

This report summarizes the findings of the BC Resort Community Labour Market Strategic Analysis, a project led by go2, BC tourism industry's labour market and human resources association, and funded in part through the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement. The goal of the analysis is to provide go2 and the Resort Communities with a stronger understanding of BC resort community labour market dynamics to enhance efforts for resort community recruitment, training and retention of staff.

BC Resort Community Labour Market Strategic Analysis

Final Report

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The initiative is being led by go2, the BC tourism industry's labour market and human resources association, and is funded in part through the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement.

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Executive summary

In December 2012, go2 issued an RFP to address a number of tourism labour market information gaps raised during its compilation of the BC Tourism Labour Market Strategy (2012-2016) in May 2012. The gaps were primarily related to specific challenges associated with the highly seasonal nature of the tourism sector in BC, particularly in rural and resort communities. The stated objectives of the RFP were:

- To enhance the knowledge base of resort community stakeholders in BC regarding existing and best practices for managing labour market issues, particularly seasonal recruitment, training and retention of staff.
- To develop strategies to assist resort community stakeholders – businesses, support agencies and governments – with recruiting, training and retaining seasonal staff.
- To develop detailed knowledge about the experiences and lessons learned in Whistler, Tofino and Fernie to assist these communities and the resort network with enhancing the overall productivity of seasonal labour markets.
- To enhance linkages and communications among resort community stakeholders at the local, regional and provincial level.

The findings of this study are based on evidence produced from a variety of research methods including:

- An in-depth literature review of tourism workforce development best practices from around the world, including elsewhere in BC/Canada.
- A telephone survey of community administrators and municipal officers in all 14 BC Resort Communities.
- Two short case studies (one in Fernie and another in Tofino) whereby employers were interviewed by field staff. This was supplemented by an online survey of employers and employees.
- One comprehensive case study (Whistler) with employer interviews conducted by field staff, employee focus groups facilitated by field staff, and an online survey for both employers and employees. A mixed qualitative/quantitative examination of compensation announcements (jobs ads) and existing compensation data were also assessed.
- An online survey of students and alumni within the BC Tourism Learning System was implemented – among those students who had worked in one or more of the 14 BC Resort Communities. This was furthered by informal discussions with a variety of program representatives at the 2013 Tourism Educators Conference.

From the initial review of literature, a series of propositions became evident. These propositions (as further outlined on p. 33-34) showcase the global situation:

1. The demand for tourism and hospitality labour in the resort communities fluctuates greatly:
 - a) There will be high demand for seasonal labour.
 - b) Heavy reliance on in-migration to supply the local labour market.
 - c) High competition for shoulder and off season jobs.
2. Due to the attractiveness of living and working in BC's resort communities, employees will be motivated by the community more than the career:
 - a. Local workers want to stay in the community for lifestyle and/or family reasons.
 - b. Migrants' desire to experience the lifestyle and/or amenities of the resort communities will be strong.
 - c. A blurring boundary between work and leisure will be noted and will influence employment decisions.
3. There will be different types of seasonal workers and they will vary in their motivations, preferences and future plans:
 - a. Youth may see tourism jobs as transitional and not as long-term careers.

4. With respect to recruitment strategies:
 - a. There will be evidence of strong recruitment strategies at the firm level targeting in-migrants.
 - b. Collaboration among stakeholders in the resort communities will be evident in an attempt to identify markets and recruit employees using the community amenities as attractors.
5. With respect to retention strategies
 - a. There will be high rates of turnover, particularly in positions that are more accessible (i.e. requiring less experience, education or training).
 - b. Management practices and philosophies will have an influence on employees' loyalty to an organization.
 - c. Creative strategies at the firm level are evident to motivate employees to remain with employers or in the community.
 - d. Efforts at the community level are evident to address issues that are influencing retention such as expanding seasons, addressing cost of living and affordable housing, etc.
6. Local, provincial, and federal policies and resources will exert an influence on the ability of resort communities to recruit and retain seasonal employees.

These propositions were both supported and refuted throughout the baseline survey and the three case studies, and provided the foundation for responding to the four priority research questions go2 sought to understand through this study. A summary of these main findings is outlined below.

1. What is the experience of BC Resort Communities with respect to labour market issues and what lessons have they learned that can advance the resort network to enhance the productivity of seasonal labour markets?

BC Resort Communities have gained a wealth of experience with seasonal labour markets due to their unique positioning in the province. The resort communities are all located close to natural and cultural amenities that allow for the creation of employment opportunities centralized around the provision of recreation and tourism experiences. They share a need for a supply of labour that can provide high-quality services to visitors, and the challenges inherent in a fluctuating environment where employment opportunities are limited by demarked seasons. This niche provides them with an important vantage point to reflect on seasonal labour and to offer suggestions for enhancements.

The evidence from this study indicates that there is high demand for seasonal labour in the resort communities such that it produces a heavy reliance on in-migration to supply the local labour market during peak season. Despite this, the majority of jobs are perceived to be held by locals in both the peak and off-seasons for most communities. Workers are attracted to the communities for their ability to satisfy lifestyle motivations. Many see their jobs in tourism and hospitality as a "means to an end" in that their job allows them an opportunity to experience the amenities through primarily recreation pursuits. Employers have responded to these needs and have developed creative strategies to motivate employees to remain working with them, or to stay within the community. These and other management practices appear to exert a positive influence on employees' loyalty to their employers.

There was only one area where the propositions set out in the review of global literature were clearly not supported: there was little evidence of collaboration between stakeholders within the communities (or with adjacent communities) to identify labour markets and recruit employees using the amenities as attractors. This lack of coordinated recruitment (in particular) and also retention (with already-noted exceptions) suggests an opportunity for the resort communities, which is expanded on in many of the "Potential Actions" found in the discussion section of this report.

2. What are the existing and best practices to manage labour market issues such as seasonal recruitment, training and retention of staff?

There are a range of practices in place to recruit, train and retain employees both at the firm and community level. Overall, with such a diversity of methods employed, one of the 'other' key findings was actually the consistency of the results. Each new data set seemed to triangulate and support the last. Whenever key themes and findings surfaced, each new method confirmed and drew out additional detail on specific practices and trends, which are highlighted below.

Attraction and Recruitment

Some of the existing practices in place to attract and recruit employees ranged considerably, from tapping into local labour pools, seeking out international workers and other in-migrants, use of local employment offices and job fairs (refer to Table 9 for more examples).

One of the best practices evident in the resort communities was the recognition of the motivations of employees and the strength that the "attractiveness of place" exerts on employees. There was a consistent understanding that the desire to be in the community results in employees who are "pulled" to live, work and play in the area. This understanding of "work as a means to an end" was understood, promoted, and employers overall showed support by recognizing this and creating positive work environments, flexible schedules and by providing a range of perks.

Retention

According to go2, the voluntary turnover rates (employees quitting) for BC's Tourism Industry is 30.7% compared to 8.6% for the private sector. Within the tourism sector, variations also exist where, for example, turnover rates range from 42.2% in recreation and entertainment, 36.8% in food and beverage, 26.8% in hotels and accommodation and 21.7% in travel services. These statistics together illustrate the high likelihood of a "culture of turnover" within the resort communities, which rely on seasonal workers in all sectors.

Many BC resort community stakeholders suggested that retention is a more prominent issue than recruitment at present, and in response there was a range of retention strategies being employed to address voluntary turnover. Building on the recognition of lifestyle as a motivator for employees, retention strategies used by employers were in alignment with those most desired by employees. For example, the use of non-monetary forms of compensation such as perks (ski/recreation passes in particular) was cited as the most effective retention strategy by both employers and employees.

Whereas non-monetary forms of compensation are in alignment, the findings of the study suggest that compensation levels – particularly for entry-level jobs - as a whole are relatively low in most cases and require a number of employees to obtain multiple jobs. Employers have responded to this reality with flexibility in scheduling and by providing a range of other monetary forms of compensation, such as rewards for outstanding work, bonus/merit pay, and paying higher than industry standard in some cases. Similarly, there was some – though quite limited - evidence of job sharing taking place, both within the same community and season, as well as between seasons in the same community (e.g., employees working in golf during summer and ski during winter).

Previous peer reviewed studies have found that there are several workplace-related conditions that need to be improved in the tourism sector; overall workplace culture, supportive management, general working conditions and flexibility in hours were cited as common problem areas. However this research demonstrated that these are in fact key retention strategies being used by employers. The management philosophy and practices, the customer service

orientation and attempts to create a positive work environment were all evident as retention strategies among employers in the case communities.

