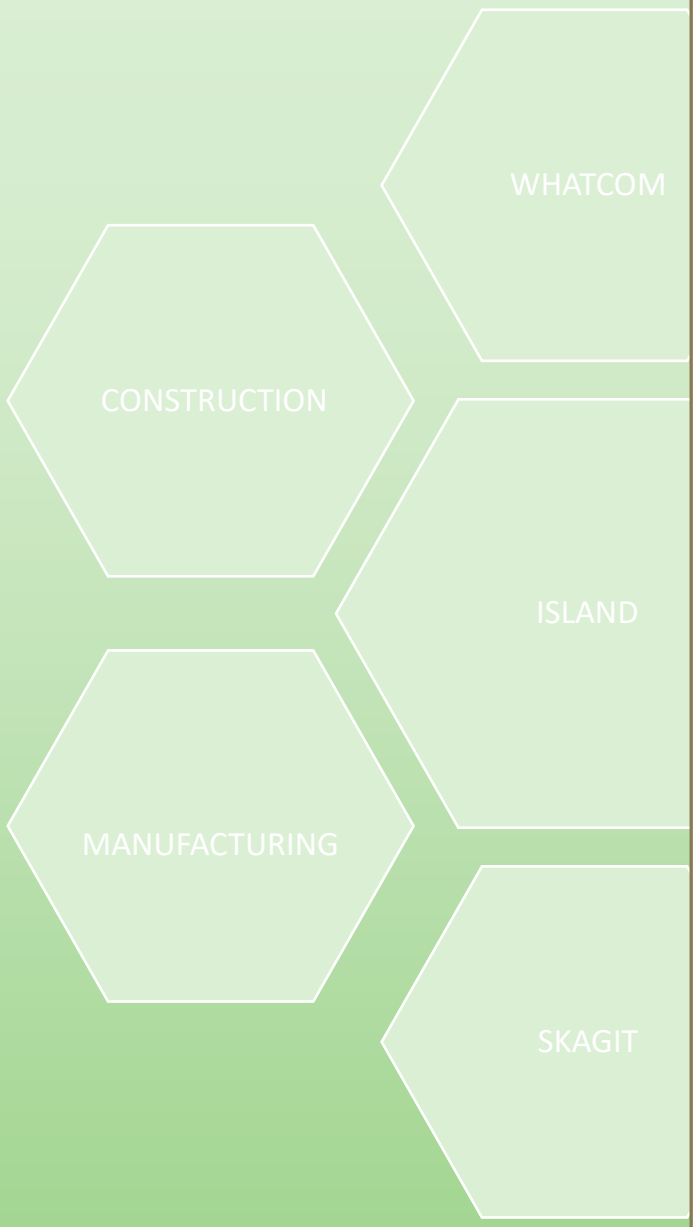

NORTHWEST WORKFORCE COUNCIL

Workforce Hiring Trends

Construction and Manufacturing in Whatcom, Island, and Skagit Counties

September 30, 2017

Prepared by

Western Washington University
Center of Economic and Business Research

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About the Report

This report summarizes the results from four distinct research projects, which were specifically designed to identify industry trends in desired hiring qualifications. The report is presented in two sections: one part that focuses on entry-level applicants and one that focuses on incumbent workers.

This research seeks to gain a better understanding of the skills and/or certifications that make applicants in the construction and manufacturing industries in Whatcom, Island and Skagit counties more attractive as job candidates. While Whatcom, Island and Skagit counties are only three of the four counties in the Northwest Workforce region, we believe that the responses from firms in these counties are representative of the region. In addition, Whatcom, Island and Skagit counties account for a large portion of the firms in the workforce area.

Information gathered from this research identifies skills and certifications that these industries are looking for in entry-level and incumbent workers, which might then be made available through local training institutions.

Methodology

The Northwest Workforce Council and the Center for Economic and Business Research identified firms at random in the appropriate sectors to participate in the survey. We contacted these firms by phone and e-mail to invite them to participate in the research project through a phone interview. Researchers at CEBR entered the responses into Qualtrics, a survey analysis tool. All responses were anonymous. Data collected are based on a sample, and therefore are subject to sampling variability.

About the Center for Economic and Business Research

The Center for Economic and Business Research is an outreach center at Western Washington University located within the College of Business and Economics. The Center connects the resources found throughout the University to assist for-profit, non-profit, government agencies, quasi-government entities and tribal communities in gathering and analyzing useful data. We use a number of collaborative approaches to help inform our clients so that they are better able to hold policy discussions and craft decisions.

The Center employs students, staff and faculty from across the University as well as outside resources to meet the individual needs of those we work with. Our work is based on academic approaches and rigor and not only provides a neutral analysis perspective but also provides applied learning opportunities. We focus on developing collaborative relationships with our clients and not simply delivering an end product.

The approaches we utilize are insightful, useful, and are all a part of the debate surrounding the topics we explore; however, none are absolutely fail-safe. Data, by nature, is challenged by how it is collected and how it is leveraged with other data sources; following only one approach without deviation is ill-advised. We provide a variety of insights within our work – not only on the topic at hand but the resources (data) that inform that topic.

We are always seeking opportunities to bring the strengths of Western Washington University to fruition within our region. If you have a need for analysis work or comments on this report, we encourage you to contact us at 360-650-3909. To learn more about CEBR visit us online at https://cbe.wwu.edu/cebr/center-economic-and-business-research.

The Center for Economic and Business Research is directed by Hart Hodges, PhD and James McCafferty.

Executive Summary

The Center for Economic and Business Research interviewed a total of 39 firms: 18 in the construction sector (9 each in Skagit and Whatcom Counties) and 21 in the manufacturing sector (10 Whatcom County, 1 Island County and 10 Skagit County). The following bullet points represent the key takeaways, with information shown separately for the two sectors.

CONSTRUCTION:

- The average construction firm consisted of 57 employees.
- In the past 90 days the average number of employees hired by construction companies was 6.
- The top desired job skill for entry-level applicants was ability to use precision measurement and tools with 88% of respondents highlighting its importance.
- For this industry, respondents defined tools as basic electric hand tools like skill saws, drills, and similar tools for carpentry purposes.
- The second top desired skill set was blueprint literacy with 77% of respondents indicating its significance for entry level workers.

