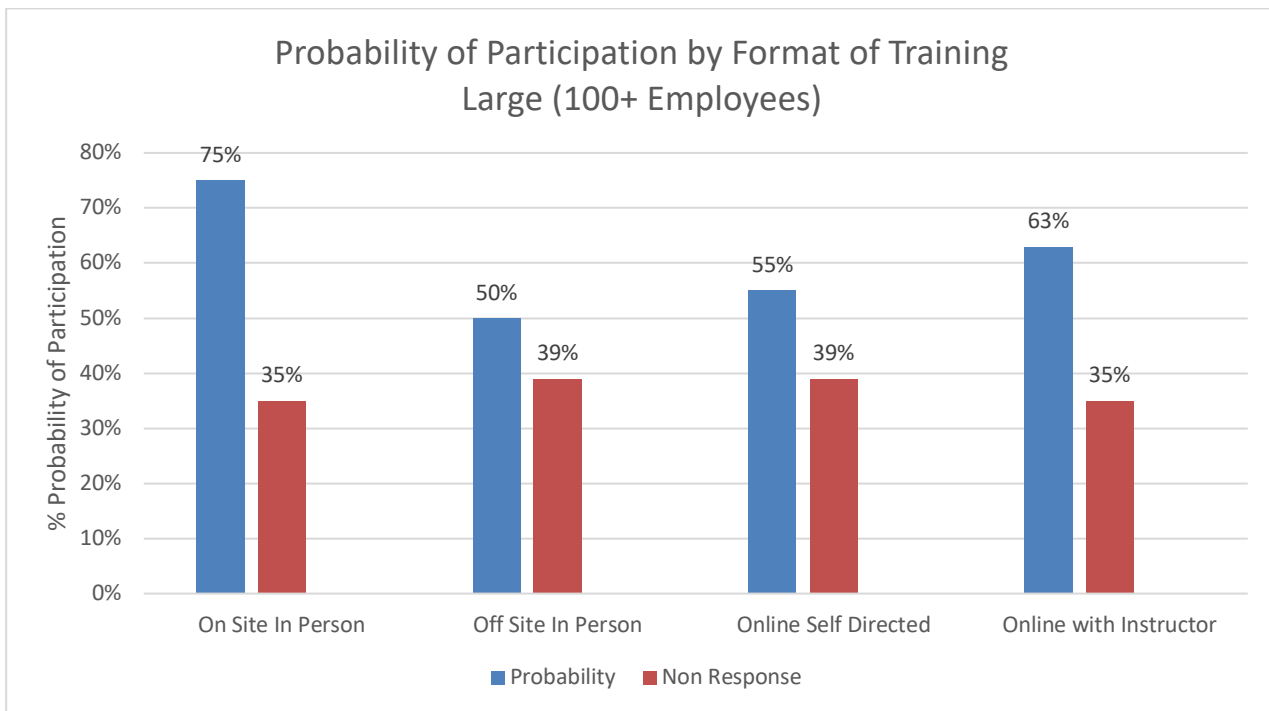
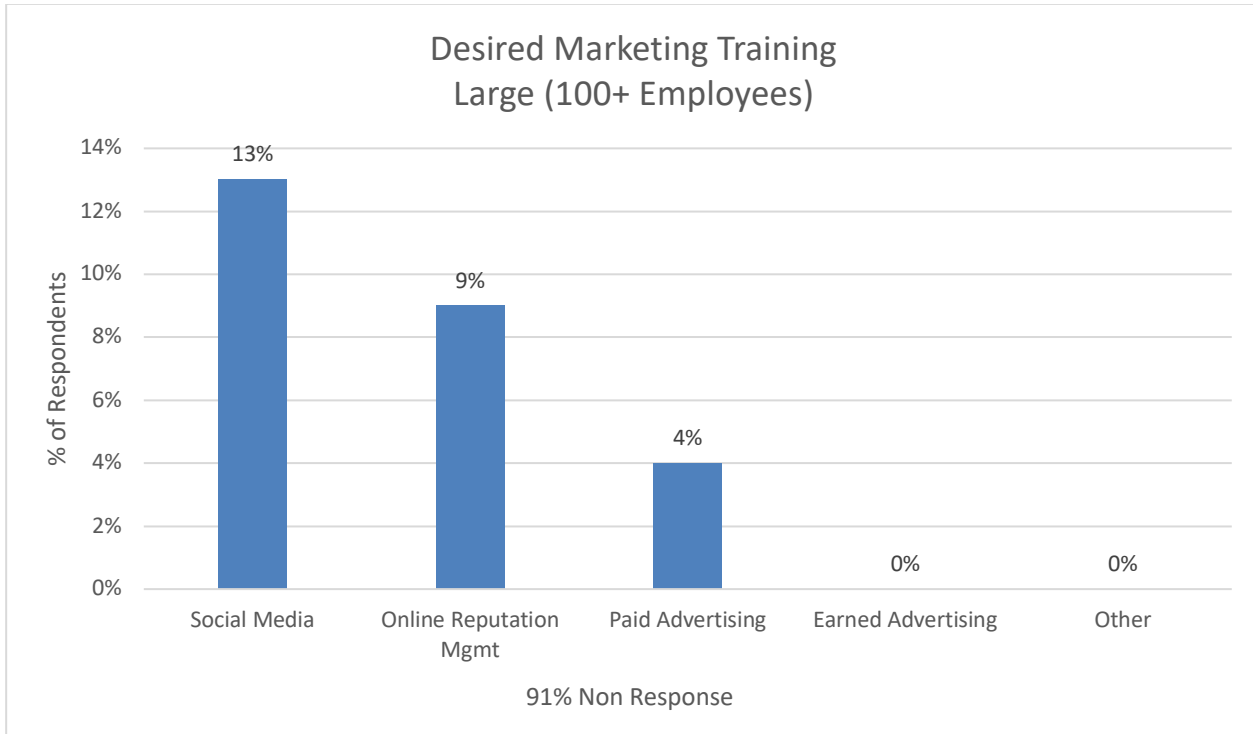
**Results for Selected Key Metrics by Number of Company Employees** *continued*

**Large (100+ Employees)**



**Results for Selected Key Metrics by Number of Company Employees** *continued*

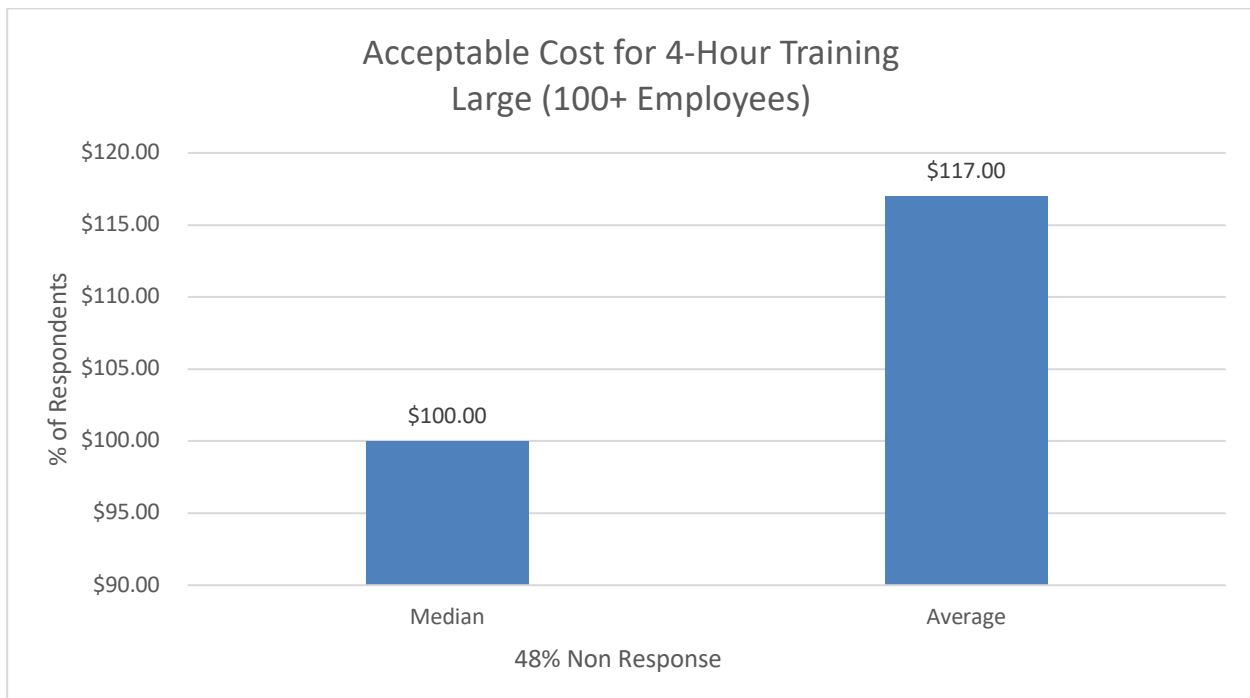
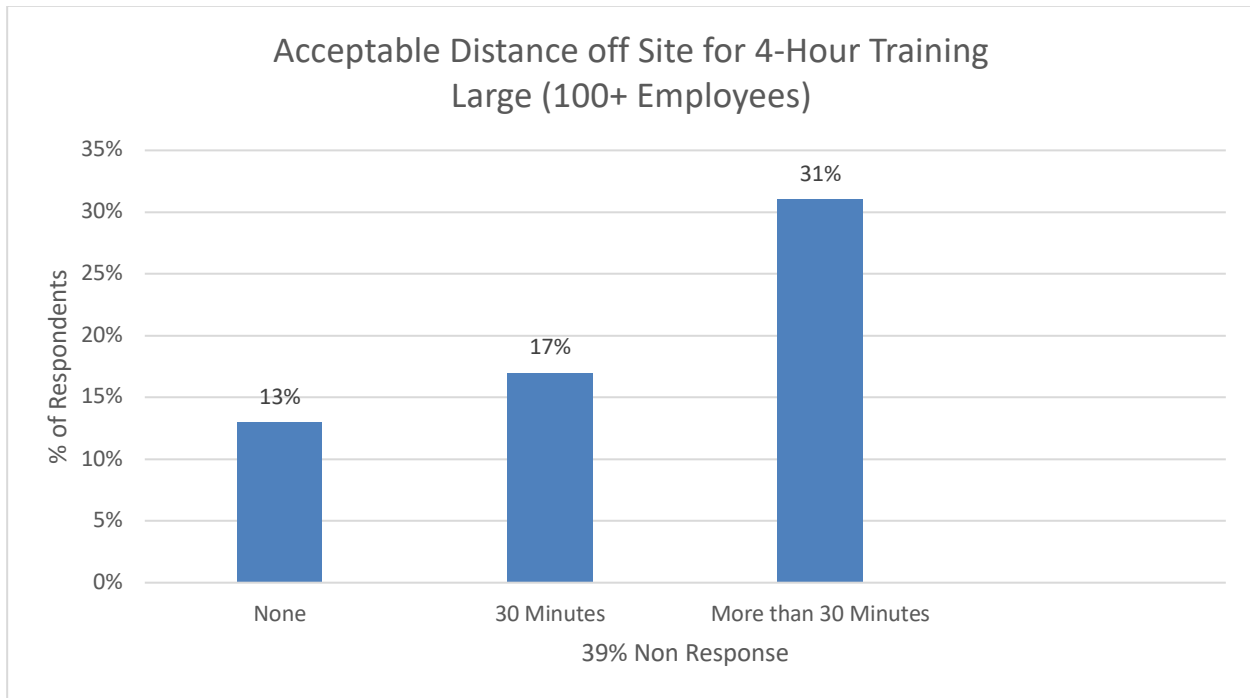
**Large (100+ Employees)** *continued*