Training

As the labour supply originates from a diverse set of origins, many employees are entering into the job market with limited formal training or education in the industry. According to the compensation data in Whistler, employers are not requesting significant education or training for job applicants other than in specific occupations such as Chef and Guide. These realities are corroborated by evidence from employees in Whistler, who indicated that advanced training and education opportunities were rated lowest in terms of current job satisfaction. Employees there expressed a desire for more training opportunities in management tasks such as strategic planning, finances, marketing, leadership and research, and in operational knowledge such as technology and organizing festivals and events. Similarly, in the focus groups, there was evidence that employees were looking for opportunities for lifelong learning. Collectively, this evidence concludes that there is a strong need for additional education and training opportunities within the resort communities.

According to the baseline study, there were limited community-based training and education opportunities being provided. Much of the training that exists is being developed and offered by employers. All three of the case studies provided further evidence of the significance of training as a dominant human resource issue for the resorts. For example, in Whistler, employers indicated that the high cost of training employees was their top labour market issue overall. Larger businesses were able to provide in-house training despite the high costs, but for the smaller businesses, training was even more difficult. The range of occupations in need of training varies widely, from those needing customer-service training to those needing highly technical skills.

Another apparent training gap is with respect to local area knowledge (culture, history, environment, tourism products). Additionally, there is a limited time horizon for training to take place in preparation for the start of the season, and staff often have only a week or two to prepare before visitors arrive. While some of the larger companies have been able to develop pre-arrival orientations and on-boarding programs online, again smaller operations are less likely to have these in place. With the high costs associated with training, and the continual replacement of seasonal staff due to high attrition, training can be considered one of the areas of greatest need emerging from this study.

Employers are not the only potential trainers that can address these challenges. Community-based organizations, employment agencies and provincial organizations could also provide assistance with training. While there was evidence among these stakeholders regarding the need for increased training opportunities in the baseline study, there were few, if any, community or organization training opportunities in place to assist employers. This may be a potential area for stronger community responses to the labour market challenges for seasonal workers (and possibly permanent staff as well).

Additionally, there are formal supports for education and training external to the communities that may provide a response to the training challenges present in resort communities. BC has one of the largest, most extensive tourism and hospitality education training systems in the world. A range of programs exist at colleges and universities around the province ranging from specialized programs in ski resort operations, culinary arts programs for Chefs and more general tourism management degree programs. Dozens of short courses are also available – in person or online – in areas such as customer service, occupation-specific training (e.g., through *emerit*), health and safety, and others. As evidenced in the survey of graduates and students, a pipeline exists between some of these educators and some of the resort

communities. According to discussions held with the Chairs of some of these programs, however, there is not a formal recognition of the labour market needs of the resort communities or a system in place to link students and graduates with communities. Based on the assumption that these individuals have invested in an education in the industry and therefore may be more inclined to remain working in it, further steps to capitalize on this labour source may be worth pursuing.

3. What strategies can assist BC Resort Communities with recruitment, training and staff retention?

Moving forward, this study identifies a number of areas where resort communities and relevant stakeholders can work both within and between communities to strengthen the supports for recruitment, training and retention of workers. This section lists these areas and offers brief explanations, but more comprehensive questions for dialogue and possible actions steps can be found in the Conclusion of this report.

Recruitment

1. Capitalize on branding

Resort communities have competitive advantage in the recruitment of seasonal workers due to their overall positioning among potential markets. The Destination Marketing Organizations have played a key role in positioning these communities in the mindsets of visitors and potential employees.

Potential actions:

- Enhance collaboration – within communities and by provincial agencies – to collectively brand the BC Resort Communities as “places to work and play.”
- Within communities, highlight the attractive amenities and the employment opportunities to potential employees.
- Develop community-wide job fairs for peak season recruitment in resorts.
- Better coordinate international recruitment through an existing process (e.g., Destination Canada) – note: go2 already attends Destination Canada on behalf of BC tourism employers.

2. Improve the Availability and Affordability of Housing

Housing issues are a dominant recruitment and retention issue for the majority of the resort communities. If employees are uncertain or unable to access affordable housing options when they first arrive or post-season, they will seek other options. Current reliance on employers to provide housing is still inadequate and unrealistic given the number of small businesses in the communities. Some communities, such as Whistler, have also made significant improvements in local housing supply, through investments in non-market housing related to hosting the 2010 Olympics. Additionally, some were questioning if it was the role of the employer to provide housing infrastructure, and others did not want their employees living and working together all the time due to human dynamics issues.

Potential actions:

- Employer collaboration (with support from community or provincial agencies) to provide seasonal housing for staff (on-site, seasonal/modular, or generalized assistance/information on options).
- Assess in greater detail practices from communities that have had at least partial success in enhancing affordable housing options for community residents and employees, such as the Resort Municipality of Whistler.
- For resort communities in close proximity to other communities, develop transportation options to transport employees to/from work between the two communities.

3. Expand Community Perquisites

There was ample evidence that perks such as a season's pass (which directly addresses the motivation of many employees) were key recruitment tools. Where available, the resorts offer early-bird rates for purchase and consider expanding the range of products/services offered as part of these passes.

Potential actions:

- Seek ways within communities to expand upon existing perks, enhancing quality and coverage of activities and products available to employees.
- Develop a BC resort communities perk program to encourage staff that have already been trained and worked a season in one resort, to relocate to another resort during the shoulder or off-season.

Retention

1. Benefits

One of the preferred retention strategies for employees was the provision of benefits (i.e. health, dental). In Whistler, 42% of employer respondents to the survey indicated that they provide benefits to their staff.

Potential actions:

- Identify avenues for the provision of benefits programs including minimal buy-in, rates and options.

2. Returning for a second season

There was some evidence that employers are actively engaging their employees prior to exit to return for a second season, and remaining in contact with them during the off-season to encourage re-application. As these employees are already trained and can re-engage quickly upon their return, there may be merit in becoming more active recruiters of these employees. Money saved in training can be used for re-signing bonuses or enhanced perks for employees.

Potential actions:

- Take a more pro-active approach to identify employees who would consider returning in the next peak season. Invite them to return and investigate what their needs would be upon return (i.e. wages, advanced training, more responsibility).
- For involuntary departures where individuals are leaving for another year of education or training, consider the use of tuition reimbursement as an incentive.
- Enhance the usage and effectiveness of end-of-season retention bonuses (for staff who stay to the end of the season).

3. Job sharing

There was some evidence that employers recognize the need of employees to work more than one job. This was often accommodated via flexible scheduling. There may be further room however to enhance supports for employees by developing a more formal job-sharing initiative between employers within resort communities, or between similar employers in different resort communities. This may provide employees with supports and enhanced options to enable

them to remain in their job(s) while dispersing the financial obligation on individual employers during shoulder and off-seasons.

Potential actions:

- Identify the interest of resort employers for job sharing options for staff both within communities and in other resort communities.
- Develop a job-sharing initiative that incorporates membership options, partners and roles, shared perks and benefits.

Training

1. Community-wide training

Training was one of the most dominant themes emerging from the case study data. Beyond the expressed interest among employees for training in management-type tasks, there was also a strong interest in customer-service training. Many employers expressed an interest in a community-based program since customers of one business are also customers of another.

Potential actions:

- Assess the feasibility of a resort community pre-season training program with standardized components (history, culture, geography, saleable products, service quality) but customized local area content. Consider utilizing return staff to assist with training to enhance their own knowledge and skills through teaching and to begin developing workplace culture.
- Encourage community-based organizations to respond to the training and education needs from the study by identifying specific training options currently available in/near the community
- Reward employees for taking education and training options provided within the community (connect training with rewards – e.g., similar to the Whistler Spirit Pass).

2. Capitalize on BC Tourism and Hospitality Learning System

There is room to create stronger and more defined linkages between the existing tourism and hospitality education system in BC and the BC resort communities. Doing so may create better “feeder programs” for the resort communities, reduce training costs, and potentially address voluntary turnover rates by securing long-term, career-minded employees. There may be additional opportunities to encourage educators and/or other agencies to collaborate with the communities to provide “in community” training options to assist them in preparing for peak season operations.

Potential actions:

- Encourage LinkBC and go2 to highlight the results of the study to educators and to assist in creating stronger linkages with BC Resort Communities.
- Highlight the existing training and education programs – credit and non-credit – available throughout BC to the resort communities. Also highlight the experiential education supports such as Cooperative Education programs, Campus Career Centers, etc., which can be utilized to target students during recruitment.
- Encourage faculty in the programs to connect students to the resort communities through case studies, field experiences and research to expose the employment options available within them.