MANUFACTURING:

- The average manufacturing firm had 184 employees.
- In the past 90 days the average number of employees hired by the manufacturing companies was 13.
- Ability to use precision measurement and tools had 81% of respondents indicating it was at least a sight advantage if not significant in the hiring process.
- Basic Computer literacy tied as a main desired skill in entry level workers from the list provided with 81% of respondents indicating at least a slight advantage.
- Forklift/Scissor lift certification also ranked at 81% indicating at least a slight advantage.

Many respondents indicated other desired skill sets they deemed important in entry level applicants.

CONSTRUCTION:

- 33% desired more basic carpentry training for framing structures and building houses.
- 19% of respondents mentioned programs offered at local community colleges i.e. Bellingham Technical College (BTC), Skagit Valley College (SVC), Whatcom Community College (WCC), and Everett Community College (EVCC).
- Safety certifications that were industry specific.
- 13% of respondents mentioned Certified Erosion and Sediment Control (CESCL).
- It should be noted that it was overwhelmingly pointed out by every respondent that good people skills such as teamwork or team building skills or relational/emotional skills were severely lacking.

MANUFACTURING:

- 69% stated soft skills, work ethic and maturity were most desired in applicants.

- 44% mentioned fabrication, graphics and CAD.
- 31% wanted to see stronger math backgrounds.
- 25% mentioned programs offered at local community colleges i.e. BTC, SVC, WCC, and EVCC.

When it came to _ and promotional opportunity, there was a strong desire for workers who are organized in task and time management. Whether it be in the form of computer proficiency or their ability to maintain a mature disposition.

CONSTRUCTION:

- 18% indicated computer skills i.e. email, proficient at typing, MS Office, Excel, data entry.
- 18% looked at ability to lead and overall leadership skills.
- 18% expressed a desire for project management skills.
- 18% also looked at experience within the industry when considering promotional opportunity.

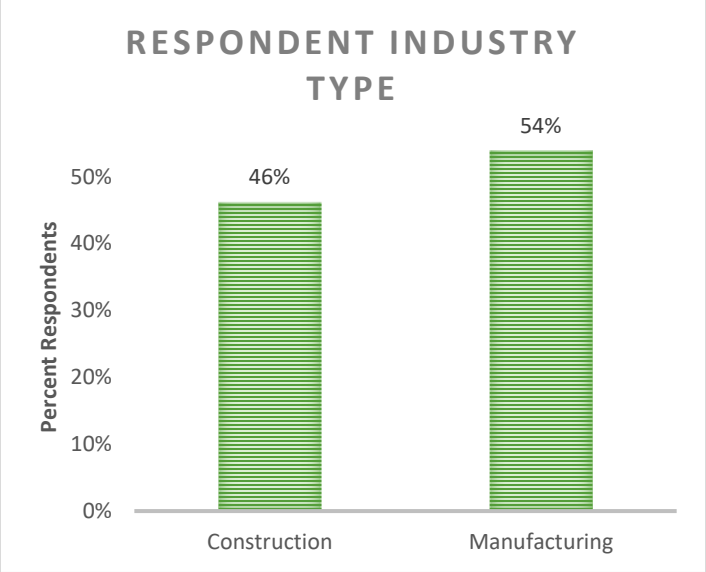
MANUFACTURING:

- 20% indicated strong written, verbal, and presentation skills were important.
- 20% stated strong leadership skills were needed.
- 15% wanted a team player.
- 15% preferred seeing an AA degree.
- 15% stated having a mature disposition was paramount.

Firm Demographics

Industry Composition of Respondents

39 total interviews were conducted – 18 construction firms with 9 each in Whatcom and Skagit, and 21 manufacturing firms with 10 in Whatcom, 1 Island and 10 in Skagit.



Construction was made up of a wide variety of firms ranging in specialty from solar to commercial to residential. Some were sub-contractors while others operated as general contractors.

Manufacturing firms had a wider variety as the industry generally lends itself to a greater spread of opportunity. Several firms were boat builders or manufacturers, some dealt with airplane and helicopter composites, while others manufactured everything from doors to solar panels.

Firm Size

In the construction industry, firms ranged from 4 to 230 employees with median employment at 30 and an average of 57. Manufacturing firms were generally larger, ranging from 10 to 750 employees with a median employment of 70 and an average of 184.

Q: About how many employees does your firm have? (N = 38)

-	Construction	Manufacturing
Average Employees	57	184
Median Employees	30	70
Minimum	4	10
Maximum	230	750
N =	*17*	*21*

Recent Hiring Trends

Manufacturing firms surveyed were not only larger in total employee size, but also in terms of recent hires. Construction firms have hired an average of 6 new employees in the past 90 days, while manufacturing firms have hired an average of 13 new employees in the past 90 days. In both industries, the median number of new hires (3 in construction, 9.5 in manufacturing) was lower than the average, indicating that there were outliers in the upwards direction who impacted the average but may not represent the industry as a whole (see maximums).

Q: Approximately how many new hires have you had in the last 90 days? (N = 36)

-	Construction	Manufacturing
Average Hires	6	13
Median Hires	3	9.5
Minimum	0	0
Maximum	16	60
N =	*16*	*20*

Entry Level Workers

The following summarizes the results of questions asked about entry level workers – positions where the hired employee may have little to no experience in each respective industry.

CONSTRUCTION

Ability to use precision measurement tools and blueprint literacy stand out as the top desired skills for applicants — 88% of construction firms believe the ability to use precision measurement tools would give an entry-level applicant a significant hiring advantage, and 71% believe blueprint literacy would give them a significant hiring advantage.