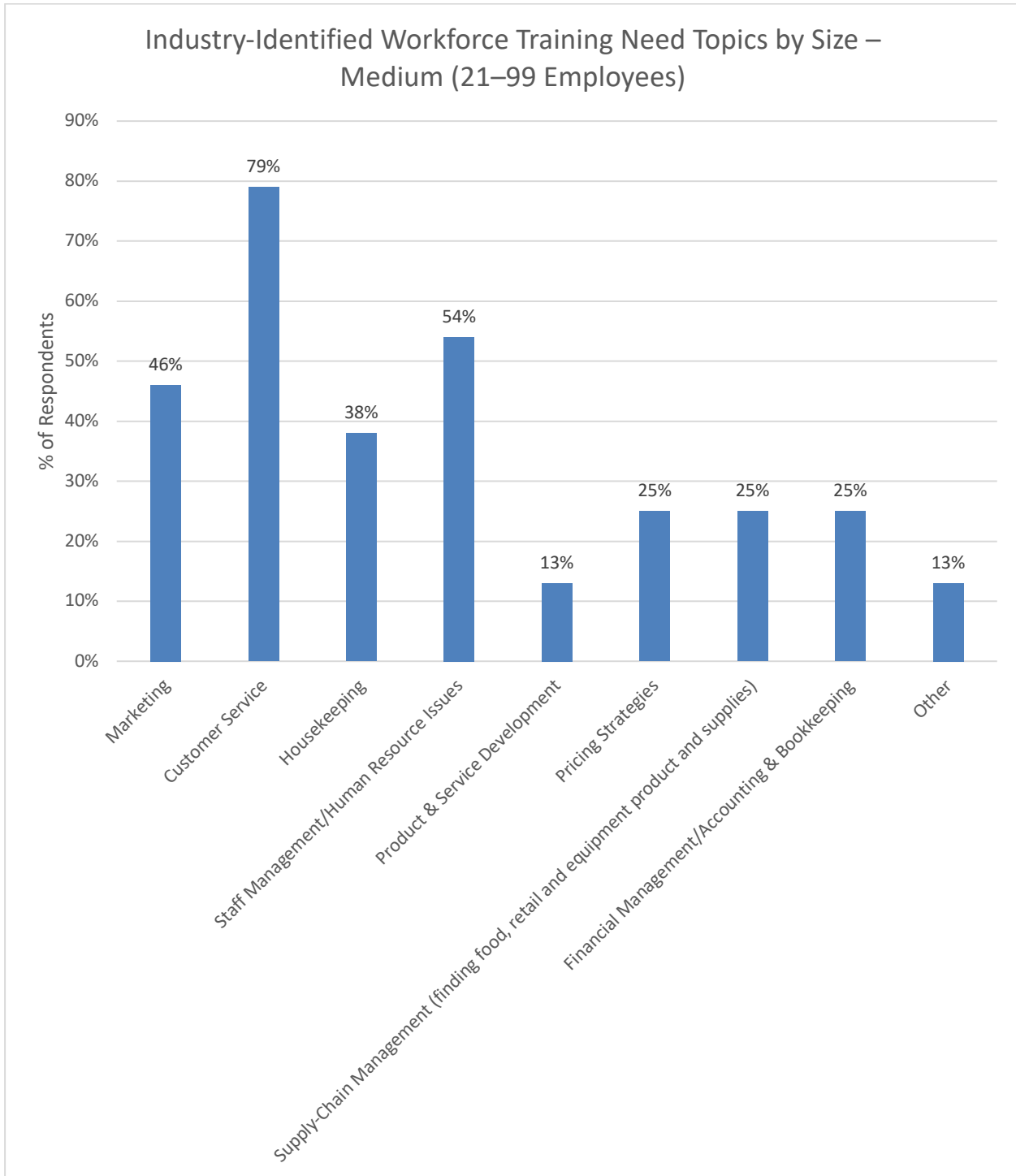
## Results for Selected Key Metrics by Number of Company Employees *continued*

### Large (100+ Employees) *continued*



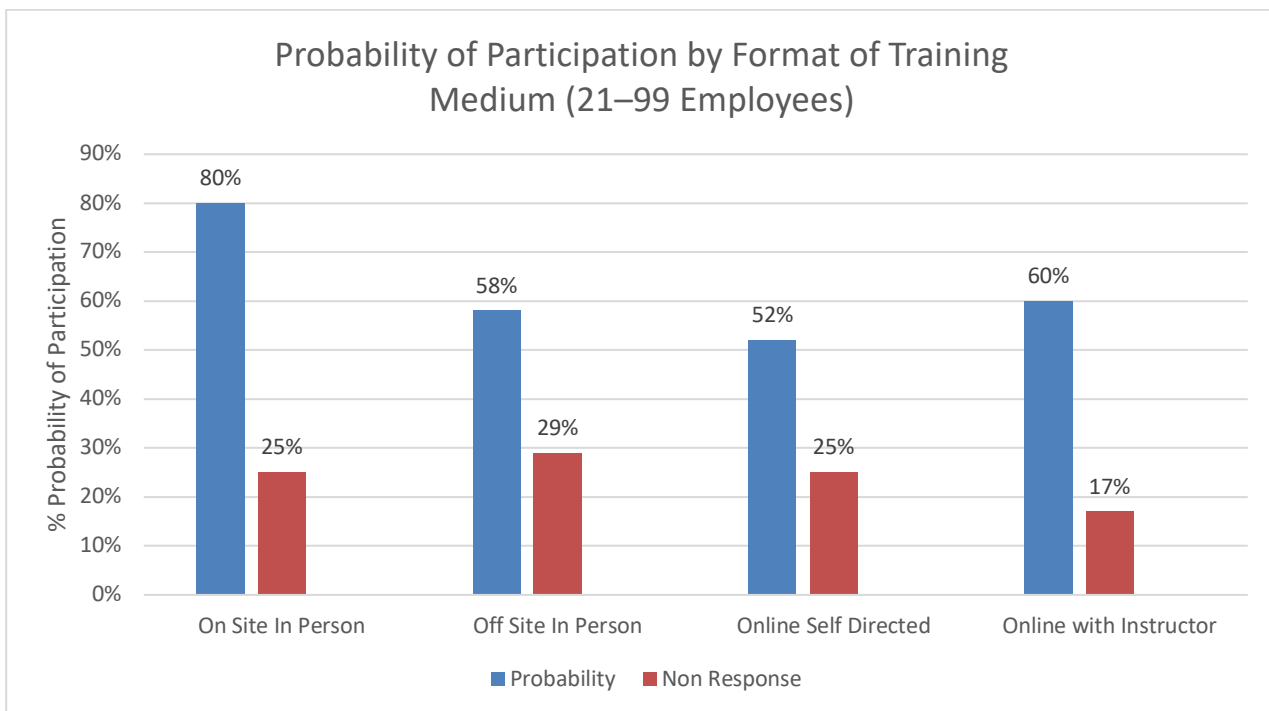
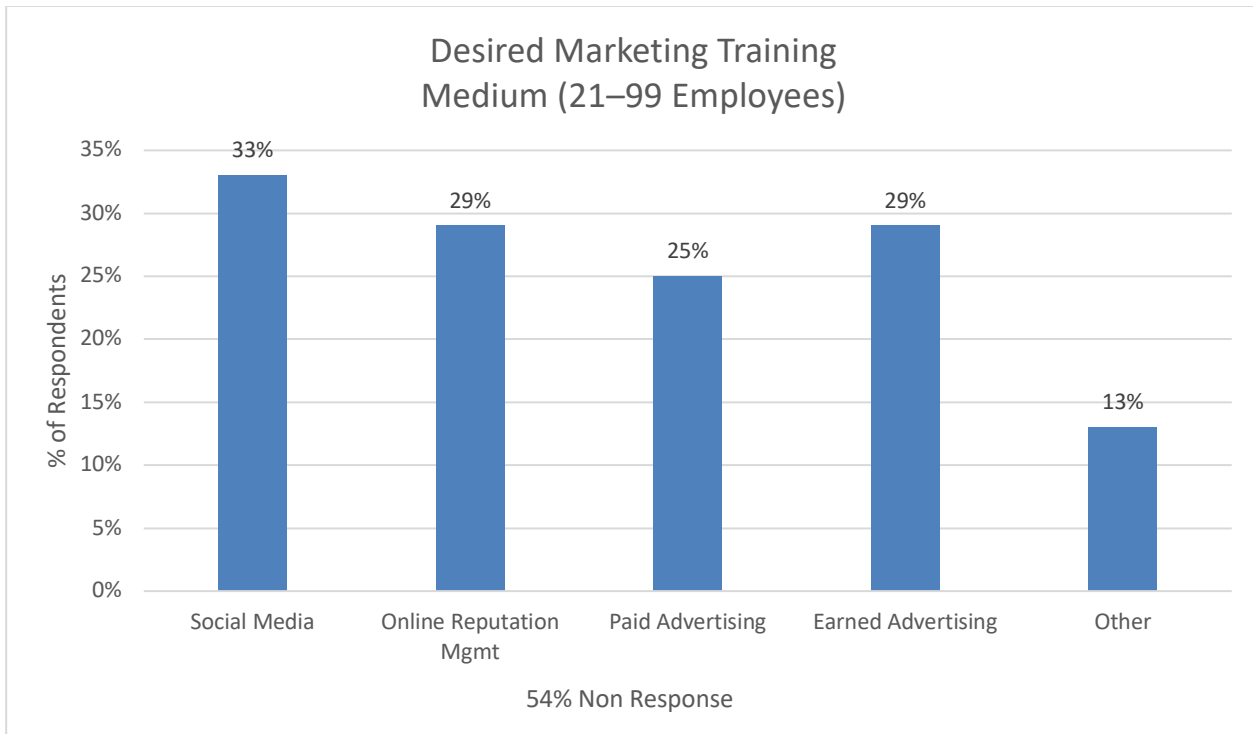
**Results for Selected Key Metrics by Number of Company Employees** *continued*

**Medium (21–99 Employees)**



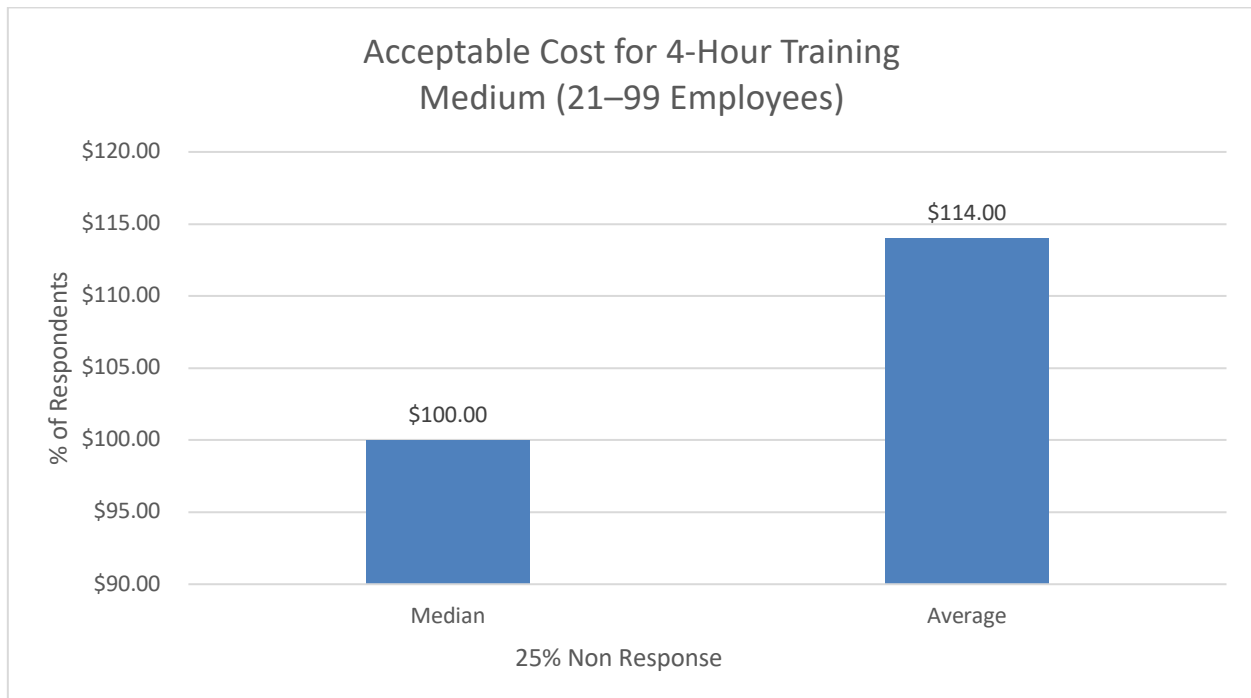
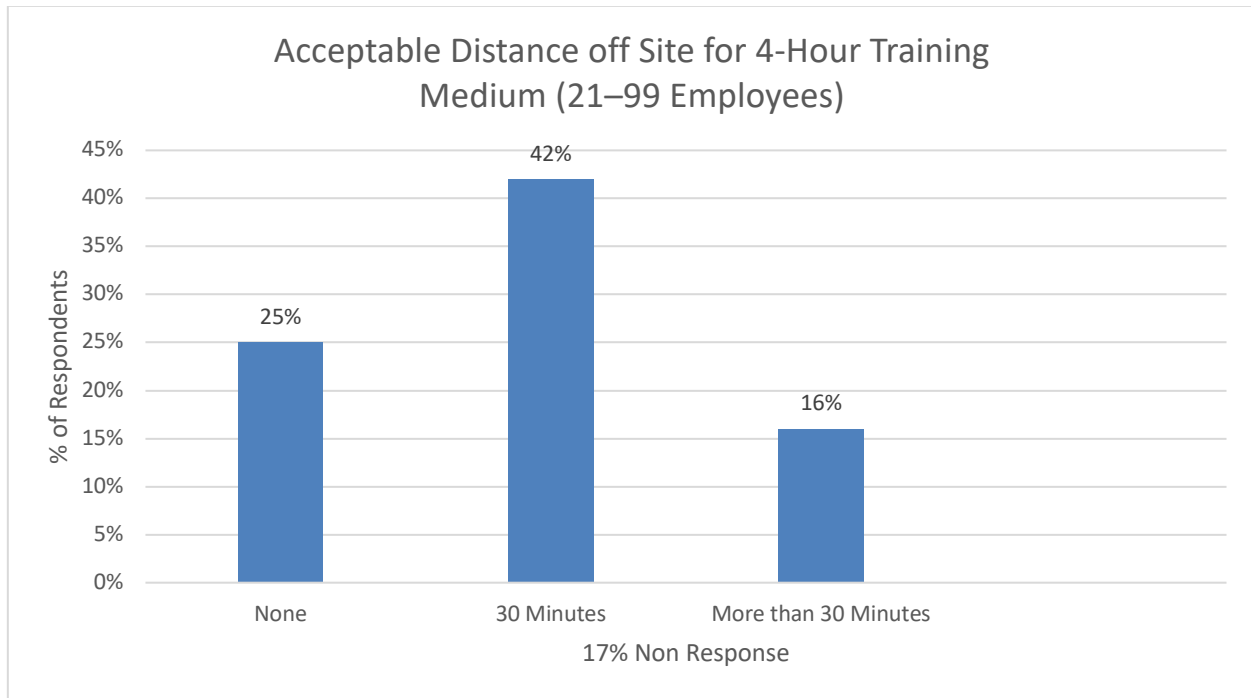
**Results for Selected Key Metrics by Number of Company Employees** *continued*