4. How can better linkages and communications between BC resort communities be developed to maximize knowledge of effective labour market practices?

The strategic analysis can be used to assist employers in the resort communities to understand the existing labour market landscape within the province. In order to create better linkages and address some of the potential issues identified, the analysis will need to be shared widely and used to facilitate dialogue within and between communities. Upon report completion, go2 and various groups will develop a communications and outreach plan to ensure that the report is widely distributed and that key findings are acted upon.

Potential actions:

- Share the report in whole, and in summarized form, with all of the participants of the baseline study with a request to share the results within community.
- go2 could use an outreach approach to engage community stakeholders in dialogue on some of the priority areas and to provide expertise on potential strategies that unfold.
- go2 can also play a broker role between communities to assist in creating opportunities for cross-community strategies around recruitment, retention and training.

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Glossary of Terms

Affordable & attainable housing	Access to housing for rent or purchase for year-round residents and seasonal workers that is reflective of tourism wages
Amenities	The pleasurable aspects associated with the natural (e.g. air & water quality, scenic settings), cultural (e.g. heritage, recreation), and systems (e.g. telecommunications, infrastructure) that make areas attractive places to visit, play, live, work, and prosper
Attraction	The process of enhancing the level of interest in a career or job prospect by highlighting its positive attributes
Attrition	The gradual reduction of a workforce by employees' leaving and not being replaced – one example of which is retirement
Benefits	The wide range of non-wage compensations provided to employees in addition to their normal wages or salaries, such as extended health, life/disability insurance, dental and RSPs
Best Practices	Methods or techniques that consistently show superior results
Community	Communities are social units that can be formed based on place (e.g. a town or business) or on values or interest (e.g. culture or leisure). A sense of community refers to an individual's relationship and participation in a community and the sense of belonging experienced
Compensation	Monetary (e.g. wages, rewards, bonuses) or non-monetary (e.g. perks, benefits) payment or reward for service to an employer
Innovation	The application of new solutions for the betterment of a product or service
Lifestyle	The way of life of an individual, group, or culture characterized primarily by recreational pursuits and interests in the case of BC Resort Communities
Migration	Voluntary or involuntary human movement from one place to another
Mobility	Labour mobility is the geographic or occupational movement of workers
Perquisites or "perks"	A special right or privilege as a result of one's position over and above regular compensation – common examples include take-home vehicles, leisure and recreation discounts, free refreshments, etc.
Recruitment	Refers to the process of attracting, screening, selecting, and on-boarding (e.g. orientation and training) a person for a job
Resident	A person who has lived in a community for more than six months

Resort Communities	Destinations that promote extensive opportunities for visitors (e.g. recreation, culture)
Retention	The ability to keep employees in an organization
Seasonality	A fundamental characteristic of and a key issue in tourism weather-dependent sectors such as the ski industry where climate conditions determine the length of the tourism season and therefore the required staffing levels
Seasonal Worker	Temporary employees who are hired for a fixed term to fulfill the demands of the tourism season
High Season	A community or organization's busiest months for visitation and sales
Low Season	A community or organization's slowest months for visitation and sales, in which some organizations may close or reduce their hours of operation
Shoulder Season	The month(s) on either side of the high season that are busier than the low season but slower than the high season for visitation and sales
Stakeholders	A person, group, organization or member of a system who affects or can be affected by the actions of another (e.g. tourism businesses, support agencies, government, employees)
Tourism Labour Market	The supply and demand of workers within the tourism industry; the size and structure of the industry makes it difficult to measure with precision and consistency
Training	The provision of knowledge, skills and competencies needed to fulfill the requirements of a job
Turnover	The rate at which employers lose employees prior to the end of a season or work contract due to resignation or termination

Introduction

Many of the labour market challenges identified in the BC Tourism Labour Market Strategy (go2, 2012) are similar to those experienced throughout global, national and local markets. Seasonality, shifting demographics, industry perceptions, training, and the recruitment and retention of staff are among the greatest challenges facing the tourism labour market (Baum, 2010; Richardson, 2009; Jolliffe & Fansworth, 2008; Iverson & Deery, 2007; Ball, 1988). Such inter-related factors emphasize the importance of human capital in the success of a tourism operation and the need to analyze labour market issues in context (de Hoyos & Green, 2011; Baum, 2010; Kusluvan, Kusluvan, Ilan, & Buyruk, 2010).

BC Resort Communities are further challenged by their rural location where access to supplies, training and personnel can be difficult (Dodds, 2012; de Hoyos & Green, 2011). Additionally, the shift from a resource-based economy (e.g. agriculture and resource harvesting) to a service-based economy (e.g. hospitality and tourism) adds another layer of complexity to the changing demographics (Dodds, 2012; Nepal & Jamal, 2011; de Hoyos & Green, 2011).

This report summarizes the findings of the BC Resort Community Labour Market Strategic Analysis, a project initiated by go2, BC tourism industry's labour market and human resources association, and funded in part through the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement. The goal of the analysis is to provide go2 and the Resort Communities with a stronger understanding of BC resort community labour market dynamics to enhance efforts for resort community recruitment, training and retention of staff.

The report responds to four core study questions, which include:

1. What are the existing and best practices to manage labour market issues such as seasonal recruitment, training and retention of staff?
2. What strategies can assist BC Resort Communities with recruitment, training and staff retention?
3. What is the experience of BC Resort Communities with respect to labour market issues, and what lessons have they learned that can advance the resort network to enhance the productivity of seasonal labour markets?
4. How can better linkages and communications between BC Resort Communities be developed to maximize knowledge on effective labour market practices?

The following sections seek to answer these questions, drawing out existing practices and trends, including the perspectives of the main stakeholder groups involved in developing and managing resort community labour markets.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to gather data to assess BC Resort Community labour market practices and overall perspectives from community representatives related to resort labour market productivity and competitiveness. This section will provide a short summary of the research methods used in the analysis, and a more detailed methodology is provided in Appendix A.

Key study questions

The research questions that were answered within the project include:

1. What are the existing and best practices to manage labour market issues such as seasonal recruitment, training and retention of staff?
2. What strategies can assist BC Resort Communities with recruitment, training and staff retention?
3. What is the experience of BC Resort Communities with respect to labour market issues and what lessons have they learned that can advance the resort network to enhance the productivity of seasonal labour markets?
4. How can better linkages and communications between BC resort communities be developed to maximize knowledge of effective labour market practices?

These research questions were answered using a multiple-methods approach, which included the following components:

1. A literature review of best practices worldwide
2. A baseline survey in each of the 14 resort municipalities. This was conducted with two to three people in Administrative, Economic Development or Chamber of Commerce offices as well as Employment Centres. A series of questions were asked via telephone during April 2013 that sought to understand community-level labour challenges and practices in recruitment, retention and training.
3. Two short case studies were conducted to provide more detail on the employer challenges and practices with respect to recruitment, retention and training. These were conducted in Fernie and Tofino using in-depth interviews, a review of secondary documents, and a survey of Employers and Employees in May 2013.
4. A comprehensive case study was conducted in Whistler. The case was developed to build on evidence from the baseline study and by providing insight from employers via in-depth interviews and an online survey, as well as from employees via focus groups and an online survey. Additional compensation data was analyzed from job postings.
5. A survey of Graduates and Students from Tourism and Hospitality programs was done to determine the extent that they were working in the communities and their career trajectories (addressing the topic of “retention”).

Literature review

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is twofold: 1) to learn about what is known and not known about the nature of the seasonal tourism and hospitality labour market, particularly in resort communities, and 2) to provide context to the final report for the project. This literature review situates this study in the literature and was used to help develop the surveys and questions in the study and also to develop a set of propositions that were expected to be found in the study.

The literature review seeks to answer the following questions: 1) What **factors** influence recruitment and retention of seasonal tourism and hospitality employees; 2) What **strategies** are employers and communities using to address issues of attraction and retention; and 3) Are there **examples** of other communities that are working to recruit and retain seasonal workers in tourism and hospitality (best practices)?

The literature review was developed by scanning the academic literature for the most influential, current and/or applicable publications on the topics of tourism labour, recruitment and retention, seasonality and resort communities. A broad understanding of tourism labour and the contextual factors influencing employment informed the specific topic of the role of resort communities in the recruitment and retention of staff. The academic literature is further enhanced by 'snapshots' of best practices found throughout the grey literature, primarily from community and organization websites.

What is known about the tourism and hospitality labour market?