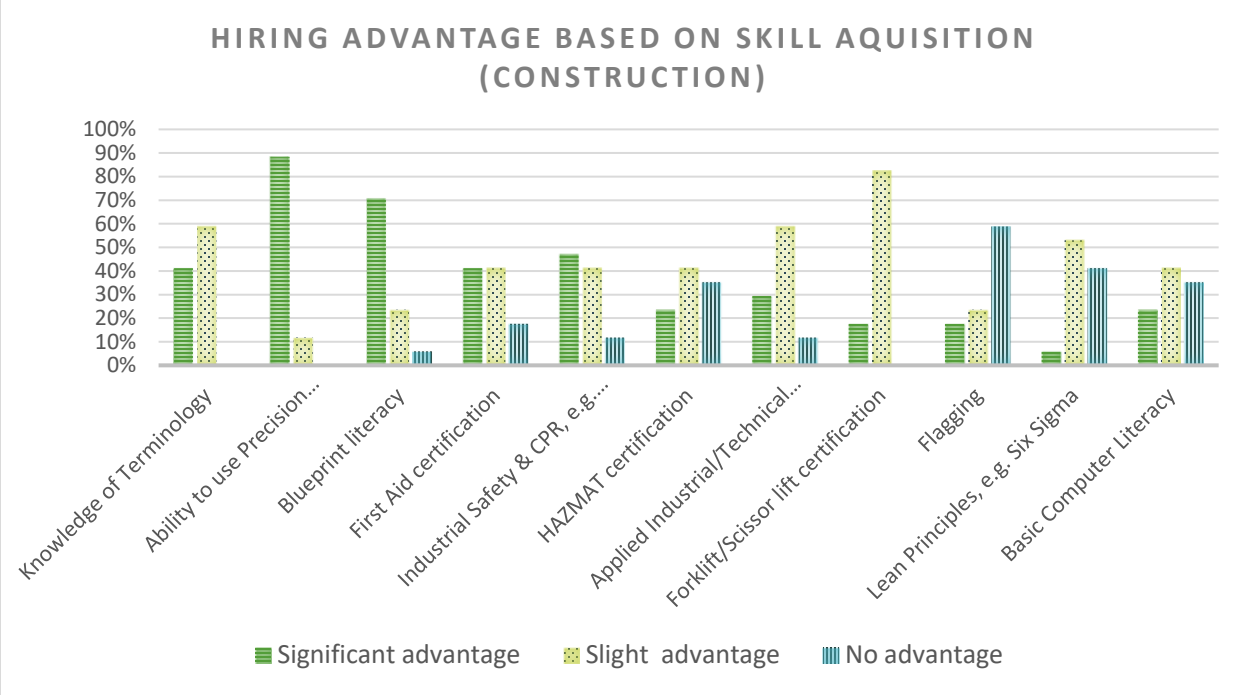
Respondents noted that they see many in the hiring process who are deficient of the ability to even identify basic construction tools (i.e. skill saw, drill, etc.) let alone use them in a safe productive way. Respondents also pointed out that there was a large gap in potential applicants' ability to do basic math such that they could use a tape measure or cut materials to appropriate lengths using fractions/construction terminology.

Hiring Advantage based on Specific Skills and Certifications

Q: Imagine you have two applicants applying for an entry level position at your company. Their resumes are very similar; neither has extensive technical training or experience in your industry, but both show that they have basic competencies and a willingness to learn and work hard.

I am going to list a number of specific skill certifications these applicants could attain relatively easily through a training class.

For each skill certification, I would like you to think about whether one applicant having this skill/certification would give the applicant an advantage over the other in the hiring process. Let me know whether each skill certification would give a significant advantage, a slight advantage, or no advantage in the hiring process. (N = 17)



Question	Significant advantage	*N=*	Slight advantage	*N=*	No advantage	*N=*	*Total N*
Knowledge of Terminology	41%	*7*	59%	*10*	0%	*0*	*17*
Ability to use Precision Measurement and Tools	88%	*15*	12%	*2*	0%	*0*	*17*
Blueprint literacy	71%	*12*	24%	*4*	6%	*1*	*17*
First Aid certification	41%	*7*	41%	*7*	18%	*3*	*17*
Industrial Safety & CPR, e.g. C-stop, OSHA 10, OSCA, TWIC	47%	*8*	41%	*7*	12%	*2*	*17*
HAZMAT certification	24%	*4*	41%	*7*	35%	*6*	*17*
Applied Industrial/Technical Math	29%	*5*	59%	*10*	12%	*2*	*17*
Forklift/Scissor lift certification	18%	*3*	82%	*14*	0%	*0*	*17*
Flagging	18%	*3*	24%	*4*	59%	*10*	*17*
Lean Principles, e.g. Six Sigma	6%	*1*	53%	*9*	41%	*7*	*17*
Basic Computer Literacy	24%	*4*	41%	*7*	35%	*6*	*17*

Additional Skills for Hiring Advantage

Q: What additional skills or certifications can you think of that would give a hiring advantage to an entry-level applicant who does not have extensive training in your industry? (N = 15)

- Basic carpentry training *(N = 5)*
- Certified Erosion and Sediment Control (CESCL) *(N = 2)*
- Commercial Driver's License (CDL) *(N = 2)*
- Clean driving record *(N = 2)*
- Basic hand tool knowledge *(N = 2)*
- Fall protection
- Drug free
- Carpentry programming
- North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP)
- Work ethic
- Small engine mechanic
- Power tool safety
- High school diploma
- Bluebeam software training (a type of Adobe software)
- MS Office
- Project scheduling
- Management training like what is offered through AGC
- 'Smart' building technology