**Medium (21–99 Employees)** *continued*



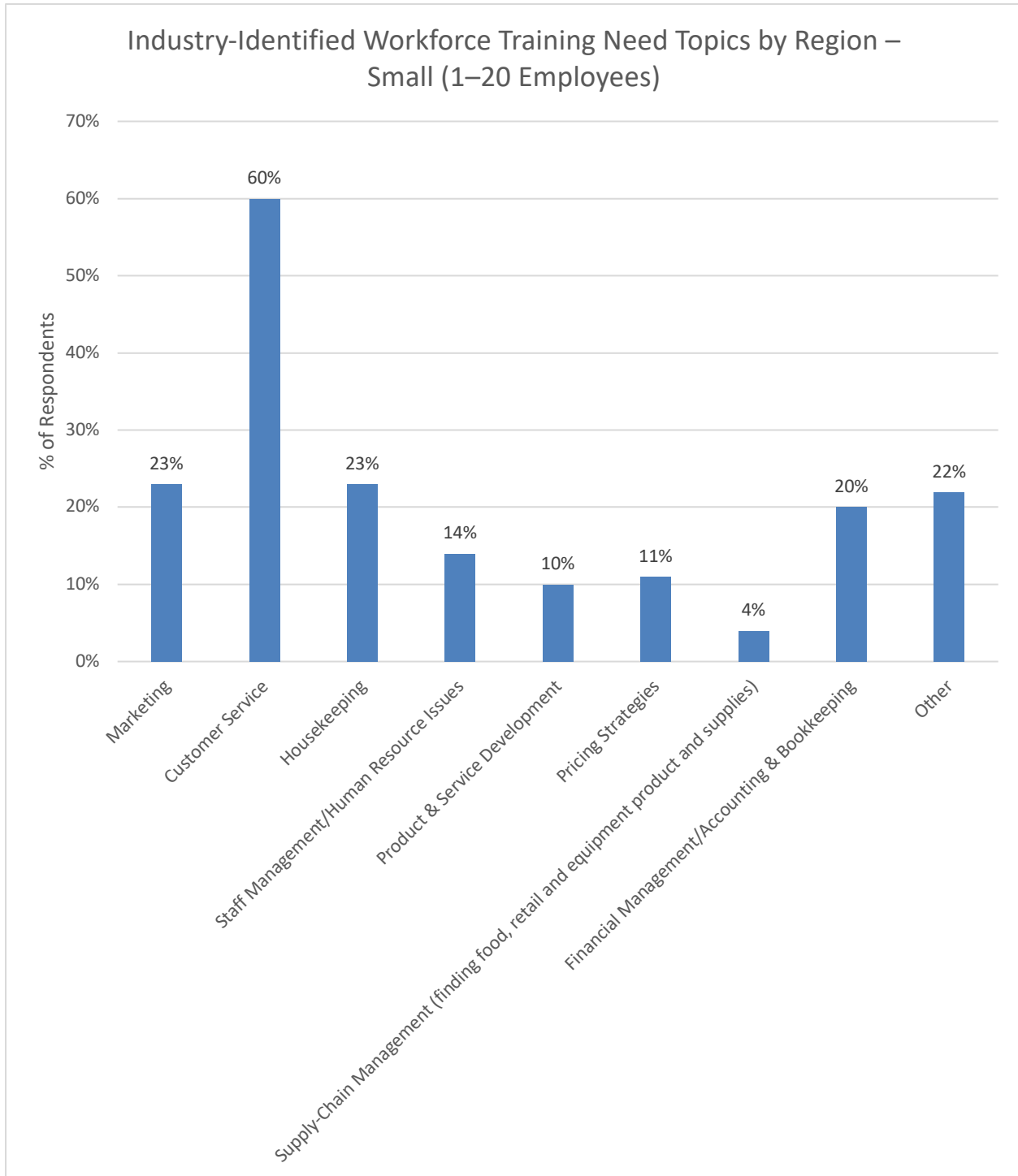
**Results for Selected Key Metrics by Number of Company Employees** *continued*

**Medium (21–99 Employees)** *continued*



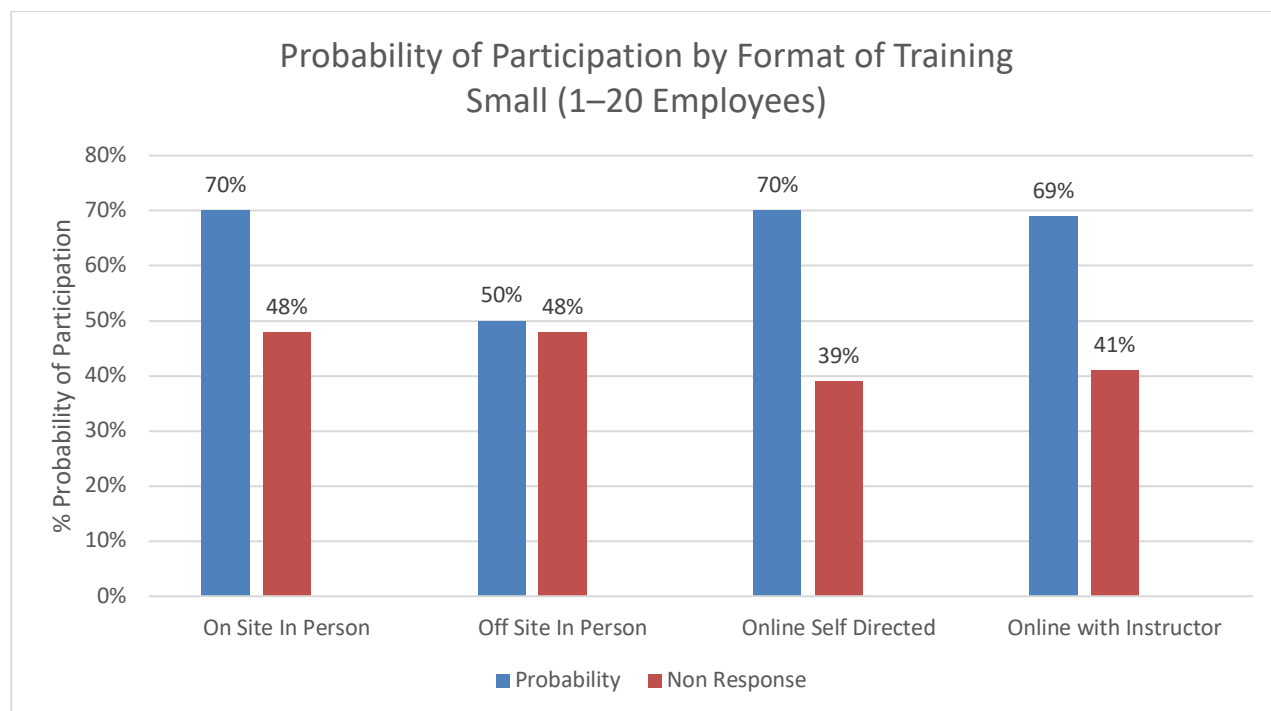
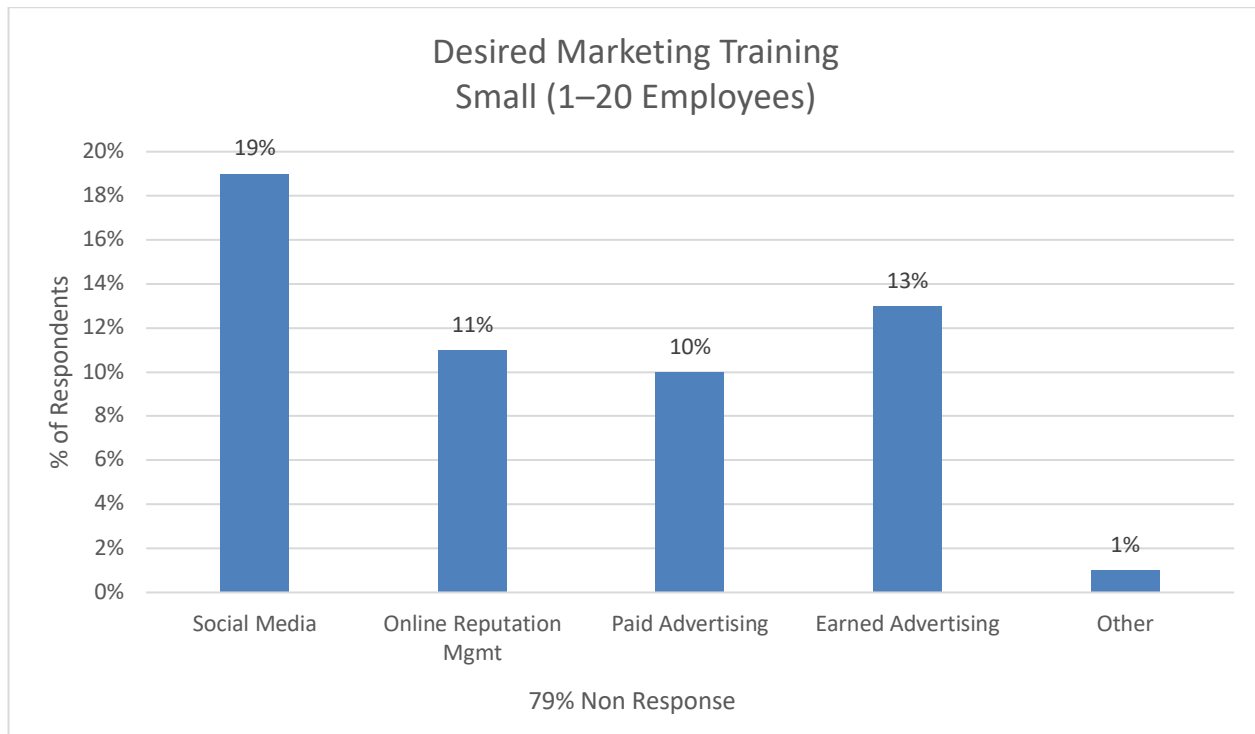
**Results for Selected Key Metrics by Number of Company Employees** *continued*