Without labourers there can be no tourism, and yet research on tourism labour is largely absent from the major subject areas that make up tourism and hospitality. The lack of reliable tourism employment data is due not only to the cost of data collection but also due to the size and scale of the industry (Ladkin, 2011). Complexities surrounding the definition of tourism services, and in turn tourism workers, have made it difficult to count total numbers and accurately analyze the industry consistently (Ladkin, 2011; Zampoukos & Ioannides, 2011). The benefits and challenges associated with tourism labour have been documented primarily from the perspective of management (Ladkin, 2011; Zampoukos & Ioannides, 2011) with little (or perhaps no) attention given to the role of employees and communities in the greater tourism labour conversation.

People are at the heart of the tourism experience, and therefore the recruitment and retention of staff is imperative to the success of a tourism operation or destination (go2, 2012; Baum, 2010; Kusluvan, Kusluvan, Ilan, & Buyruk, 2010; Duncan, 2008). Yet, labour is crucial to more than business operations. The successful development of destinations cannot be accomplished without recognition of the people who provide the core tourism products. Staff and residents are an integral part of the branding image of destinations, and the interactions between visitors and residents influence the overall tourism experience (Baum, Hearn, & Devine, 2008).

For the 14 BC Resort communities, understanding the nature of the tourism and hospitality labour market is crucial to destination development. Many of them depend upon a continual supply of employees to provide visitors with the world-class experiences that they are known for. As the number of jobs fluctuates based on the tourism seasons, there is a need to understand if there are issues with the recruitment and retention of employees within the resort

communities, to determine the strategies that resort communities are using to address these issues, and to identify potential strategies that can perhaps enhance the labour market situation in each community.

Contextual factors impacting recruitment and retention

Many of the potential labour market challenges facing the 14 BC Resort communities are similar to those experienced throughout global, national and local markets as identified in the BC Tourism Labour Market Strategy (go2, 2012). Seasonality, demographic changes, industry perceptions, and the recruitment, training and retention of staff are among the greatest challenges facing the tourism labour market (Baum, 2010; Richardson, 2009; Iverson & Deery, 2007, Christensen Hughes, 2002).

Adapting the work of Baum (1993) and Christensen Hughes (2002) and in consideration of the priority challenges highlighted in the British Columbia Tourism Labour Market Strategy report (go2, 2012), the following categories will help to define and identify the variety of issues facing recruitment and retention: the image of the industry; government policies and priorities; management philosophy and practice; seasonality; and available labour markets.

The image of the industry

The overall image of the tourism industry and the nature of the work involved require attention in order for the industry to grow as a reputable sector for employment (Baum, 1993; Ladkin, 2011). The perception that the tourism industry is a great place to get experience, combined with the lack of awareness surrounding the long-term career options in tourism, have contributed to retention issues (go2, 2012). Many people, youth in particular, see tourism jobs as transitional and not long-term careers (Richardson, 2009). This has contributed to a 'turnover culture' that is rooted in the belief that there are limited career-development and promotional opportunities (Iverson & Deery, 2007). Yet, given such impressions, the tourism industry has done little to improve its perceived attractiveness (Christensen Hughes, 2002).

The tourism industry culture has traditionally focused on destination marketing and capital projects such as building roads and infrastructure and less on human resource development including the recruitment and retention of staff (Christensen Hughes, 2002). The lack of consideration for human resources and training as a key business imperative needs to be addressed and could help shift the overall industry culture (go2, 2012). Presenting the 'right' image to attract young workers (Baum, 2010) is as important as presenting the 'right' image to attract tourists.

The overall workplace culture, conditions and flexibility need to be addressed (Baum, 2010; Deery, 2002). Perceptions that service work is demeaning and lacks prestige or has low status, is considered highly feminized, and is simply domestic work have been challenging to the image and culture of the tourism industry (Ladkin, 2011; Zampoukos & Ioannides, 2011; Christensen Hughes, 2002; Riley et al., 2002). Initiatives such as promoting job security through long-term contracts, orientation programs, benefits, promotion from within, and the availability of supervisory and management positions have helped to redefine the image of the tourism industry (Pizam & Ellis, 1999 as cited in Christensen Hughes, 2002).

Government policy and priorities

Government policy and priorities, including education, have major implications for the tourism industry (Baum, 1993; Christensen Hughes, 2002). Policies relating to employment standards, tax incentives, immigration laws, education policy, transportation, affordable housing and unemployment support all impact the recruitment and retention of staff. Given the importance of people in the delivery of a successful tourism product, government investment in the tourism industry has implications across various sectors (Christensen Hughes, 2002).

The provisioning of education and training is a major issue facing tourism labour (go2, 2012; Ladkin, 2011; Christensen Hughes, 2002; Baum, 1993). In BC, there is a need to align education and industry and for greater industry participation in advisory committees and work experience programs. And while there is a strong tourism education system in BC, small and rural operators lack access to more programming and training options. Ongoing training and professional development for the tourism industry is of great importance especially given that many leaders in management positions have worked their way up without formal training or experience in supervision and management (go2, 2012).

Management philosophy and practice

Management style, philosophy and practice have significant impacts on the recruitment and retention of staff (Ladkin, 2011; Christensen Hughes, 2002; Baum, 1993). The overall workplace environment from the organizational structure to individual job satisfaction impacts employee recruitment and retention (Ladkin, 2011). Competitive pay and benefits for employees, the provision of training and development, and the promotion of non-material or non-pay-related benefits and perks can reduce employee turnover (Zampoukos & Ioannides, 2011; Christensen Hughes, 2002; Baum, 1993).

Turnover is a major issue facing tourism operations and management (de Hoyos & Green, 2011; Christensen Hughes, 2002; Baum, 1993). From a management perspective it can cost an organization more than 12 months' salary or \$50,000 to lose and replace a manager and more than four months' salary or \$5,000 to lose and replace an hourly worker (go2, 2012; Worcester, 1999). High turnover can also contribute to a poor reputation in the industry (Christensen Hughes, 2002). Push factors such as stressful working conditions, lack of career prospects, and monotony in job tasks (de Hoyos & Green, 2011) combined with pull factors including the lure of more lucrative paying careers (Cameron, Miller, & Frew, 2010) influence an employee's decision to leave an organization. To overcome such challenges, employers have adjusted their management practices and have implemented initiatives such as better recruitment and selection procedures, higher wages, more training, career advancement, multi-skilling, and worker participation (Timo & Davidson, 1999, cited in Christensen Hughes, 2002).

Seasonality

The seasonality of many tourism employment opportunities in conjunction with the high turnover rates of staff are among the greatest challenges facing the successful recruitment, training, and retention of staff. Seasonality has been considered a fundamental characteristic of and a key issue in tourism (Ladkin, 2011; Jolliffe & Fansworth, 2008; Christensen Hughes, 2002; Baum, 1993). Industry trends and the nature of tourism products in BC have made it difficult to offer year-round, full-time employment and to have seasonal employees return year after year. The pressures of seasonality are greatest in rural or remote regions and on weather-dependent sectors such as the ski industry, where climate conditions determine the length of the tourism season and therefore the required staffing levels (go2, 2012).

Limitations such as variation in the duration of employment and the potential for seasonal unemployment could be countered by understanding the characteristics and motives of participating workers (Ball, 1988). According to Ball (1988), participation in seasonal employment can be either voluntary or involuntary. There are two types of seasonal voluntary workers: traditional (either purposely returning to inactivity at end of season, e.g. students; or transferring from one seasonal job to another, e.g. dovetailers) and professional (intend to continue to pursue employment after the season). Additionally, there are two types of seasonal involuntary workers that are linked to the lack of regular job opportunities: immature (new to the labour market, searching for regular employment) and displaced (from jobs in the regular labour market, unemployed). Understanding the needs of different types of workers may help to overcome some of the challenges associated with seasonality.

Seasonality presents many challenges to the delivery of tourism services for employers, employees and the greater community. Many of the general issues in tourism labour as identified by Ladkin (2011) are exacerbated in a seasonal labour market. Employers find it difficult to offer consistent levels of high service quality (Christensen Hughes, 2002). Factors such as high turnover greatly influence service quality due to the lack of continuity in staff. Employees are often faced with low pay, modest working conditions, uncertainty in the duration of temporary work, off-season unemployment and involuntary migration, which contribute to the perception of seasonal work as an inferior form of job opportunity (Ball, 1988). Further, access to affordable housing and the cost of living during peak seasons can be major deterrents to participation in seasonal work (Christensen Hughes, 2002).