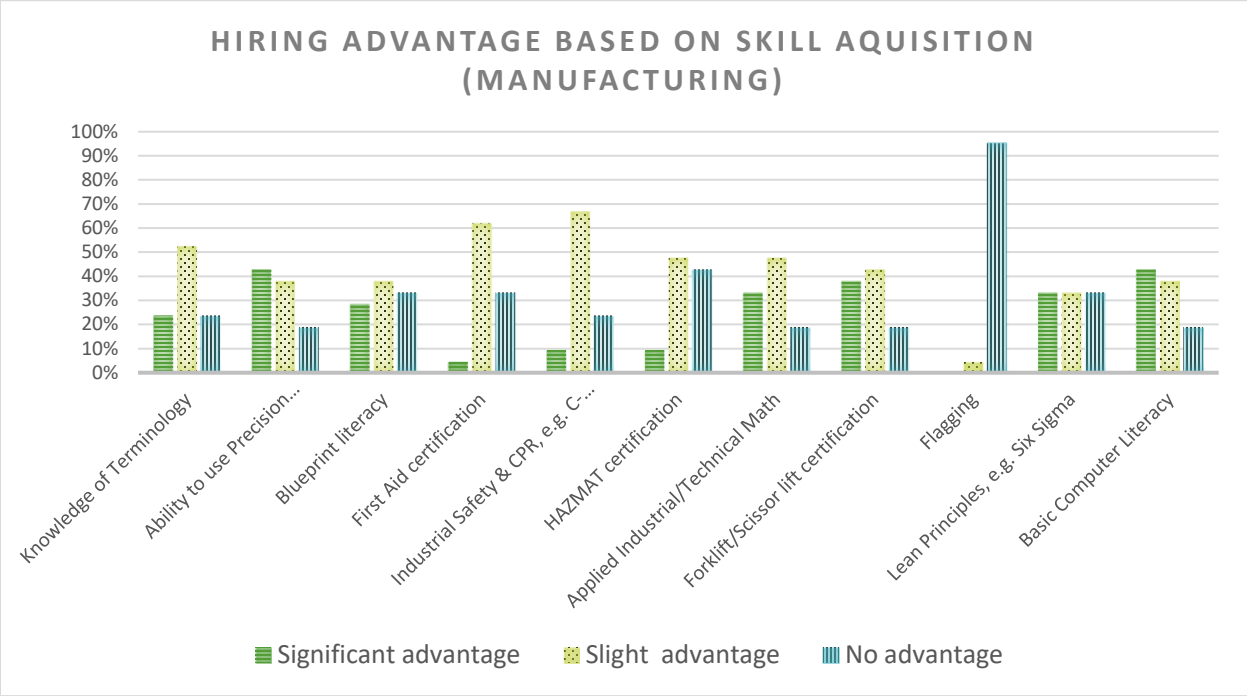
MANUFACTURING

For manufacturing firms, 80% of respondents agreed, the skills and certifications at least provide a slight to significant advantage in the hiring process were industrial safety and CPR, applied industrial/technical math, ability to use precision instruments and tools, and forklift/scissor lift certification.

There is much more variation to these desired skill sets regarding their advantage in the hiring process than there was in construction. This is likely the result of there being such a large variation in manufacturing firms themselves. The firms surveyed ranged from doors to boats to aerospace manufacturers. These firms deal with materials ranging from wood to metals to composites. It should also be noted that there is a larger demand for basic computer skills at entry level and many firms were looking for industry specific competencies (see Additional Skills for Hiring Advantage pg. 16).

Hiring Advantage based on Specific Skills and Certifications

Q: Imagine you have two applicants applying for an entry level position at your company… (N = 21)



Question	Significant advantage	N=	Slight advantage	N=	No advantage	N=	Total N
Knowledge of Terminology	24%	*5*	52%	*11*	24%	*5*	*21*
Ability to use Precision Measurement and Tools	43%	*9*	38%	*8*	19%	*4*	*21*
Blueprint literacy	29%	*6*	38%	*8*	33%	*7*	*21*
First Aid certification	5%	*1*	62%	*13*	33%	*7*	*21*
Industrial Safety & CPR, e.g. C-stop, OSHA 10, OSCA, TWIC	10%	*2*	67%	*14*	24%	*5*	*21*
HAZMAT certification	10%	*2*	48%	*10*	43%	*9*	*21*
Applied Industrial/Technical Math	33%	*7*	48%	*10*	19%	*4*	*21*
Forklift/Scissor lift certification	38%	*8*	43%	*9*	19%	*4*	*21*
Flagging	0%	*0*	5%	*1*	95%	*20*	*21*
Lean Principles, e.g. Six Sigma	33%	*7*	33%	*7*	33%	*7*	*21*
Basic Computer Literacy	43%	*9*	38%	*8*	19%	*4*	*21*

Additional Skills for Hiring Advantage

Q: What additional skills or certifications can you think of that would give a hiring advantage to an entry-level applicant who does not have extensive training in your industry? (N = 16)

- Soft skills (N = 6)
- Math i.e. algebra (N = 5)
- Composite and wood working technologies offered from programs like those at SVC, BTC, or EVCC (N = 4)
- Work ethic (N = 3)
- Fabrication (N = 3)
- Mature (N = 2)
- Graphics (N = 2)
- CAD (N = 2)
- MS Office Suite: Word and Excel *(N = 2)*
- Welding General *(N = 2)*
- Good hand eye coordination
- Materials and warehouse management
- Supply chain management
- Project management

- Design
- Can use a tape measure
- Industrial background
- Machinery (heavy) manufacturing experience
- Welding (aluminum)
- Electrical experience
- Drafting
- Lean classes i.e. 6 Sigma
- Plastics
- Thermal
- Composites training
- Team work
- Communication skills
- Relationship building classes
- 2 year process technology degree for operators
- CNC machining experience/certification
- Machinist tools experience/certification i.e. plasma cutter
- Instrumentation experience/certification
- Analyzers
- Maintenance people
- More females in these fields
- Crane operator
- Carpentry training (union)
- Boat building background
- Construction apprenticeship experience
- Military experience
- Interest in the work
- Ability to follow and take direction