**Small (1–20 Employees)**



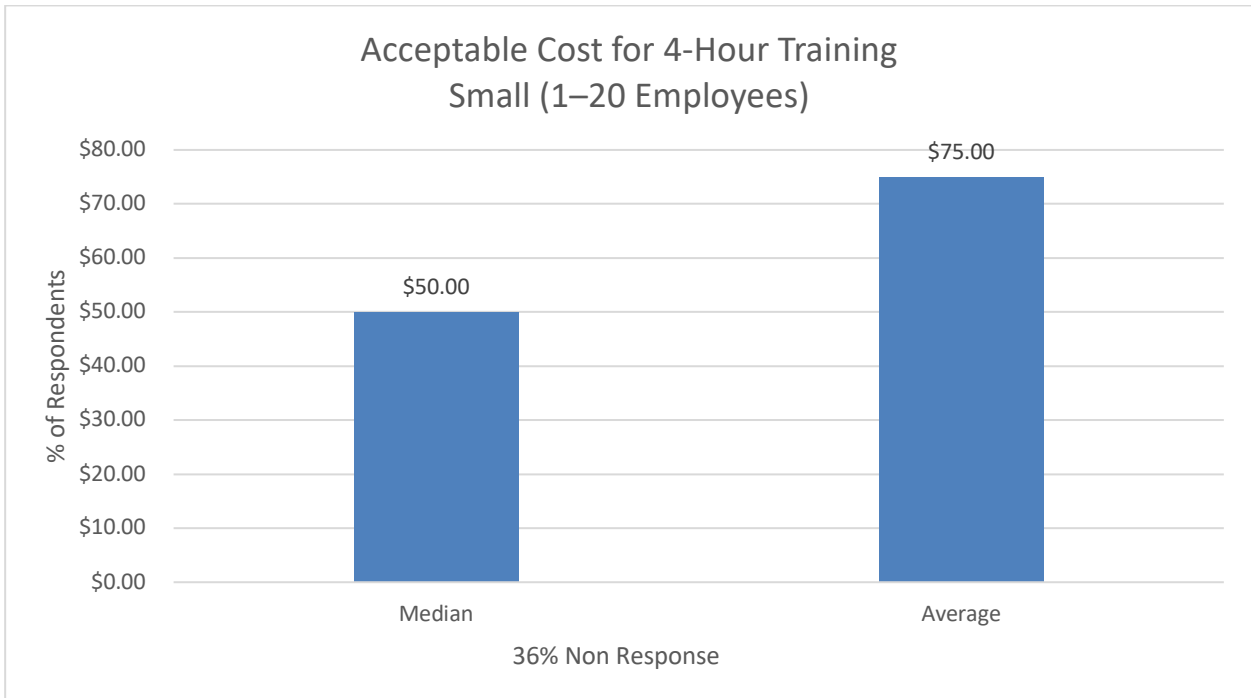
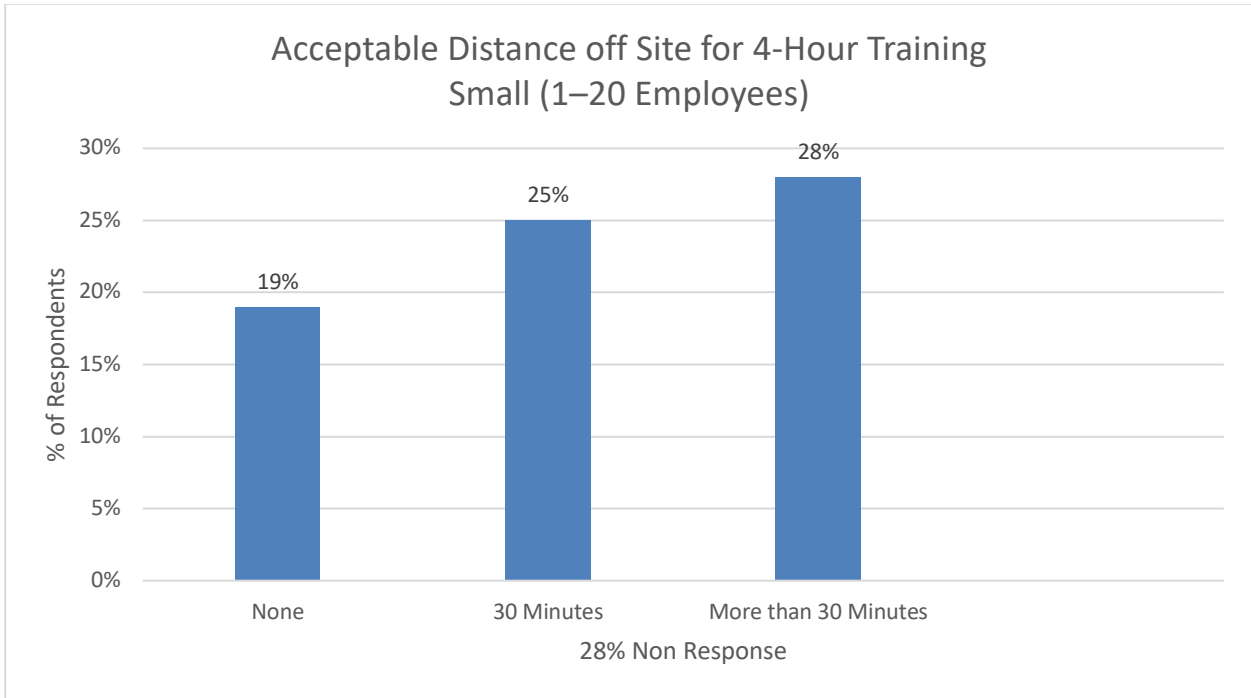
**Results for Selected Key Metrics by Number of Company Employees** *continued*

**Small (1–20 Employees)** *continued*



**Results for Selected Key Metrics by Number of Company Employees** *continued*

**Small (1–20 Employees)** *continued*

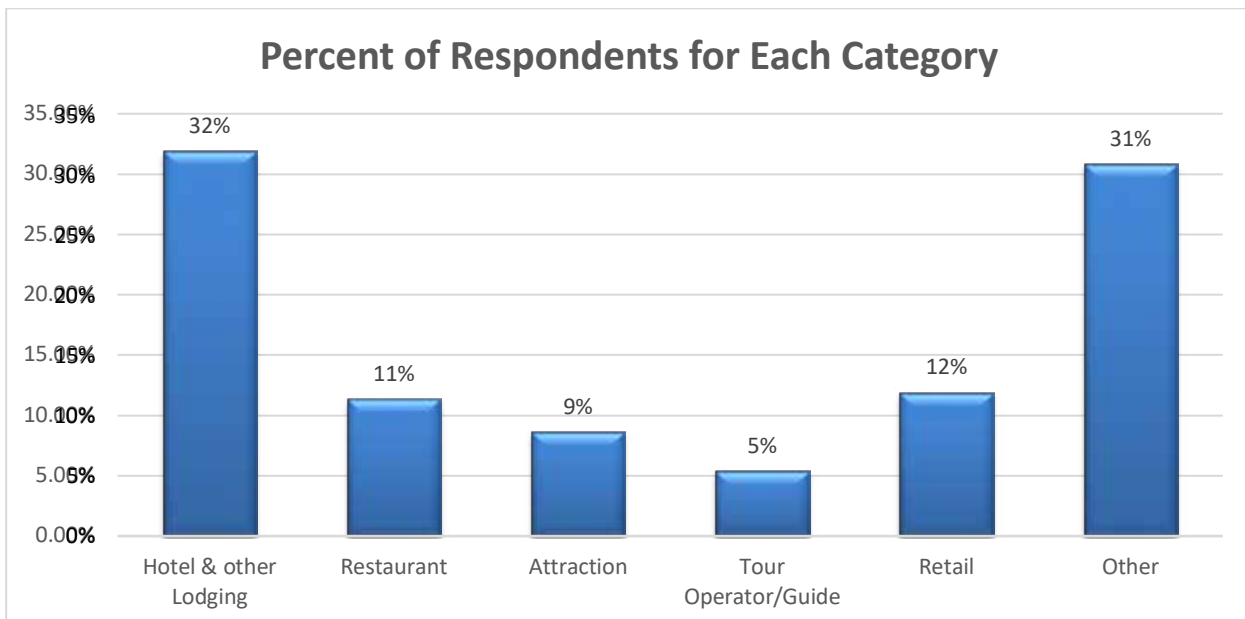


## Section 3: Overall Combined Results for Visitor Industry Organizations along the Entire Oregon Coast



(Steve Dimock)

The types of businesses participating in this assessment were primarily Hotel and Other Lodging. Among the responses in “Other” were municipalities, non-profit organizations, educational organizations, government agencies, and new media.



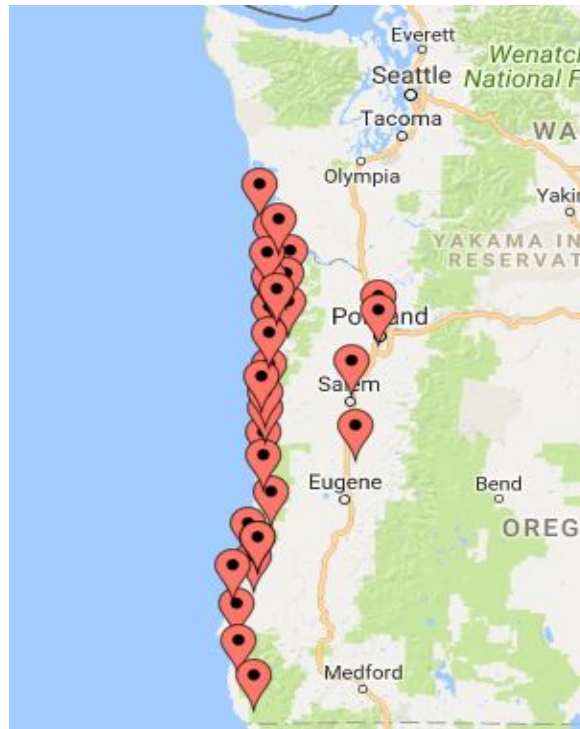


**Overall Combined Results** *continued*

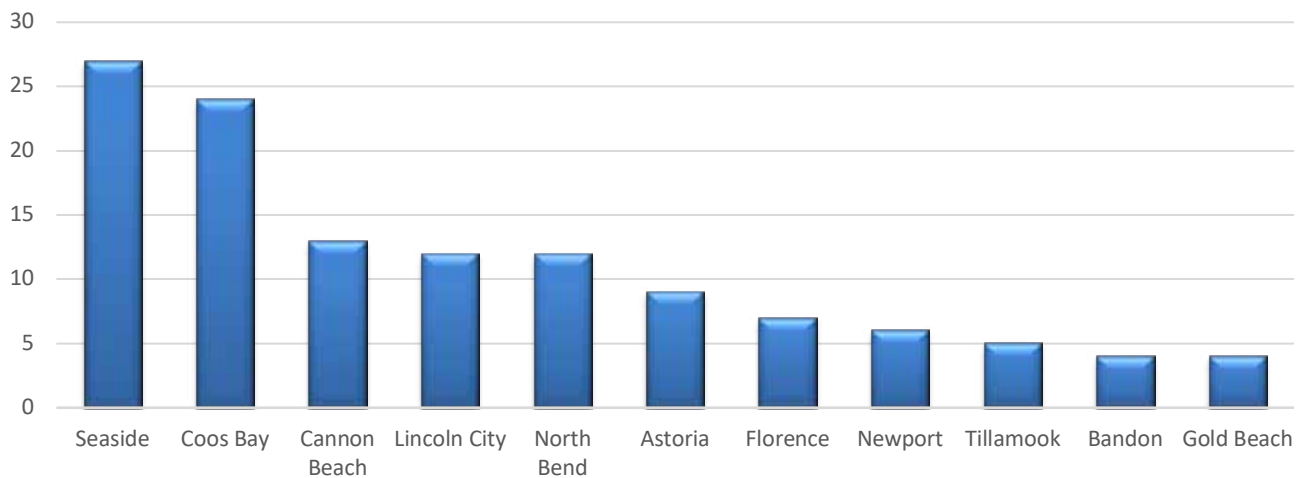
The location of respondent businesses was diverse along the entire coast. The communities with the most respondents are presented below.