Despite challenges, there are benefits associated with seasonal work. In the case of seasonal youth budget travellers to Whistler, BC, working is part of the tourism experience for some (Duncan, 2008). To the employer, such seasonal workers are also potential returning tourists and potential ambassadors for the organization they worked for upon their return home or the arrival at the next destination on their travels (Duncan, 2008). Employees benefit from gaining experience in the labour market and through non-pecuniary benefits such as access to facilities and local attractions (Zampoukos & Ioannides, 2011; Ball, 1988).

Available labour markets

Tourism is highly reliant on a young workforce and in some cases the authenticity of the tourism product is affected by the presentation of the 'right' image, which includes presenting the 'right' people (go2, 2012; Baum, 2010; Christensen Hughes, 2002). As demographics shift to an older population, there is a need to explore different labour pools and to understand the different implications for the successful retention of staff (Christensen Hughes, 2002). The available local labour market is influenced by population, unemployment rates and demographic trends (Christensen Hughes, 2002; Baum, 1993). As the Canadian workforce ages and birth rates drop, there is an increased reliance on migrant workers to fill tourism vacancies (go2, 2012; Baum, 2010; Christensen Hughes, 2002).

Migration has been identified as a means to address labour deficiencies in local markets (Joppe, 2012; Zampoukos & Ioannides, 2011; Baum, 2010). Migrant labour mobility is linked to seasonality in that some workers are attracted to the short-term nature of employment such as the case of migrant young budget travellers attracted to resort work in Whistler, BC (Duncan, 2008). Migration is at the heart of the global 'talent war' or competition for workers in tourism (Baum, 2010). In BC, factors such as the lure of more competitive wages and lower living costs in regions such as Alberta and Saskatchewan, and the keen competition among employers for workers from a shrinking talent pool affect the migration patterns of tourism workers (go2, 2012).

Freedom and mobility in the labour market depends on who you are, where you are, and what you aspire to become (Zampoukos & Ioannides, 2011). For workers in rural areas, the rural culture and the community play a significant role in the mobility of workers. In a thorough survey of workers across the United States of America, encompassing over 8,000 communities including metro and rural regions, it was found that place-based and social factors were more influential in the desire to stay in a community than economic conditions or individual demographic characteristics (Mellander, Florida, & Stolarick, 2011). The sense of place and pride in belonging has implications for recruitment and retention at a community, organizational, and individual level.

Small businesses with fewer than 20 employees account for more than 75% of tourism and hospitality businesses in BC. Having a small labour force in a business, combined with many of the other issues previously stated, places further challenges on small business to be able to offer development, training and practices that promote long-term employee

development and engagement (go2, 2012). Due to their constrained ability, small businesses often lack long-term strategies to address issues such as cost minimization and recruitment and retention. Unfortunately, common practice to reduce costs is often at the expense of employees in the reduction of wages, which can then lead to employee turnover, thus having even greater costs in the form of recruitment and retention (Shaw & Williams, 2004). Taking into consideration small business in remote, rural and/or resort communities, the challenges are even further intensified.

Resort and/or rural communities

All of the previously stated issues that occur within the tourism labour market are only exacerbated in rural, remote and/or resort areas. Rural areas in industrialized countries face consistent challenges such as shifts from resource-based economies (e.g. agriculture and resource harvesting) to service-based and knowledge economies (e.g. hospitality and tourism) (Dodds, 2012; Nepal & Jamal, 2011; de Hoyos & Green, 2011; Cameron, Miller, & Frew, 2010). The tourism and hospitality industry is one of the common diversification industries for economic growth in many areas, especially those in peripheral regions (Zampoukos & Ioannides, 2011). The limited local labour pool in these areas contributes to a restricted labour market where recruitment and retention issues are often intensified (Chan & Kuok, 2011).

Small communities are also often experiencing demographic trends such as the out-migration of youth and the prevalence of out-commuters (people who live in rural areas but travel to work elsewhere), which can impact the availability of workers in communities (de Hoyos & Green, 2011). The local labour market in rural and remote areas is further influenced by the limited availability of services (e.g. public transportation) and a low population density that contributes to a smaller labour pool (de Hoyos & Green, 2011; Cameron, Miller, & Frew, 2010). The lack of options for employment in rural locations can exert an opposite effect on retention and recruitment wherein the lack of other employment options may be the primary reason for staff to remain with their employer (de Hoyos & Green, 2011).

What factors influence recruitment and retention of seasonal tourism and hospitality employees?

Tourism workers have been attracted to the industry for a variety of reasons. Of the few studies undertaken to understand the motivations of workers in the industry it is clear that there are different 'types' of workers who are motivated by different factors (Vaugeois & Rollins; Adler & Adler, 1999; Ball, 1988). In general, the allure of the industry and the benefits experienced by workers include opportunities to meet new people, develop friendships, travel, and practise a foreign language, all of which contribute to the overall development of human capital and new skills (Ladkin, 2011; Zampoukos & Ioannides, 2011; Szivas et al., 2003). Structural factors such as the flexible hours and accessibility of jobs are other common factors contributing to the benefits and allure of employment in the tourism industry (Ladkin, 2011; Zampoukos & Ioannides, 2011). The industry is also recognized for creating employment opportunities for minorities and females (Ladkin, 2011; Zampoukos & Ioannides, 2011).

In a study of tourism operators on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Vaugeois and Rollins (2007) identified five motivational orientations for employment in tourism. Understanding these orientations to employment can assist destinations to develop strategies that appeal to the type of employees that are required in the labour market. The orientations ranged along a push-pull continuum where tourism was entered into as an industry of choice due to its attractiveness, flexibility, opportunity for entrepreneurship and profit and variety or, for others, a default employment option based on limited other opportunities.

While an attractive labour prospect for many, workers can experience a number of challenges linked to the tourism and hospitality industry that impact decisions to work or remain in the industry. Unfavourable pay and work conditions in

general are further characterized by long hours, the predominance of part-time jobs, the temporary or seasonal nature of the industry, a lack of benefits, and limited opportunities for promotions or pay increases. Other factors such as the low skill nature of the work, the repetitiveness of tasks, and the emotionally and physically demanding aspects of the work weigh heavy on tourism workers (Ladkin, 2011; Zampoukos & Ioannides, 2011; Christensen Hughes, 2002; Riley et al., 2002). For employers, sourcing workers from the available labour market is further challenged by labour shortages and skills shortages (Dodds, 2012; go2, 2012; Ladkin, 2011). Projected trends indicate that the demand for skilled workers in BC will be greater than the supply and that normal attrition combined with the growth of the sector will result in a significant number of job openings in tourism (go2, 2012). In order for the tourism industry to prosper into the future, understanding the array of benefits and challenges facing tourism workers will be paramount.

These benefits and challenges have a direct impact on the recruitment and retention of workers in the tourism labour market. The variety of labour market issues in any destination needs to be analyzed in context and not as isolated issues (de Hoyos & Green, 2011; Baum, 2010). Baum (2010) highlighted the overall issue of recruitment and retention as a combination of factors including labour turnover, skills shortages, training and development opportunities, and workplace conditions. Together, these factors influence individual decision-making to identify employment opportunities, gain training and experience, and enter into or exit positions in the industry. According to Ladkin (2011) the main issues facing the tourism labour market in general include: pay, working conditions, job satisfaction, organizational structure, management styles, globalization, skills, education and training, labour markets, and service quality. Such issues greatly impact the recruitment and retention of tourism workers and need to be evaluated in context in order to best understand the implications of a broad range of factors.

In addition to the micro and macro issues facing recruitment and retention in the larger tourism labour sector, individual variances among the types of tourism resort workers must also be considered. Within resort communities, destinations that promote extensive opportunities for visitors, the demand for and reliance upon a strong labour pool is crucial. Adler and Adler (1999) identified and classified resort hospitality workers through comparative research in Hawaii with insights from resorts in the Rocky Mountains (USA). They found ... “that aside from the effects due to seasonal variation, the categories and experiences of resort workers in all the different types of hotels we studied were remarkably consistent” (Adler & Adler, 1999, p. 372). Their four-tier typology of hospitality workers include: new immigrants, locals, seekers and managers. Understanding the motivations of workers in accordance with Adler and Adler’s (1999) typology, Vaugeois and Rollin’s (2007) factor orientation, and Ball’s (1988) classification of seasonal workers may help to understand the variances in tourism workers’ motivations and the recruitment and retention strategies best suited to the type of employee (table 1).