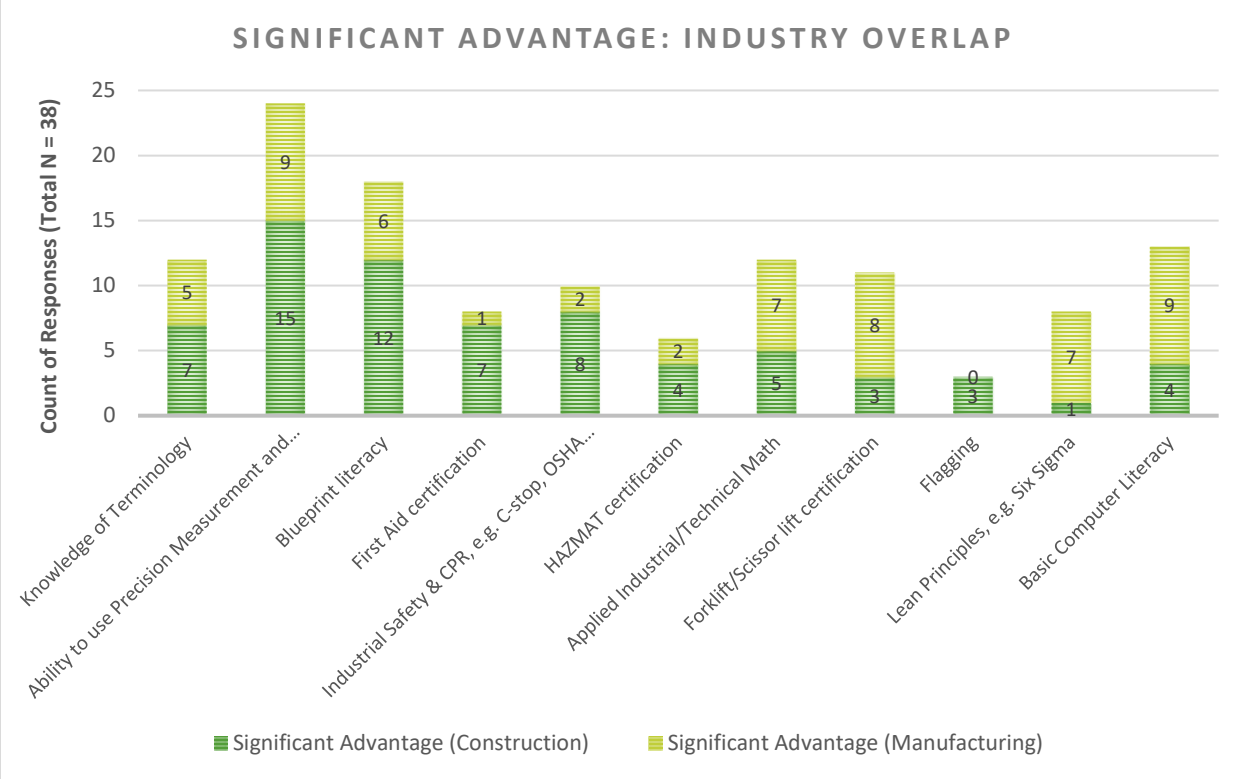
NON-INDUSTRY SPECIFIC TRENDS

Every respondent commented on a desire for some form of soft skills training. Some suggestions were to provide basic business classes similar to those offered within Skagit Valley Colleges' technical management degree. Coursework such as leadership training, resume building, or human resources training could be tangible solutions to soft skill deficiencies.

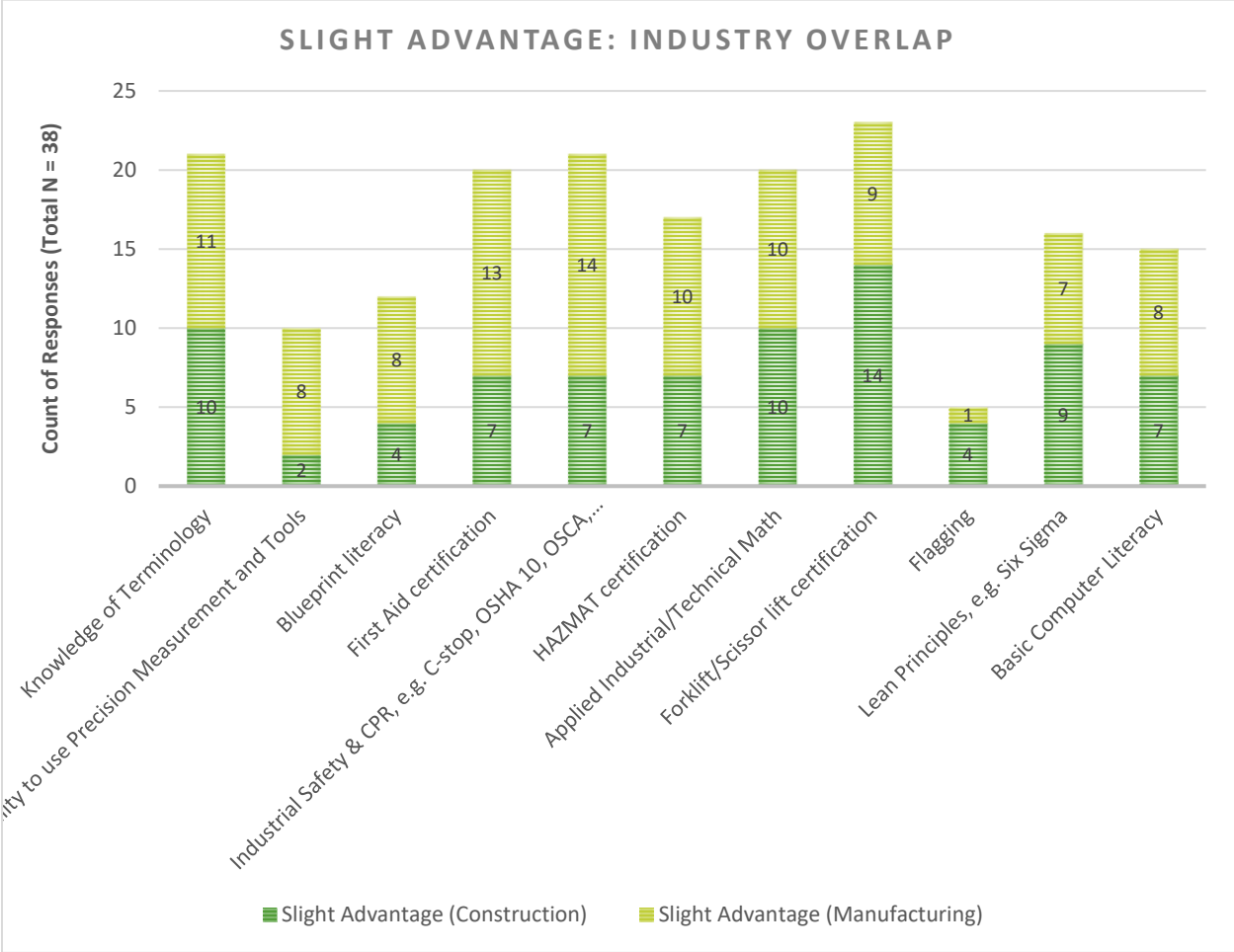
Industry Overlap

There are several noticeable industry overlaps in both significant and slight advantage. A worker with the *Ability to use Precision Measurement and Tools, Knowledge of Terminology, Blueprint Literacy, and Applied Industrial/Technical Math* were shared across the two industries as giving a significant advantage. While *Knowledge of Terminology and Applied Industrial/Technical Math* were also seen as giving a slight advantage, industry overlap as categorized by giving a slight advantage was consistently heavy on safety certifications.

Significant Advantage



Slight Advantage



Incumbent Workers

The following summarizes the results of questions asked about incumbent workers seeking to advance within a company – those who have experience in each respective industry but no formal degree in management.