Result = 32 Different ZIP Codes for Reporting Businesses – Duplicates were removed from list of 156 entries. The 10 most frequent response location town names are shown (11 are actually shown due to a tie). The map below shows all reported ZIP Code locations.

What is your zip code (for your business)	Number of Entries	Town
97138	27	Seaside
97420	24	Coos Bay
97110	13	Cannon Beach
97367	12	Lincoln City
97459	12	North Bend
97103	9	Astoria
97439	7	Florence
97365	6	Newport
97141	5	Tillamook
97411	4	Bandon
97444	4	Gold Beach



**Responses by Community Area**



## Overall Combined Results continued

### Indication of industry-identified workforce training need topics

“Other” responses were primarily that they do the training themselves, or that there is a general need for quality work habits. “Improved writing skills” was also mentioned at least twice. Some comments were not related directly to tourism, e.g., automotive repair skills.

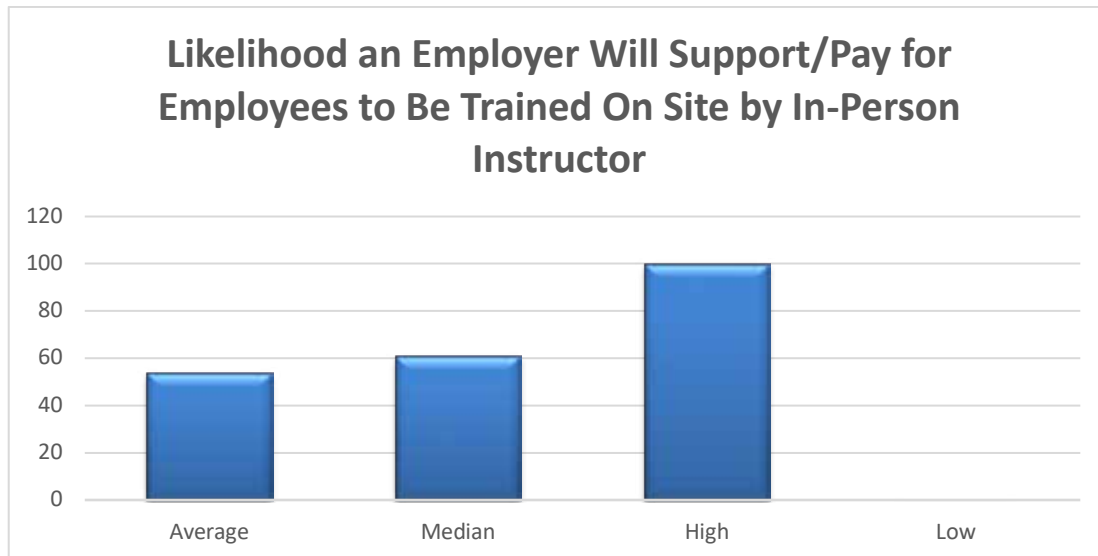


(Susan Dimock)

**Overall Combined Results** *continued*

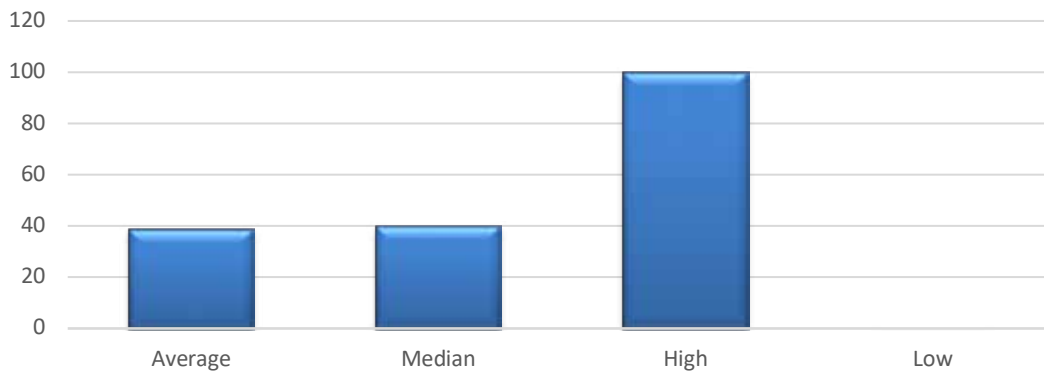
**Industry-rated probability of participation in training by format**

Rated from 0% to 100%; the median value is recommended for use in evaluating options.