Table 1: Overview of Tourism Workers

	Benefits	Challenges
Tourism Labour Characteristics (de Hoyos & Green, 2011; Ladkin, 2011; Zampoukos & Ioannides, 2011; Szivas et al., 2003; Christensen Hughes, 2002; Riley et al., 2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet new people - New friendships - Travel - Foreign language use - Develop human capital - Develop new skills - Flexible hours - Accessibility of jobs - Many opportunities for minorities and females - Non-pecuniary benefits (i.e. perks) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unfavourable pay - Unfavourable/stressful work conditions - Long hours - Part-time, temporary, and/or seasonal jobs - Lack of benefits - Limited opportunities for promotion or pay increases - Emotionally and physically demanding work - Monotony in job tasks
Tourism Employment Orientations (Vaugeois & Rollins, 2007)	Orientation	Motivational Factors
	Refuge Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Circumstances of labour market - Desire for improved employment
	Positive Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appealing image of the industry - Desire for a particular lifestyle
	Entrepreneurial Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fit of tourism to education, situation, or goals
	Instrumental Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Profitability of tourism
	Wanderer Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Variety of options
Seasonal Workers (Ball, 1988)	Participation	Types
	Voluntary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditional and professional
	Involuntary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Immature and displaced
Resort Workers (Adler & Adler, 1999)	Types	Motivations
	New immigrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Means of supporting extended family - Sought a better life
	Locals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Temporary orientation: likely to view jobs as temporary while young; - Individual career development: upward mobility that involved skill acquisition; - Organizational career development: one of the only industries available; - Permanent: see themselves as permanent fixtures of the hotel and the foundation of stability.
	Seekers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Escapists; motivated by lifestyle - Pursuit of experiential rather than material goals
	Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to integrate work and leisure - Chance to travel; transient

For employers, retention is considered a far bigger issue than recruitment and selection (Cameron, Miller, & Frew, 2010). Finding employees, while challenging, is not nearly as difficult as retaining good employees once hired. If, for example, employers are not able to offer competitive packages, they risk losing employees to other companies or regions. Employers have overcome some challenges by creating a friendly and pleasant work environment, making training available to employees, enriching career prospects, enhancing financial packages, and providing challenging and creative jobs for their employees (de Hoyos & Green, 2011). Such a focus on the relationships between employer and employee has been identified as a key success factor in the retention of employees (Cameron, Miller, & Frew, 2010). However, there are greater contextual factors that impact recruitment and retention surrounding the availability of the supply of human resources in the tourism industry (Christensen Hughes, 2002).

To what extent do employees choose the community over the job?

There is an assumption in the labour market literature that individuals prioritize decisions about their career over decisions about lifestyle. Yet there is ample evidence that our population today elevates the role of lifestyle in personal decision making. This trend suggests that there is a need to identify the extent that location or community exerts an influence on career decision-making. For example, in the rural county of Lincolnshire, UK, de Hoyos and Green (2011) found that in addition to structural factors, location does have a great impact on the retention of staff. For example, despite employer efforts, if an employee did not like the lifestyle or had no family in the area, keeping an employee on staff proved difficult. In resort communities, which often rely on the continual in-migration of labour, understanding the influence of the desire to live in a community among seasonal workers may identify additional strategies available to assist in recruitment efforts.

Some evidence exists already to suggest that the 14 BC resort communities are attracting labour due to the amenities available within as opposed to the job opportunities. For example, in a 2002 case study of Whistler, Christensen Hughes determined that many employees were there for the skiing, not the career; it did not matter what type of work they were doing, so long as they could ski every day. Therefore their loyalty was to their leisure and not their employment, which resulted in high absenteeism (especially on great powder days) and high turnover. Prior to the case study, this indifferent attitude toward work had been contributing to high in-season turnover at Chateau Whistler. Many workers experienced a lack of work satisfaction, boredom during valleys, burnout during peaks, and difficulty balancing career and lifestyle. Combined with factors such as a high cost of living, a lack of affordable housing and unrealistic corporate

Figure 1:

Employer Recruitment & Retention Initiatives

- Promoting job security through long term contracts
- Orientation programs
- Career advancement and promotion from within
- Availability of supervisory and management positions
- Competitive pay and benefits for employees
- The provision of training and development
- The promotion of non-material or non-pay related benefits and perks
- Providing challenging and creative jobs for their employees
- Multi-skilling
- Worker participation
- Creating a friendly and pleasant work environment,
- Care for employees,
- Buy-in to the corporate culture

(de Hoyos & Green, 2011; Zampoukos & Ioannides, 2011; Christensen Hughes, 2002; Baum, 1993).

expectations, for many workers their source of employment was not satisfying their overall needs and desire to live in the community of Whistler.

What *strategies* are employers and communities using to address issues of recruitment and retention?

In response to the challenges faced by many resort areas, numerous recruitment and retention strategies have been implemented by employers (table 2). In the recruitment phase, there is a shift from a focus on technical skills to an emphasis on attitude and personality with the assumption that new hires can be trained and acquire the necessary skills (Chan & Kuok, 2011; Duncan, 2008; Christensen Hughes, 2002). Training and development were also viewed as retention strategies to counter low wages (de Hoyos & Green, 2011). Further, the establishment of a relaxed atmosphere, care for employees, and buy-in to the corporate culture have proven useful in retaining staff (Duncan, 2008). “Employees need to be made to feel that they are an important part of the business when they are recruited and that they have an ongoing commitment made to them by management through their whole career” (Cameron, Miller, & Frew, 2010, p.73). Innovative employer actions such as partnering with other organizations on opposite seasonal cycles, the use of automated human resource information systems (HRIS) to track seasonal workers, and the recruitment of migrant workers have also proven to be useful strategies for the recruitment and retention of staff (Christensen Hughes, 2002). Other strategies at the firm level are evident through businesses’ websites and include strategies such as banking employee hours during their seasonal employment to ensure they have income for 12 months of the year (table 2).

Table 2: Employer-Based Innovative Recruitment and Retention Strategies

WHO: Hostels International	WHERE: Banff, Alberta
WHAT: Job seeker package	PURPOSE: Recruitment
<p>DETAILS: The package includes: 14 nights’ accommodation (if job seekers get a job and a place to stay, the unused nights of the package are refundable), free wi-fi, personal voice mail box so potential employers can leave voice mail messages for job seeker, free resume printing & faxing, free local bus transit on the Banff city bus system</p> <p>SOURCE: Business’ website: http://www.hihostels.ca/westerncanada/877/Hi-Banff-Alpine-Centre/Working-Holiday-Makers/index.hostel</p>	
WHO: Sunshine Ski Resort	WHERE: Banff, Alberta
WHAT: Employee experience	PURPOSE: Retention
<p>DETAILS: Provide the opportunity to socialize and enjoy some of the incredible advantages that living in the Rocky Mountains and Bow Valley has to offer. All full-time staff ski and ride free at Sunshine and receive big discounts at over 13 other amazing Canadian ski & snowboard resorts. Their staff receives: discounts in Food & Beverage outlets, retail store, on rental equipment and ski lessons, free transportation to Banff and Canmore, staff recognition and parties.</p> <p>SOURCE: Business’ website: http://www.skibanff.com/employment/perks-wages/</p>	

WHO: Big White Ski Resort	WHERE: Kelowna, British Columbia
WHAT: Job fair	PURPOSE: Recruitment
<p>DETAILS: Each year Big White Ski Resort hosts a job fair for applicants, where applicants can be interviewed for one, two or even three different jobs. Throughout the year jobs are posted online. Potential employees submit job applications online. Online applications are required to be submitted no later than mid-September to obtain an appointment at the two-day job fair held annually mid to end of October.</p> <p>SOURCE: Organization's website: http://www.bigwhite.com/contact-us/employment-info/?ccm_tab=3#tab Past Employee Blog site: http://bigwhitebc.wordpress.com/employment/ Kelowna News: http://www.kelowna.com/2009/10/16/annual-big-white-job-fair-takes-place-today-and-tomorrow/</p>	
WHAT: Staff perks	PURPOSE: Retention
<p>DETAILS: Staff perks: Free season pass, half-price food, free lift tickets at other resorts in BC, discounts at retail stores, access to staff accommodation.</p> <p>SOURCE: Organization's website: http://www.bigwhite.com/contact-us/employment-info/?ccm_tab=3#tab Past Employee Blog site: http://bigwhitebc.wordpress.com/employment/</p>	
WHO: Parks Canada (Trent Severn Waterway)	WHERE: Southern Ontario
WHAT: Banked hours	PURPOSE: Retention
<p>DETAILS: Staff bank overtime hours to ensure they are paid 12 months of the year, even though they only work seven months. Weekly hours above 40 hours per week are banked and paid on weeks when employees are not able to work.</p> <p>SOURCE: Personal communication</p>	
WHO: Buckeye Marine	WHERE: Bobcaygeon, Ontario
WHAT: Banked hours	PURPOSE: Retention
<p>DETAILS: Staff bank overtime hours to ensure they are paid during the off season. Weekly hours above 40 hours per week are banked and paid on weeks when employees are not able to work. Sales staff whose wages are based on seasonal sales are paid regularly during off season. This pay is then deducted from commissions during on-season.</p> <p>SOURCE: Personal communication; Organization's website: http://buckeyemarine.com/</p>	