CONSTRUCTION

The respondents within the construction sector indicated that when considering an employee for promotion they looked at a variety of qualifications. However, there were several overlaps that should be highlighted. *(N = 17)*

- 100% of respondents saw value in project management and supervisor and leadership training. (N = 17)
- 59% liked Lean Enterprise certifications. (N = 10)
- 35% saw value in Six Sigma. (N = 6)
- 18% looked at an employee's proficiency with basic computer skills. This would be things like their ability to send and answer email, ability to type, use Microsoft Office Suite, particularly their proficiency with Excel and data entry. *(N = 3)*

- 18% of respondents looked at the employee's leadership skills and their ability to hold themselves and their subordinates accountable. *(N = 3)*
- Project management ranked high at 18% along with an employee's industry experience. *(N = 3)*
- 12% in Toyota Kata. *(N = 2)*

Overwhelmingly, there was a strong trend toward experienced leadership. These firms want a manager who can hold not only themselves accountable, but their subordinates as well. They want someone who knows their industry and can command the respect of those around them by consistently providing a positive example. Having competency in the Microsoft Office Suite, primarily Excel and Word such that they could do scheduling and inventory was evident. 12% indicated having more advanced math skills (i.e. algebra, geometry or trigonometry) was important and 17% wanted to see better communication skills regarding presentation, verbal, and written abilities.

Qualities of Employees to Promote

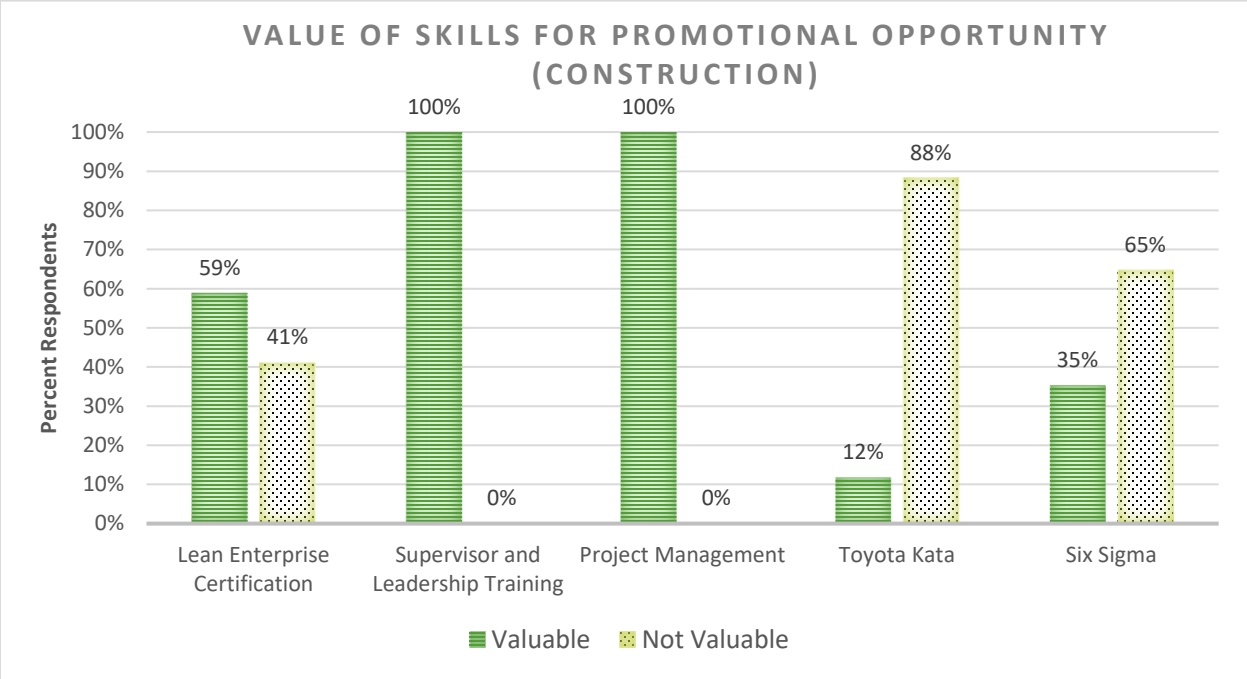
Q: Imagine you want to fill a position for a foreman or supervisor, and you would like to promote from within the company. Think about the person that comes to mind. What about them makes them a good candidate for this position? (N = 17)

- Computer skills i.e. email, proficient at typing, MS Office, Excel, data entry *(N = 3)*
- Leadership skills, (N = 3)
- Project management skills (N = 3)
- Experience *(N = 3)*
- Blueprint/architectural (N = 2)
- Time management (N = 2)
- Math/measurements skills, (N = 2)
- Past performance, (N = 2)
- Trade knowledge (N = 2)
- Communication skills (N = 2)
- Instructional aptitude
- O6A license for HVAC and refrigeration
- Estimating a job/bid quotes
- Loyalty
- Knowing expectations
- Blueprint reading
- Willingness to accept new responsibilities and to learn
- Follows directions
- Leads in a safe capacity
- Work integrity
- Knows and adheres to safe processes
- A multi-tasker
- Has foresight
- Organized
- Teamwork builder
- Self-starter
- Good worker

- Assumes more responsibility
- Management training construction specific
- Demonstrates strong leadership
- Hard worker
- Goes the extra mile
- Ability to work well with subordinates and lead them/discipline them
- Planning
- Hands-on skills
- Willing to learn and adapt
- Continued willingness for training
- Soft skills
- Quick learner
- Reliability
- Takes direction well

Value of Skills for Promotional Opportunity

Q: Still thinking about your current employees, please rate the following with regard to their value in terms of promotional opportunity. (N = 17)



Skill or Certification	Valuable	N=	Not Valuable	N=	Total N
Lean Enterprise Certification	59%	*10*	41%	*7*	*17*
Supervisor and Leadership Training	100%	*17*	0%	*0*	*17*
Project Management	100%	*17*	0%	*0*	*17*
Toyota Kata	12%	*2*	88%	*15*	*17*
Six Sigma	35%	*6*	65%	*11*	*17*

Additional Skills Desired for Promotional Opportunity

Q: What additional credentials or new skills would be valuable? (N = 12)

- Communication classes *(N = 2)*
- General carpentry training
- HVAC installers & service techs
- Vocational training
- Electronics training
- Time management training
- Organization of self and task training
- Six Sigma training
- Schedule building
- Project management training
- Computer literacy classes i.e. MS Office, project management training
- Anything safety
- Leadership classes for entry/current level workers
- Blueprint reading
- Management training
- Business courses
- Familiarity with the state environmental policy act (SEPA) i.e. erosion control certificate
- Basic HR understanding
- General HR supervisory training
- Just-in-time (JIT) training/understanding
- Time within the company to show quality of character

MANUFACTURING

The respondents in the manufacturing sector looked at several factors when considering an employee for promotion. The top factors were 20% written, verbal, and presentation communication skills, 20% leadership skills, 16% team player, 16% wanted at least an AA degree, and 16% wanted the employee to exhibit a mature disposition.