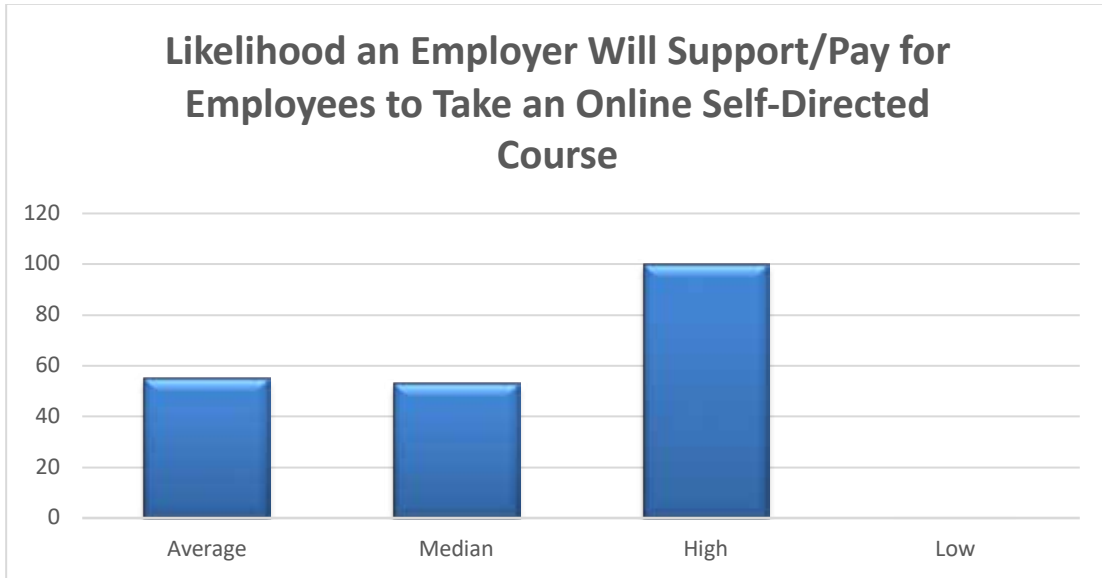
Average	Median	High	Low
54	61	100	0

**Likelihood an Employer Will Support/Pay for Employees to Be Trained off Site by In-Person Instructor**

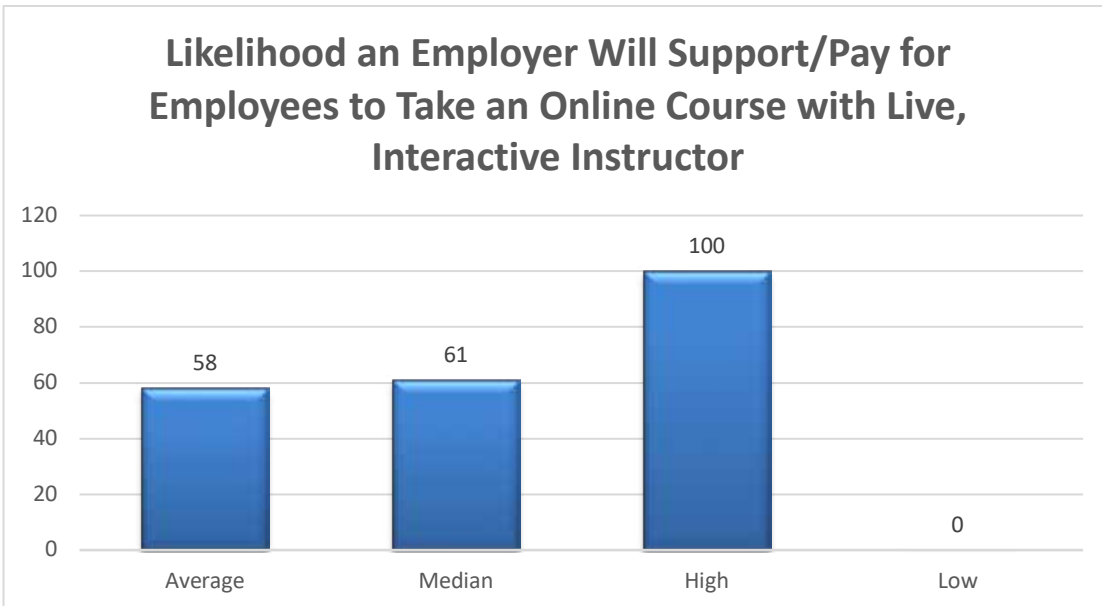


Average	Median	High	Low
39	40	100	0

**Overall Combined Results** *continued*

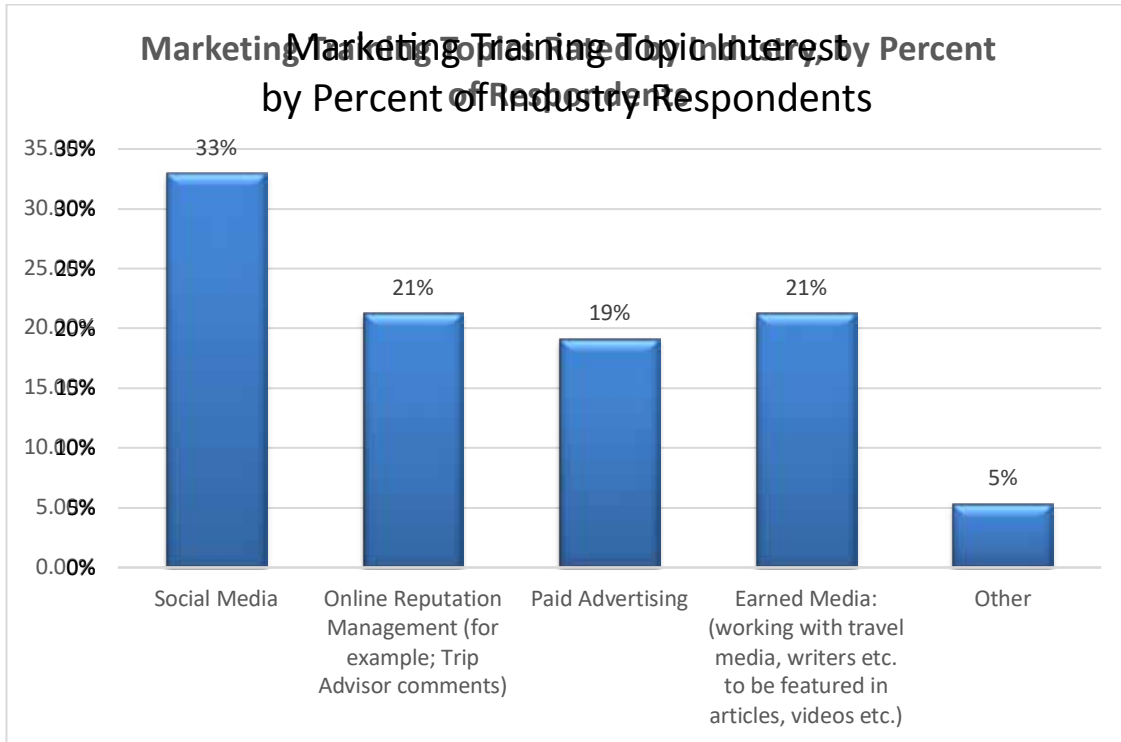


Average	Median	High	Low
55	53	100	0

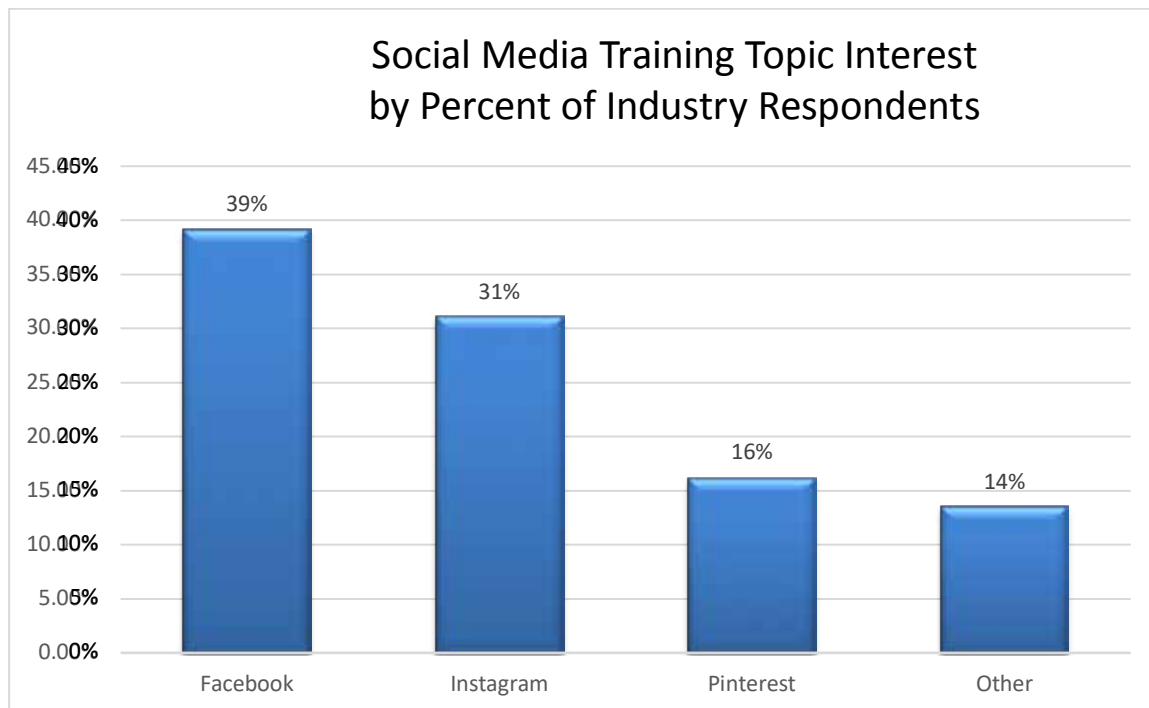


Average	Median	High	Low
58	61	100	0

**Overall Combined Results** *continued*

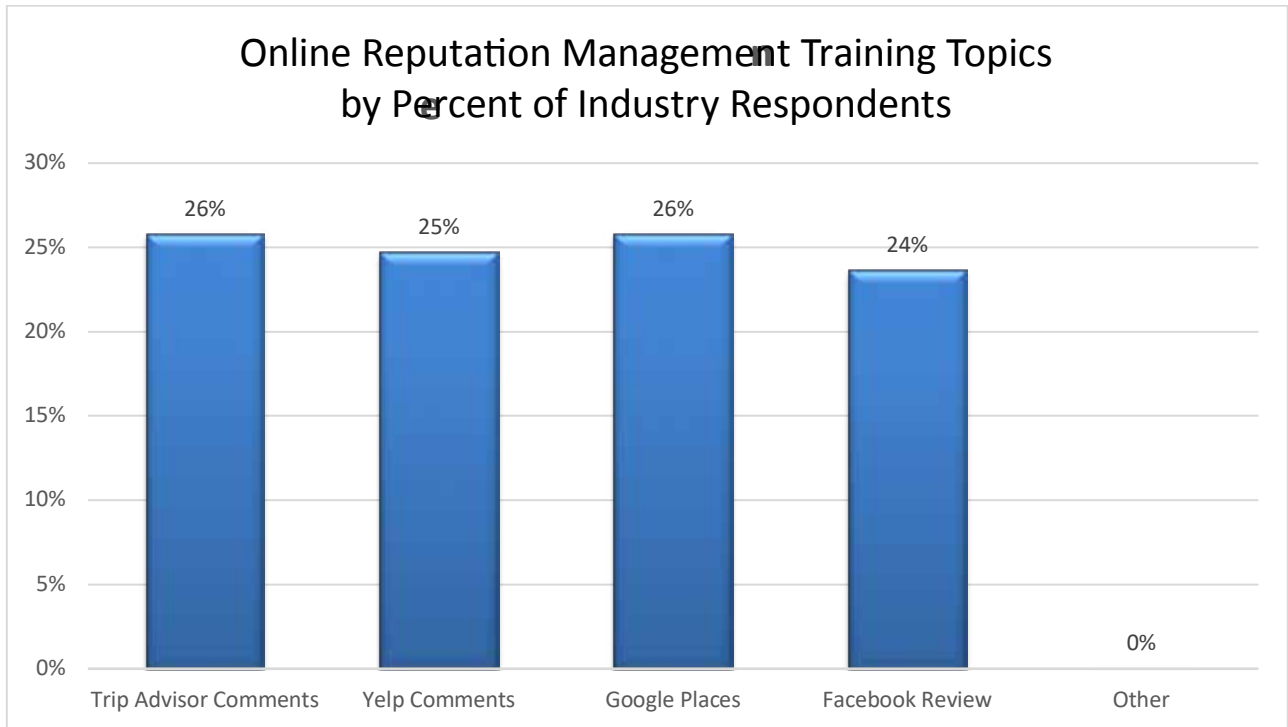


**Industry comments on which social media marketing training topics would be of interest**



**Overall Combined Results** *continued*

Online reputation management training topics by percent of industry respondents



(Erik Urdahl)

## Overall Combined Results *continued*

### A sample of statements regarding the challenges faced with online marketing

Sometimes, creating popularity can be a double edged sword - social media is a beast, and can be hard to keep up with!

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Unfortunately just time and resources

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Being a small business, the juggling act. When I'm doing a good job focused on one thing, then other areas are suffering. Our online presence is one of these areas.

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Review sites in general, time to respond, knowledge of options

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Certainly negative on-line reviews are a concern. It seems happy customers do not take the time to write positive reviews, only the negative ones. There are always two sides to every story, to reply to a negative post can be viewed as ranting. Negative reviews used to bother me quite a bit. I've done what I can to encourage happy customers to put up good reviews but yelp for example filters reviews quite a bit. I have learned over the years to not let it bother me, there is really nothing I can do to change it. Another challenge is when you do on-line marketing, then you are flooded with inquiries and phone calls. That work load can be challenging for myself and my staff to keep up with. It is hard to find the right balance.

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Google Analytics and how to use FB and Instagram to engage our audience.

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(Rowland Willis)

**Overall Combined Results** *continued*

**Industry comments on desired cost for training program**

What cost (per person) would be feasible to pay for a 4-hour training on a specific topic desired for your staff? 80 Usable Responses

Average	Median	High	Low
79	55	380	0

What cost (per person) would be feasible to pay for a 2-hour training on a specific topic desired for your staff? 79 Usable Responses

Average	Median	High	Low
50	38	300	0

Approximately, how many times per year would you expect to have employees participate in some type of training? 78 Usable Responses

Average	Median	High	Low
2	2	12	0

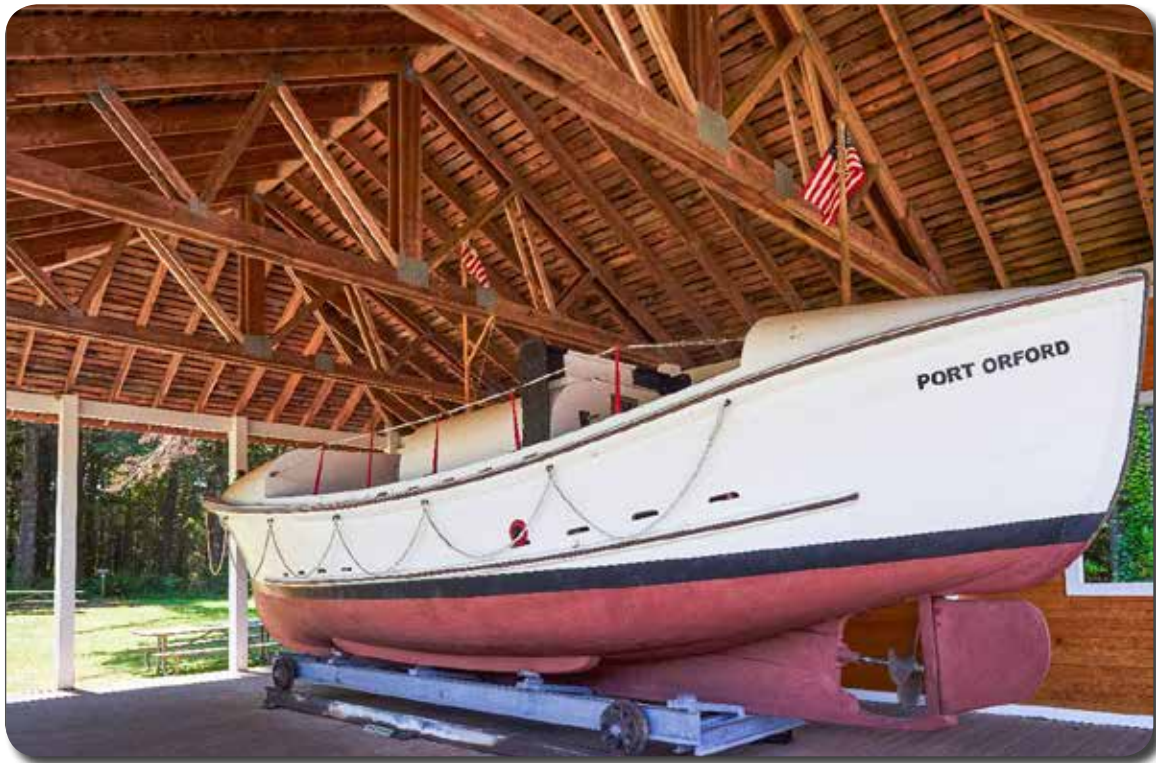
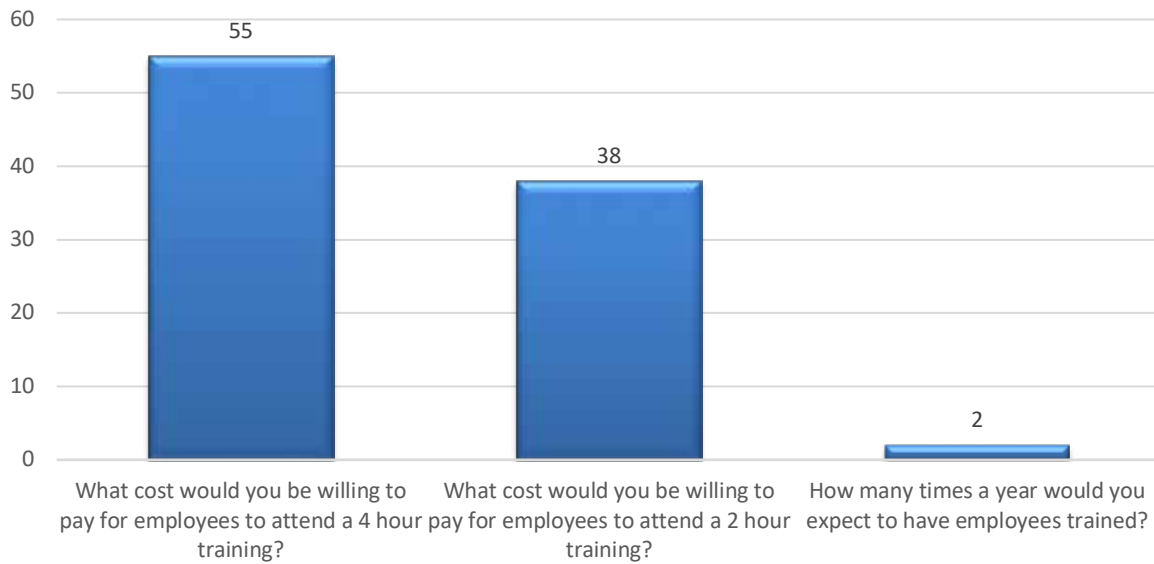


(Erik Urdahl)