WHO: Summer Watersports	WHERE: Muskoka, Ontario
WHAT: Cover the cost of certification	PURPOSE: Recruitment, training and retention
<p>DETAILS: Staff who possess certification from other countries are eligible for the cost of Canadian certification to be covered by company. Coaches from countries such as Australia are able to work year-round by traveling with the seasons.</p> <p>SOURCE: Personal communication; Organization’s website: http://www.summerwatersports.com/</p>	
WHO: Aspen Snowmass Ski Resort	WHERE: Aspen, Colorado
WHAT: Job fair	PURPOSE: Recruitment
<p>DETAILS: Aspen holds three job fairs for applicants. Job fairs are in August, October and November.</p> <p>SOURCE: Organization’s website: http://www.aspensnowmass.com/we-are-different/employment</p>	
WHAT: Free meals	PURPOSE: Retention
<p>DETAILS: During slow times in the shoulder seasons, when staff are not getting full-time hours, Aspen provides free meals to staff.</p> <p>SOURCE: CBS News: http://denver.cbslocal.com/2012/12/11/aspen-skiing-company-takes-care-of-their-own-when-business-is-slow/</p>	

In a study of small family-owned businesses in rural Australia, Cameron, Miller, and Frew (2010) identified the demographics and central issues, recruitment issues, selection issues, retention issues and turnover issues facing businesses. Foundational to their results is the importance of establishing, building, maintaining and marketing relationships for the long-term retention of staff. From the data collected, they developed a new model of the phases of relationship, recruitment and retention based on relationship marketing that could provide the framework for future initiatives (table 3).

Table 3: Relationship Marketing in Recruitment & Retention

Phase I: Recruitment Phase	Phase II: Orientation Phase	Phase III: Relationship Development Phase	Phase IV: Trust Development Phase	Outcome: Relationship Recruitment and Retention
Marketing the benefits of the relationship through HR policies and job specifications and descriptions	Marketing the benefits of the organization through an orientation program that defines company culture	Marketing long-term commitment to relationship through involvement in decisions (e.g. training, reward development)	Marketing the legal and moral relationship through acknowledging the rights and needs of employees	Marketing an ongoing relationships can lead to improved relations, decreased turnover, increased profits, and reduced stress on employers and employees

Adapted from Cameron, Miller, & Frew, 2010

As previously noted, communities can also play a role in the recruitment and retention of staff. In the case of Whistler, much of its success is "...attributed in large measure to the priorities of several of Whistler's most influential community organisations" (Christensen Hughes, 2002, p. 23). The sense of cooperation and community in addressing staffing issues is apparent through the various initiatives of some of the town's major stakeholders and tourism businesses. Table 4 identifies the best practices undertaken in Whistler as identified in Christensen Hughes' 2002 case study of the resort community. In the 10-plus years since publication, Whistler has experienced many changes, most notably hosting the 2010 Winter Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. Therefore, it is realistic to assume that many of the findings of Christensen Hughes' 2002 study may have changed; however, the findings provide context and background to the literature and the community of Whistler.

Table 4 : Recruitment and Retention Best Practices in Whistler, BC, Canada		
Organization	Recruitment Initiatives	Retention Initiatives
Whistler Resort Association	Attracts tourists and potential employers	Creates a family atmosphere to retain its employees
Whistler Chamber of Commerce	Employment centre that coordinates job postings	Supports business needs; provides training
Whistler Housing Association	Affordable housing; aims to create a fully integrated community (e.g. encourages suite/basement development in private homes)	
Whistler Blackcomb Mountain: Intrawest Corporation	Provide many benefits	Heavy focus on employee happiness to return/recommend; share workforce with golf course and transfers with sister resorts on opposite cycles; HRIS use and tracking; management philosophy

Adapted from Christensen Hughes, 2002.

From a community perspective, seasonal employment and high turnover can have major implications for the social and economic well-being of a community. In resort communities, where staff may live on or off site, fluctuations in staffing can put strain on local amenities and can present issues for long-term planning. Therefore, it is in the communities' interest to ensure the recruitment and retention of tourism workers as they are also residents contributing to the local economy. Yet, there is little documentation in the academic literature of practices being implemented at a community level to address tourism labour challenges; however there is evidence among the grey literature, primarily websites that highlight community-based initiatives such as affordable housing initiatives (table 5).

Table 5 : Community-Based Innovative Recruitment & Retention Strategies

WHO: Job Resource Centre	WHERE: Banff, Alberta
WHAT: Ski hiring fair in October	PURPOSE: Recruitment
DETAILS: During this time all of the regional ski areas are on hand to talk about employment opportunities for the coming winter.	
SOURCE: Organization's website: http://jobresourcecentre.com/	
WHO: Banff Housing Corporation	WHERE: Banff, Alberta
WHAT: Affordable housing initiatives	PURPOSE: Retention
DETAILS: The Banff Housing Corporation helps people living and working in Banff. The Town of Banff established the Banff Housing Corporation to ensure a range of housing types is available to Banff residents and families of all ages and income ranges.	
SOURCE: Organization's website: http://www.banff.ca/Index.aspx?NID=156	
WHO: Aspen/ Pitkin County Housing Office	WHERE: Aspen, Colorado
WHAT: Employee housing	PURPOSE: Retention
DETAILS: The Aspen employee housing program exists to help people who work within Pitkin County seeking home ownership or long and short-term rental opportunities, and who would not otherwise have the opportunity to build a life as part of our community.	
SOURCE: Community's website: http://www.aspenhousingoffice.com/	

With little evidence of community cases on seasonal labour in tourism, it may be worthwhile to look beyond the industry to see if other labour sectors have addressed recruitment and retention in innovative ways at the community level. There is some academic evidence on community engagement in the recruitment and retention of workers in rural areas in the medical sector (Shannon, 2008; Veitch et al., 1999). In an in-depth study of two very different rural communities in Australia, Veitch et al. (1999) analyzed the broad-based community action plans for effective recruitment and retention of medical professionals. They found many similar strategies implemented by the two communities that could be implemented elsewhere: the formation of a liaison committee to interact with stakeholders; development of information packages for prospective applicants; formation of a welcoming process to help doctors and families settle in to the community; addressing the quality and availability of housing; sponsoring students to spend time in the community; and consideration for spousal and family employment and education needs (figure 2). The action plans involved a community facilitation process that was a means for community, industry, government, academic institutions and others to collaborate on the issues of recruiting and retaining medical professionals.

In another case study on West Virginia, a multi-disciplinary oversight committee consisting of private and community organizations and academic departments was formed to devise the Recruitable Community Project (RCP) to address recruitment and retention of medical professionals in rural areas (Shannon, 2008). The RCP initiated community assessment processes, provided educational workshops and tools for community members, and facilitated the links

between practitioners and communities to enhance opportunities for both doctors and the communities they could serve.

The RCP was based on many assumptions: (1) health care personnel are attracted by a community's physical attractiveness, local supports for the practice and family, and the welcome they feel; (2) communities do not understand what health care personnel are looking for or how their community is perceived by potential recruits; (3) communities can learn and can effect positive changes; (4) outside assistance from trusted in-state resources can provide this needed assistance; (5) assistance is best delivered in a supportive and collaborative fashion; and (6) an explicit recruitment plan serves as a good vehicle through which to focus the community's efforts" (Shannon, 2008, p. 348).

The assumptions made in regards to the recruitment and retention of medical professionals are not necessarily exclusive to that sector. Perhaps the emphasis on the types of workers needs to be re-focused to include an emphasis on the communities in order to better understand how to best recruit and retain seasonal workers. On one hand, there are people who already live in resort communities who may want to stay and will take whatever job is available to them or create their own opportunities. On the other, there are likely some migrants who have already chosen their profession, whether it be tourism or medicine, and are seeking a community to practice within and call home. Understanding how people interact with the community and with the tourism labour force may help to understand what attracts people to a community and/or industry and what will keep them there in the long term.