Given the industry demands there seemed to be a desire for more technical skill sets like deeper understanding of math in general (i.e. advanced algebra, trigonometry). Having competency in the Microsoft Office Suite, primarily Excel and Word such that they could do scheduling, inventory, etc. was standard across firms as was being current on industry software and trends. It was pointed out that manufacturing sector is rapidly changing, so adaptability as a worker was required.

Organization of oneself and task performance was paramount. All 100% of respondents indicated leadership and supervisor training was valuable, followed by 86% for project management, and 62% for Six Sigma in terms of promotional opportunity. 16% wanted to see more availability of trainings in office suite with a focus on Excel and 11% favored management training certificates.

Qualities of Employees to Promote

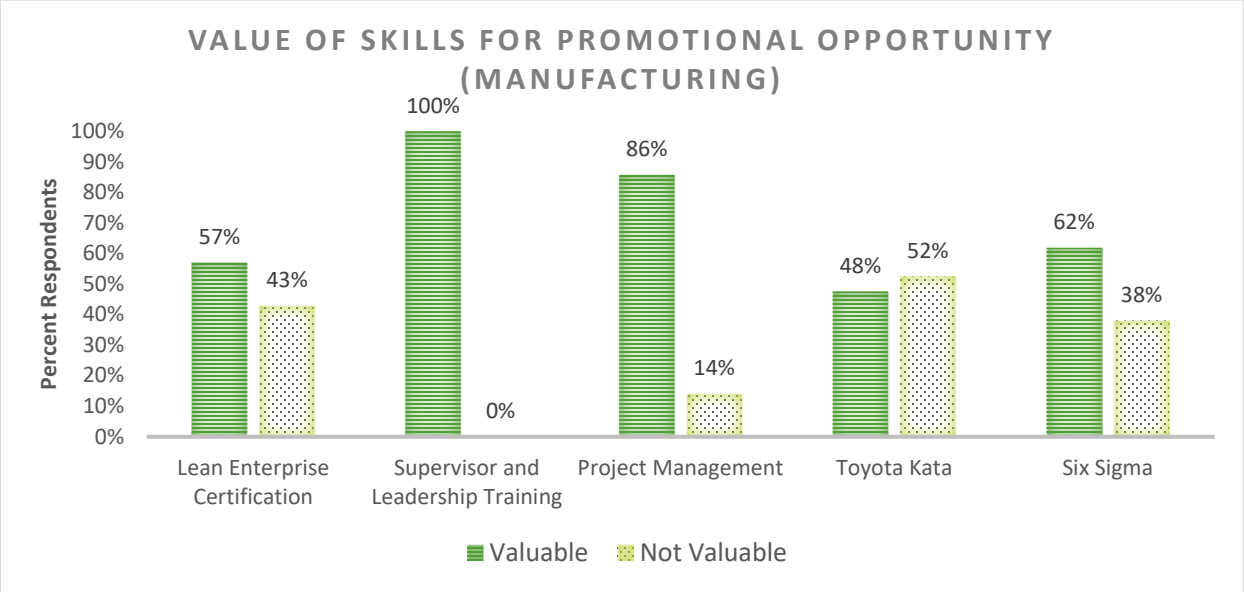
Q: Imagine you want to fill a position for a foreman or supervisor, and you would like to promote from within the company. Think about the person that comes to mind. What about them makes them a good candidate for this position? (N = 20)

- Strong communication skills i.e. written, verbal, presentation *(N = 4)*
- Leadership skills *(N = 4)*
- Team player *(N = 3)*
- AA degree *(N = 3)*
- Mature *(N = 3)*
- Product knowledge *(N = 2)*
- 4yr degree BA/BS *(N = 2)*
- 5+ years field experience
- Demonstrates good judgement
- Good attendance
- Reliable
- Strong scheduling understanding
- Previous manufacturing experience
- Supervisor experience
- Leadership ability
- Safety conscious
- Technical ability/knowledge of process
- Willingness to do what is necessary to complete the job
- Employment law understanding
- Management experience
- Work safety
- Mastered skills in current position,
- Respectful

- good attendance and attitude
- MS Office
- Industrial management
- Supply chain
- SAP software training
- Management lean training
- Safety and environment training
- Good mentor/coach
- Soft skills
- Takes initiative
- Efficient worker
- Being familiar with the product
- Interpersonal skills
- Technically competent
- Confident leadership skills
- Positive influence
- Accountable and holds others accountable
- Asks the right questions
- Decisive
- Collaboration skills
- Problem solving skills
- Team oriented
- Results oriented
- Good math skills
- 3D thinking
- Degree in CAD
- Architecture background
- Good attitude
- Consistent in attitude and performance
- Willing to learn and work on training
- Engaged on projects
- Demonstrates good leadership skills and adaptability
- A strong ability to prioritize and has great team work capabilities
- Lead by example
- They can hold their subordinates accountable to their actions.

Value of Skills for Promotional Opportunity

Q: Still thinking about your current employees, please rate the following with regard to their value in terms of promotional opportunity. (N = 21)



Skill or Certification	Valuable	*N=*	Not Valuable	*N=*	*Total N*
Lean Enterprise Certification	57%	*12*	43%	*9*	*21*
Supervisor and Leadership Training	100%	*21*	0%	*0*	*21*
Project Management	86%	*18*	14%	*3*	*21*
Toyota Kata	48%	*10*	52%	*11*	*21*
Six Sigma	62%	*13*	38%	*8*	*21*

Additional Skills Desired for Promotional Opportunity

Q: What additional credentials or new skills would be valuable? (N = 19)

- Proficient in Outlook and MS Office especially Excel (N = 3)
- Management training/certificate *(N = 2*
- Accounting
- Business classes
- Any engineering applications
- Conflict resolution classes
- General supervisor and leadership training
- Employment law classes
- Western Red Cedar grading
- Lumber grading ticket
- Supervisory training
- leadership building classes
- Conflict resolution classes
- HR training's
- Business law and liability understanding
- Manufacturing anything training
- Warehousing
- Truck driving
- Safety is big
- Project management
- PMP certification
- CNC training
- Leadership development classes
- Conflict resolution classes
- Value of diversity classes
- Computer literate
- Math classes that included basic trigonometry and geometry understanding that were tailored to industry
- Soft skills
- Welding tech (aluminum)
- Passion
- Management training like those offered from HUB International & Unity Group
- Composite technology
- Business classes or business background.
- Be current in all available technical skills/certifications.
- Programs like those offered at Skagit Valley College are valuable, however, depending on the instructor, the quality of classes can be hit and miss.