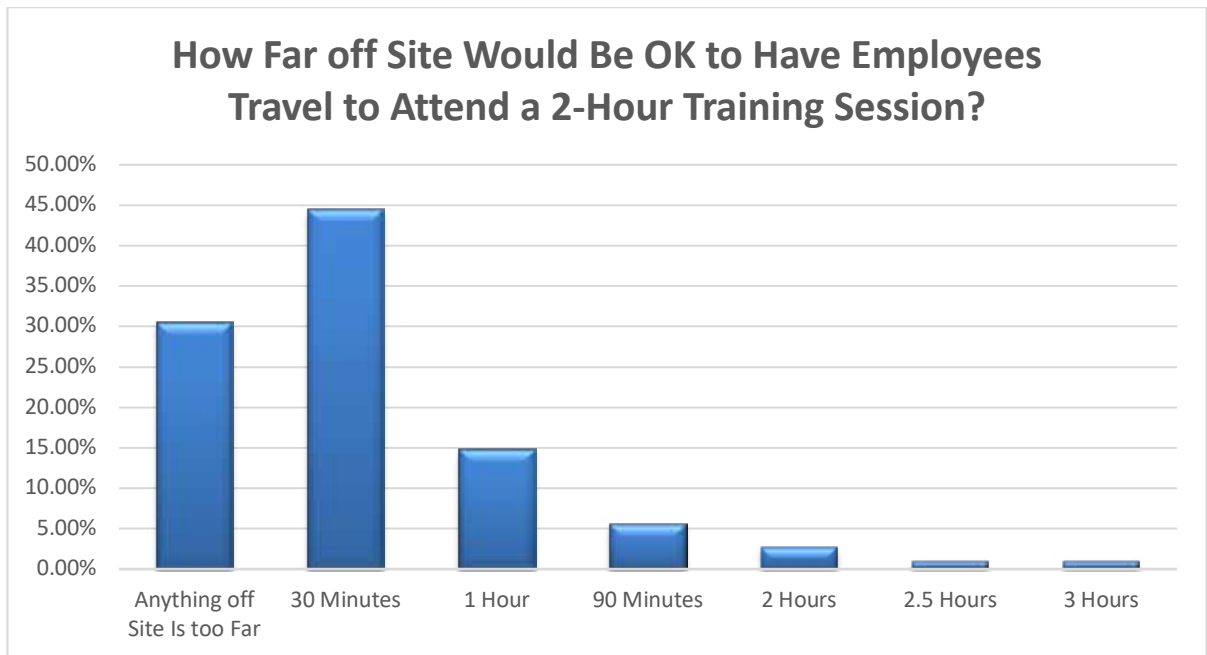
**Overall Combined Results** *continued*

### Median Statistics for Training Opportunities



(Erik Urdahl)

**Overall Combined Results** *continued*



## Industry Comments

### What other types of training would you like to be available to your company?

Management training.

We train on site with our own staff

Training is not the problem, people do not want to work, and they would rather work for a few months and then try to get unemployment.

We provide training to our employees. I would prefer to see job readiness training for job seekers.

We have a program already established through our franchise for training (online and in-person on-site). I just wish more candidates could spell, put a sentence together, do basic math and understand the importance of working for someone else. Customer-service skills can be taught, but the basics of being able to converse with customers and understand their needs should already be a part of the job-seekers skill set.

Spanish for business.

Group training for management. Vocational training for housekeeping staff at a location such as LCC

Front Desk skills, cashiering, basic business accounting, customer service.

We do not need training help. We need people who can afford to live in our area.

Training really isn't the issue. We can train the right people in-house

Database management, web publishing

Housekeeping is a hands on training and we do our own training our problem is finding staff.

On-Demand Webinars. It is difficult to arrange for any training for employee which requires travel, potential one-night stay, meals, etc. Smaller budgets cannot support it.

Tour Guides

We would like to see training for "how to search for a job" and "how to apply for a job" done at the high school level for those entering the workforce. Also, training on how to write a resume and how to prepare references.

We have a staff of professionals who are required to have CPE credits, so accredited training is always helpful. Our industry is pretty specific to our needs, but as stated prior in the survey, maybe some marketing.

Online, self-paced.

Basic cash handling

none - our corporate office provides training materials

Everything we have put into the Waldport workforce training program is exactly what I need. Plus access to the AHLEI upper level credentials.

Where do you currently receive assistance with your workforce training needs?

Online via providers; Oregon Employer Council/Oregon Employment Division; Small Business Development Center

In house

I do not have assistance.

Our training is developed and delivered internally.

None.

**Industry Comments** *continued*

From our franchise.

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We do not have a continued training program.

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online webinars

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corporate office - Dallas, Texas

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No assistance. We do it in house because outsourcing breaks our budget!

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In house - OCVA - ORLA - Travel Oregon

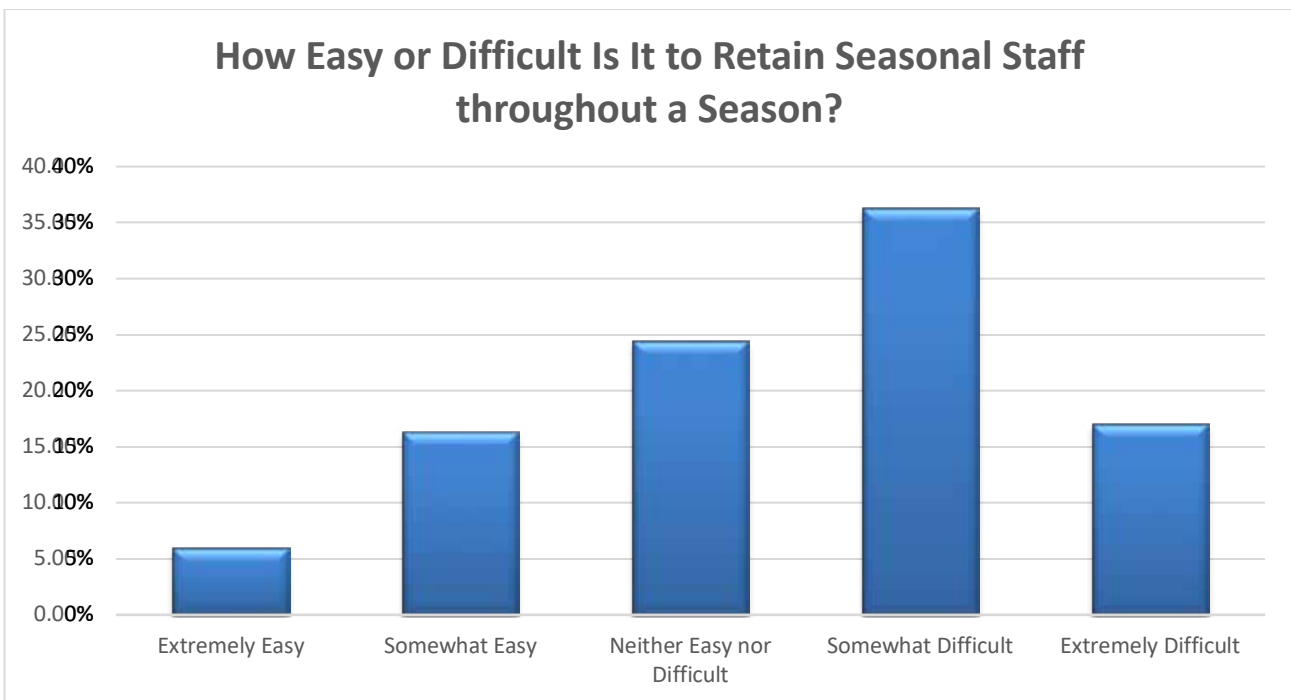
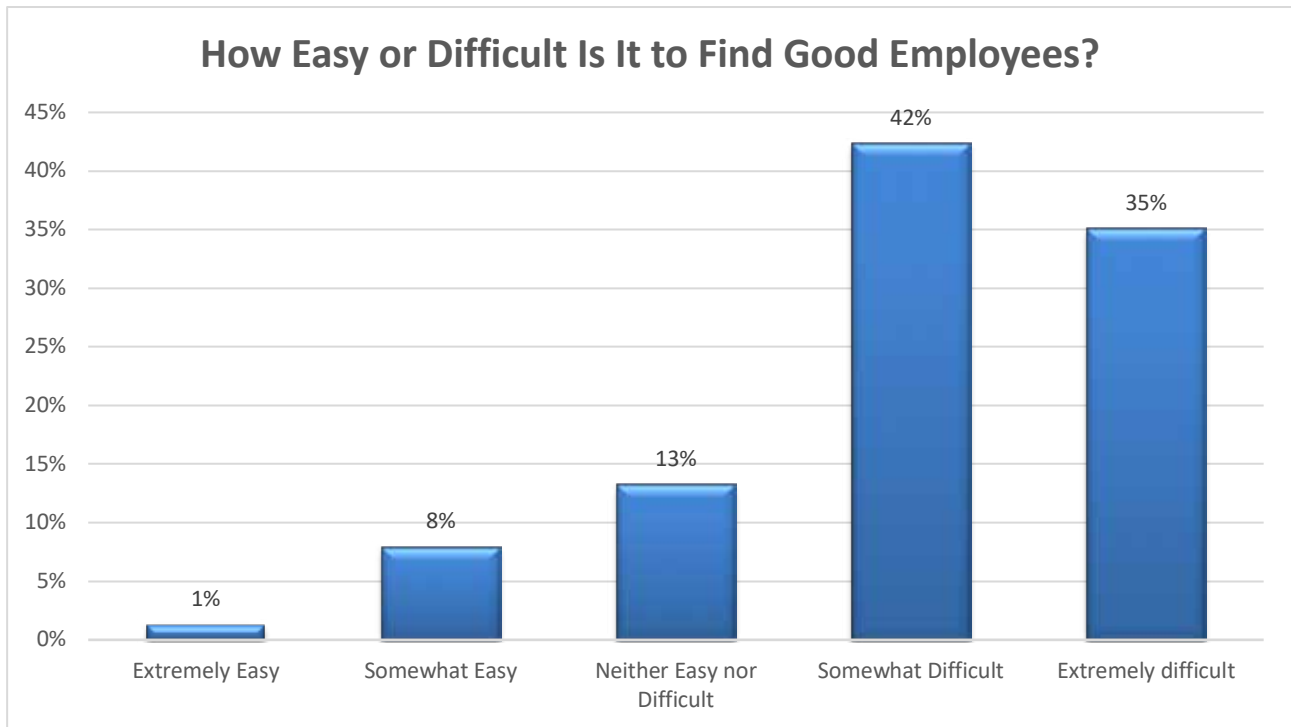
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(Erik Urdahl)

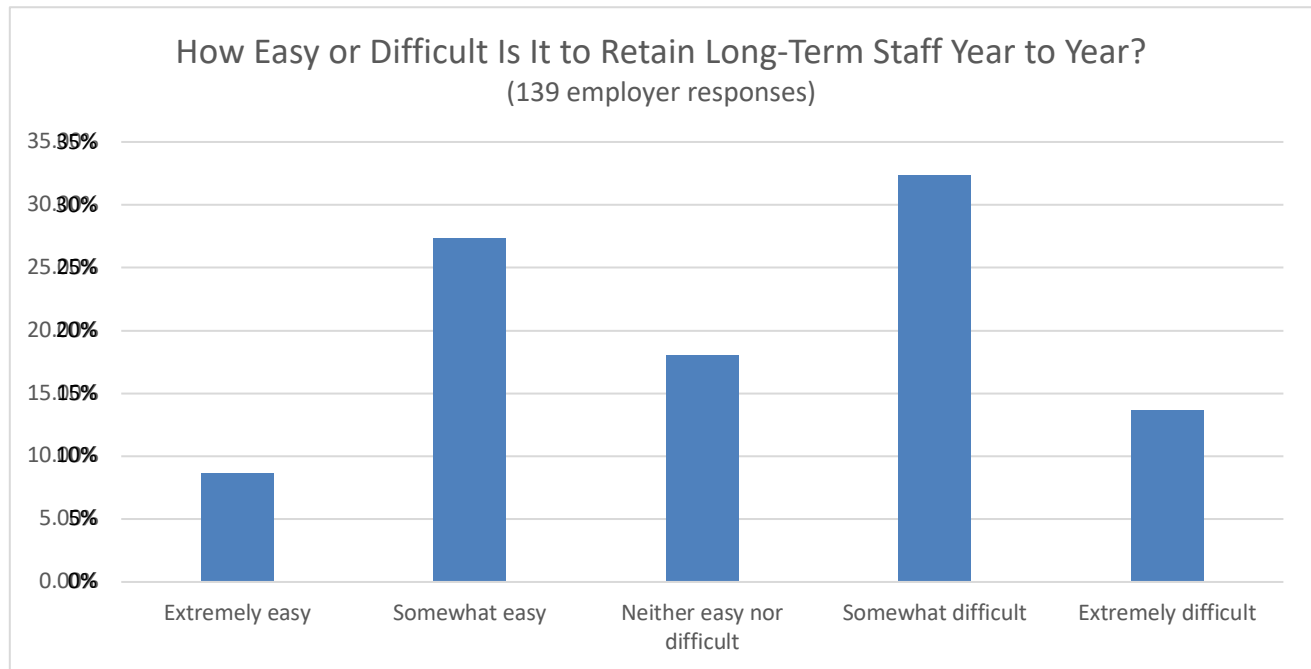
**Industry Comments** *continued*

**How easy or difficult is it to find good employees?**



**Industry Comments** *continued*

How easy or difficult is it to retain long-term staff year to year?



(Erik Urdahl)

**Industry Comments** *continued*

What is your company's peak and fewest number of employees during the year?

Statistics for reported number of peak jobs during the year

Sum	Average	Median	High	Low
11752	85	12	3000	1

Statistics for reported number of fewest jobs during the year

Sum	Average	Median	High	Low
9058	65	8	2000	0

Statistics for reported difference between high and low employment for individual companies

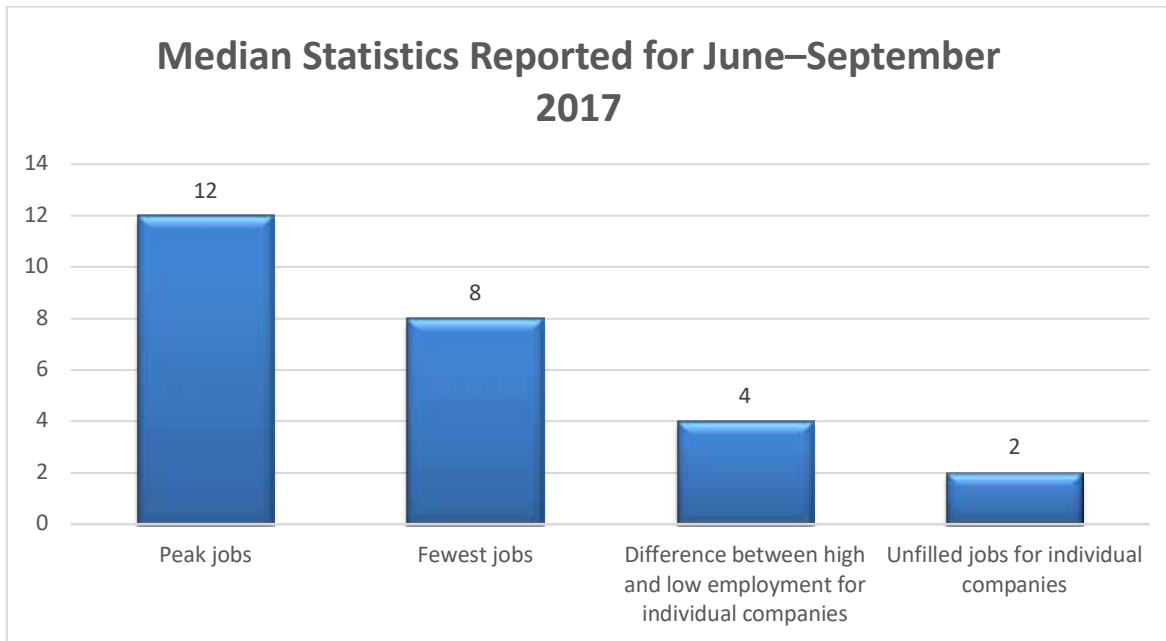
Sum	Average	Median	High	Low
2694	19	4	1000	0



(Erik Urdahl)

**Industry Comments** *continued*

Number of unfilled positions during the period June to September 2017



**Statistics for reported number of unfilled jobs for individual companies**

Sum	Average	Median	High	Low
859	7	2	300	0



*(Justin Myers)*



## Industry Comments *continued*

### Industry comments on the reason(s) their company has difficulty filling job positions

Lack of viable candidates willing to drug-screen/background check; candidates not willing to perform scheduled work...

The number of qualified applicants is simply too low. I believe that there are potential applicants that believe they are not qualified for some positions, when they are. With most locations now requiring applicants to apply online, there isn't as much opportunity for a person to make a good impression in person while dropping off a resume/filling out an application.

Unwillingness to work, inadequate housing for qualified employees, drugs

Customer relations / skills working with customers

Shallow hiring pool, lack of housing, under motivated work force

Wage competition in the local labor market. We do tend to have a fairly stable staff with the exception of Front Office and Housekeeping staff.

lack of affordable housing - seasonality of business (low income during off season) - lack of skillset in employees

Significant competition for entry-level positions and we are unable to guarantee a set number of hours or standard schedule.

We can't offer benefits. Our front desk jobs are part time and usually includes weekends.

Housing for employees

TOO FEW HOURS AND SEASONAL. PLUS MOST YOUNG FOLKS DONT WANT TO WORK THAT HARD. (HOUSEKEEPING)

It's a multi-faceted problem. Not enough legitimate day care providers for single mothers (or families) that want to learn a skill or work, rampant drug abuse, lack of work ethic in younger generations... in addition to the idea that often, small business owners like myself can't always afford payroll until business is booming.

Though tourism is a key economic factor here on the north Oregon Coast it is not supported by our community college system or in our high schools as a career field. I have gone to the Clatsop Community College over a year ago to inquire why we have nothing to support a hotel -restaurant program and was assured a new incoming president for the college intended to begin that program. To date nothing has been done. While we (hotels) are viewed as a primary source of taxes for our communities, our city and county leaders contribute nothing to an educational fund or promote education in our industry.

Lack of technical skills (computer, design, stagecraft)

#1 Lack of education, #2 Lack of housing, #3 Lack of experience

Persons in the job market who are looking for a position that pays well, but requires little work. This includes those who want to work, but only on the days and hours that they want regardless of the needs of the organization. We have had numerous people who were interviewed, hired and either never showed up or worked less than 3 days - reason for leaving was "it was more work than I expected."

We do not have trouble filling job positions.

## **Industry Comments** *continued*

### **Industry comments on the reason(s) their company does NOT have difficulty filling job positions**

We don't have much of a staff, I as owner am at my business all the time, (closed one day each week). When I do need fill in, word of mouth works well as it's a small community that has many knowledgeable people with art backgrounds.

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Small staff and great networking

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We offer a competitive wage above minimum, and we provide indoor, office work, with a fun workplace - we often have employee referrals.

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Because you get what you give

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Because people know we take good care of our employees and that they will make a good living

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Right now we have a wait list, stack of resumes of people wanting to work for our company. We provide a very healthy and positive work environment. One that we are constantly giving back to our community and always rewarding. We don't call our customers our customers, they're our family. They are the driving force behind what we do and why we do it.

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Good paying positions, benefits, etc.

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Our employee pay rate has been recently adjusted (increased) to reflect national Interpreter rates. We promote upward mobility within our program. We promote a positive work environment, where employees concerns and/or positive feedback is not only heard, but acted upon. Additionally, our program is viewed in an overall positive light, with wonderfully positive feedback, contributing to the mindsets of those interested in employment, the notion that our program provides a good working environment.

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Low stress Beautiful work environment Great co-workers

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We are a very small business and have been blessed with good employees

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We made a decision to offer a full benefits package that includes us paying 100% for our employees' health insurance and 10 days of PTO.

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### **Additional industry comments regarding training needs**

Tourism industry needs to focus more on career development and career promotion versus job/hiring fairs. Folk do not understand the range of positions available nor the year-round nature of our industry!!!

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We do most of our training in-house and it is conducted by HR.

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Need training on how to recruit good workers.

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Additional Training: Motivational / Life Skill Training (for example the importance of keeping a job, earning your own wages, becoming independent, the interdependence of how our local economy works, area highlights and resources?)

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We don't have trouble attracting candidates for teller position. The issue is their preparedness for a demanding workplace, and lack of skills for financial services, professional, office environment. We get very few qualified applicants for manager/asst manager positions. I think the pool of local people with adequate skills is limited, and few are in transition or ready to leave their current employer. We'll get candidates that have never managed before, or have limited work history.

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## **Industry Comments** *continued*

For us, it really isn't about training. It's about attracting workers with a professional appearance and attitude, who understand what delivering the highest level of service looks and feels like. To be honest I've had much better luck recruiting people from other areas who are already passionate about the hospitality industry. As opposed to a person from Depoe Bay that is just looking for whatever pay check they can find. And unfortunately I don't think that's an attitude the can be coached. Once I find the right people, training them in house is far more attractive of an idea than sending them out to a training done by someone who doesn't have an intimate knowledge of what our hotels expects. But in general finding good people is tough here on the coast. Housing people is also tough, due to the lack of apartment type housing in Depoe Bay. Hope this helps

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After working here on the coast for 18 months, I feel that many factors are affecting our workforce recruiting efforts. This includes the fact that many people would lose benefits if they work and can do as well, if not better, by working "under the table" and maintaining benefits rather than holding a steady job. At this point, I would support out-sourcing and bringing in seasonal employees from Asia (China, Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand). We could partner and work on housing for these workers.

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Small businesses in our area are extremely challenged finding qualified employees. This questionnaire does not really address our needs. We need educated candidates that can spell, sell, speak, and operate software, we need people for housekeeping, cooking, and waiting tables. We need management candidates. We are so shorthanded year round constantly behind in everything. We cannot come close to offering the customer service our customers deserve due to a lack of staff. Housing is a huge problem, we are paying \$14-16 per hour but staff cannot afford the housing available in the area, nor can they afford health insurance even if we pay half the premium. Obviously, we suffer from inflation and an economic in-balance that is not being recognized or addressed.

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We have a variety of needs, and our management may even fly to a specialty conference for training. But other staff rarely get an opportunity for training outside of management staff. Training would need to be specific to the job in order to justify travel and labor expense.

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### **WOULD LOVE TO ESTABLISH A PRERECORDED SESSION TO GO THROUGH EXPECTATIONS OF JOB AND EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK EXPECTATIONS**

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OSU needs to form a listening task force to speak to professional staffing/hiring firms for the latest issues, trends, and employment obstacles. We are on the front lines of recruiting, screening and disciplining employees 24/7. We are hired by employers and businesses to be their HR department. We see every conceivable employment problem and interact with all types of job seekers. Many times our own clients do not have the insight or articulateness to express exactly what the issues are except to say "I can't find workers" or I can't keep workers. And often it comes down to them - they can't find good workers because they pay on the cheap or they can't keep good workers because their front line supervisors are awful or they pay crap.

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We already pay for training to the tune of \$80 per person so adding more is tough so that is why I priced it low. I assume OSU would do this as part of their extension service or at least augment the cost.

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Training is something that happens every single day. Owners/Managers need to coach their staff daily to reinforce any formal training that the employees receive.

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On the time for travel question, the difference between on site and 30 minutes is too great. I would suggest you edit this survey to have 10 minutes be a choice. There is a big difference between 10 minutes and 30 when you don't have a car. Newport is 30 minutes from Yachats that is too far. But Waldport is 10 minutes and that is where most Yachats employees live. So having the trainings in Waldport is as far as we can go. Many of them have no car and the bus only goes by 4 times a day. Please look into exactly what we have done with the Waldport Hospitality Program, as that is exactly what we all need.

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## Conclusion

The scope of this needs assessment was very broad, and, as previously noted, information reported here was provided by individuals in a wide range of management positions (54 title variations in all), including owners, managers, and presidents.

Comments indicate that the majority of organizations face difficulty hiring quality staff and that they desire staff training and workforce-development programs, with a number of respondents specifically mentioning OSU Extension as a possible source of such assistance.

Some comments from organizations indicated that they don't have trouble finding good employees; these also may be informative. Presented again, below, are three examples of such comments:

*"We offer a competitive wage above minimum, and we provide indoor, office work, with a fun workplace — we often have employee referrals."*

*"Because people know we take good care of our employees and that they will make a good living"*

*"Right now we have a wait list, stack of resumes of*

*people wanting to work for our company. We provide a very healthy and positive work environment. One that we are constantly giving back to our community and always rewarding."*

Results for all groupings of respondents indicate that the most desired training program topics for employees are

- customer service
- housekeeping
- staff management/human resource issues
- marketing

For those who identified marketing as a program interest, the desired topics were social media and online reputation management, with Facebook as the most desired training topic.

As would be expected, the input on acceptable cost for training varies, but overall there is a willingness to pay for training when the location and content meet targeted needs.



(Erik Urdahl)