NON-INDUSTRY SPECIFIC TRENDS

Many believed there would be a benefit to having weekend classes or evening classes that they could send their incumbent workers to. Some suggested ideal content being business law as it applies to how one interacts with and supervises subordinates/coworkers.

Many respondents stated there was a lack of leadership training courses in the community that addressed teamwork or cooperative working environments. Conflict resolution, basic human resources/law classes were among the most desired when it came to desired educational opportunities needed.

Conclusion

This report summarizes four distinct research projects soliciting comments and opinions in construction and manufacturing sectors in Skagit, Island and Whatcom Counties. Recent economic trends have created challenges and opportunities for employers in these sectors. On one hand, overall economic conditions have fueled business growth and opportunities, while on the other, the growth in other sectors, and in other parts of the region, have detracted from their ability to attract and retain qualified workers.

The study indicates that many employers were willing to entertain the idea of hiring an employee with little to no skills because of their positive outlook and mature disposition. This approach may be the product of a lack of advertising for vocational training and educational opportunities locally as indicated by many of the respondents. Generally, strong verbal and writing skills seemed to transcend both sectors and geography, as did a few other skills such as basic math. While the construction industry seemed to indicate an overall need for basic carpentry skills, manufacturing pointed more toward needs that focused on working with materials. Both industries saw a demand for workers with abilities in basic tool handling and general safety.

Whether it was construction or manufacturing, entry-level or incumbent worker, Whatcom, Island or Skagit Counties, every firm wanted employees with these competencies, and to have access to educational and vocational training that focused on cooperative and interpersonal skills while teaching and integrating industry specific technologies.

Appendix

The following survey instrument was used by the center to conduct the research projects referenced in this report.

Workforce Council Interview Sketch

This survey is currently LOCKED to prevent invalidation of collected responses! Please unlock your survey to make changes.

Introduction Block Options ⌄

Industry Type

- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Manufacturing

Hello! My name is ... I'm a research analyst at Western Washington University working in collaboration with Northwest Workforce Council. We wish to gain a better understanding of the skills or certifications that might make applicants more attractive as job candidates in your industry.

Northwest Workforce Council makes investments in the preparation of new or inexperienced workers eager to begin careers in your industry. We hope to discover which short-term classes that result in industry-recognized skill certificates are of value to you in selecting new employees. Information gathered from this survey will identify skill certifications that might then be made available through local training institutions or providers.

Your current workers might also benefit from gaining new workplace skills to advance their careers and their value to your business. We will ask your opinion on what might be most useful.

The survey will take roughly 10-15 minutes. There are no anticipated risks to your participation and your participation is voluntary, you may end the survey or skip a question at any time. If you have questions about your rights as a Western Washington University research participant, we encourage you to contact Janai Symons, WWU Research Compliance Officer at 360-650-3082.

Let's dive in.

Add Block

Entry-level Skills and Competencies Block Options ⌄

Let's start with a few questions about entry-level positions you have filled in the past 6 months or those you plan to fill in the coming year [for example: (**CONSTRUCTION**--laborers, framers, roofers, drywallers, painters, etc.) (**MANUFACTURING**--machine operators, assemblers, shipping, etc)].

Q1

Imagine you have two applicants applying for an entry level position at your company. Their resumes are very similar; neither has extensive technical training or experience in your industry, but both show that they have basic competencies and a willingness to learn and work hard.

I am going to list a number of specific skill certifications these applicants could attain relatively easily through a training class. For each skill certification, I would like you to think about whether one applicant having this skill/certification would give the applicant an advantage over the other in the hiring process. Let me know whether each skill certification would give a **significant advantage**, a **slight advantage**, or **no advantage** in the hiring process.

	Significant advantage	Slight advantage	No advantage
Knowledge of Terminology	○	○	○
Ability to use Precision Measurement and Tools	○	○	○
Blueprint literacy	○	○	○
First Aid certification	○	○	○
Industrial Safety & CPR, e.g. C-stop, OSHA 10, OSCA, TWIC	○	○	○
HAZMAT certification	○	○	○
Applied Industrial/Technical Math	○	○	○
Forklift/Scissor lift certification	○	○	○
Flagging	○	○	○
Lean Principles, e.g. Six Sigma	○	○	○
Basic Computer Literacy	○	○	○

Q2

What additional skills or certifications can you think of that would give a hiring advantage to an entry-level applicant who does not have extensive training in your industry?

Add Block

Incumbent Skills and Competencies Block Options

Let's change focus to look at your current employees who could advance into a lead or management role at your business.

Show Discussion (0)

Q3 Imagine you want to fill a position for a foreman or supervisor, and you would like to promote from within the company. Think about the person that comes to mind. What about them makes them a good candidate for this position?

Show Discussion (0)

Q4 Still thinking about your current employees, please rate the following with regard to their value in terms of promotional opportunity.

	Valuable	Not Valuable
Lean Enterprise Certification	○	○
Supervisor and Leadership Training	○	○
Project Management	○	○
Toyota Kata	○	○
Six Sigma	○	○

Q5 What additional credentials or new skills would be valuable?

Add Block

Demographics Block Options

Q6 About how many employees does your firm have?

Q7 Approximately how many new hires have you had in the last 90 days?

Add Block

Future oriented Block Options

Thank you so much for your time and sharing your thoughts.

Northwest Workforce Council and The Center for Economic and Business Research greatly appreciate your time and value your input. If you have any questions about the project, you can reach us at (360) 650-3909.

We wish your business a successful year ahead!

Add Block