What do we not know? Research Gaps

There is a lack of understanding and research on resort communities, in particular regard to employee recruitment and retention and the general labour market. Most of the academic knowledge on tourism labour strategies is based in hospitality with a management perspective and a practitioner focus (Ladkin, 2011; Zampoukos & Ioannides, 2011). The application of alternative approaches and methodologies are emerging to shift the paradigm to understanding tourism labour beyond the management or employer's point of view. In order to achieve this shift, multi-disciplinary approaches that study labour market issues as a whole will help to address the many gaps in research and challenges in practice (Zampoukos & Ioannides, 2011; Christensen Hughes, 2002). As researchers and communities seek to gain a better understanding of the tourism labour market, the following items, learned from the review of current literature, should be considered:

- Tourism labour needs to be studied as a whole to include operators, employees, the greater industry (including government and education) and the local community.

Figure 2: Recruitment & Retention of Doctors in Rural Australia: Community-based strategies

- Form a liaison committee to interface with other stakeholder
- Develop information packages for prospective applicants
- Form a welcome process that helps doctors and families settle in
- Address quality and appropriateness of housing
- Sponsor a medical student to spend time in the community
- Consider spouses' education and employment needs

Adapted from Veitch et al., 1999, p. 208

- Demographic changes (e.g. aging population and exodus of youth from rural areas) into the future will place further pressures on the labour market.
- There is a great need for wider access to continual learning, training and professional development that are delivered through diverse and innovative means, that suit the diversity of participant needs and that occur in locations conducive to employees.
- Innovative strategies to address the challenges of tourism employment such as seasonality need to be shared and developed.
- The extent to which the community exerts an influence on the recruitment of seasonal labour and on the retention of staff who remain due to the high quality of life within communities needs to be understood.

What do we expect to find in this study? Propositions

The benefits and challenges to employment in tourism have a direct impact on the recruitment and retention of workers. It has been stated that the challenges outweigh the benefits (Zampoukos & Ioannides, 2011); however, that gives little or no indication as to the motives for employees to engage in the tourism workforce. Tourism has implications beyond the individual operations of businesses and includes impacts to host communities on a micro and macro level (Ladkin, 2011). Recruitment and retention, therefore, is not solely a management issue but impacts the greater tourism product and the destination as a whole. Despite knowing the many benefits of tourism to host communities, there is little academic research that explores the community's role in the recruitment and retention of tourism workers. Given such information, the research team expected to find the following propositions in this study:

The demand for tourism and hospitality labour in the resort communities fluctuates greatly:

- a. There will be high demand for seasonal labour.
- b. Heavy reliance on in-migration to supply the local labour market.
- c. High competition for shoulder and off-season jobs.

Due to the attractiveness of living and working in BC's resort communities, employees will be motivated by the community more than the career:

- d. Local workers want to stay in the community for lifestyle and/or family reasons.
- e. Migrants' desire to experience the lifestyle and/or amenities of the resort communities will be strong.
- f. A blurring boundary between work and leisure will be noted and will influence employment decisions.

There will be different types of seasonal workers, and they will vary in their motivations, preferences and future plans:

- g. Youth may see tourism jobs as transitional and not as long-term careers.

With respect to recruitment strategies:

- h. There will be evidence of strong recruitment strategies at the firm level targeting in-migrants.
- i. Collaboration among stakeholders in the resort communities will be evident in an attempt to identify markets and recruit employees using the community amenities as attractors.

With respect to retention strategies:

- j. There will be high rates of turnover, particularly in positions that are more accessible (i.e. requiring less experience, education or training).

- k. Management practices and philosophies will influence employees' loyalty to an organization.
- l. Creative strategies at the firm level are evident to motivate employees to remain with employers or in the community.
- m. Efforts at the community level are evident to address issues that are influencing retention such as expanding seasons, addressing cost of living and affordable housing, etc.

Local, provincial, and federal policies and resources will exert an influence on the ability of resort communities' to recruit and retain seasonal employees

This literature review has highlighted the gaps in current knowledge about the seasonal tourism and hospitality labour market. It enabled the team to establish some propositions that we expected to find upon analysis of the BC Tourism Labour Market in the Resort Communities. What is clear is that there is little known about the extent to which strategies are being implemented at the community level. The strategies to attract and keep workers may be in many ways the same as those required to attract tourists – research, segmentation, promotion, cooperative marketing and support services. In resort communities, where the attraction of visitors is not solely the responsibility of individual organizations, collaborations exist to market the region as an enjoyable place to visit. Applying similar collaborative strategies could provide innovative solutions to recruitment and retention challenges faced in BC's resort communities.

Baseline Survey

The purpose of this portion of the project was to understand the strategies and practices in the 14 Resort Municipalities with respect to recruitment, retention and training of tourism and hospitality employees. This baseline is intended to provide a high-level indication of existing practices and high-level perceptions of labour market issues in communities, as opposed to an in-depth inventory of strategies from tourism and hospitality employers. More detailed strategies used by employers are shared in the short case studies of Tofino and Fernie and in the comprehensive case study of Whistler.

Findings

In total, 34 in-depth interviews were conducted in the 14 resort communities with the majority of input provided by local government Chief Administrative Officers, Economic Development Officers, Chambers of Commerce staff and some input from Employment Agencies.

At the core of the seasonal employment issue lies the reality that tourism is embedded in the seasons when product is available for visitors to the communities. Table 6 identifies the nature of seasonality within the Resort Communities. About a half of the resort communities have been attempting to extend their existing season by adding new products such as festivals and events in shoulder seasons or by adding new recreation activities (i.e. mountain biking at winter resorts) in the off season.

Table 6: Summary of Seasons for the BC Resort Communities

Community	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Fernie												
Golden												
Harrison Hot Springs												
Invermere												
Kimberley												
Osoyoos												
Radium												
Revelstoke												
Rosland												
Sun Peaks												
Tofino												
Ucluelet												
Valemount												
Whistler												

For high season
For shoulder season
For Low Season

Half of the resort communities that have a major downhill skiing attraction (four out of eight) indicated that BC's traditional summer travel season was **not** a peak operating season for the community. In addition, only one community (Whistler) indicated no actual low season. When asked about the current size of the tourism labour market, respondents provided "best guess estimates." While there was some inconsistency in responses from individuals within the same community, overall the responses provide a very helpful starting point for the analysis. Importantly, it appears that none of the communities has a tracking mechanism for employment in the industry, which may be an opportunity for the future.

There is a perception among the communities that employment in tourism is distributed between residents and visitors differently throughout the seasons. As shown in Table 7, there is a strong perception that locals occupy the majority of work in the tourism industry in the low season. In the high season, the perception is that jobs are filled mostly by in-migrants in communities such as Fernie, Golden, Harrison Hot Springs, Revelstoke, Tofino and Valemout. All other communities are perceived to have more than 50% of jobs filled by local residents¹.

Table 7: Employment of local residents in tourism industry by community

Community	Low season	High season
Fernie	70-90%	30-40%
Golden	50%	25%
Harrison Hot Springs	95%	20-25%
Invermere	75-80%	60-80%
Kimberley	90-100%	60-70%
Osoyoos	90-100%	70-80%
Radium	100%	50-60%
Revelstoke	80%	20%
Rosland	100%	80%
Sun Peaks	90%	60%
Tofino	100%	25-30%
Ucluelet	80-90%	60-70%
Valemout	? Low	? Low
Whistler	80-90%	60%

The impact of the fluctuation in seasonal workers had significant impacts on the resort communities. On the positive side, the seasonal workers provided an influx of new energy, ideas, youth and money into the communities. Their presence also provided financial benefits to businesses and the housing markets of the Resorts. On the flip side however, a range of negative impacts were also noticed. By far, the most prevalent impact was on the availability and

¹ Note: residents are defined as anyone living in the community for more than six months, which may inflate the resident employment numbers somewhat.

affordability of housing. There were often incredible shortages of housing available during high season, which impacted the ability of employers to recruit and retain staff, and as soon as the season ends and workers leave, there is an oversupply of housing.

Beyond the fluctuation of housing for staff, many reported that the popularity of tourism had resulted in real estate speculation that drove up housing prices. Many of these homes are owned by non-locals and rented out to visitors during the high season and often remain vacant during the off season (a pattern that directly undermines housing supply for seasonal workers).

These rental dynamics are the cause of the issue for many communities, or as one respondent indicated:

"Housing for seasonal workers in the winter is the biggest impact. During studies done (Canada Mortgage and Housing Study) in Oct. show highest vacancy rate (28%) in BC. Revelstoke also had the highest rental rate for the same month. This is because owners end up just charging high rates year round because they can get high rates in the winter. The town ends up losing lower income people that were living there, because they can't afford to live there. There is also over-crowding in housing so people can afford to live there."

Outside of housing issues, a number of respondents commented on the loss of the population during the off season and its impact on the local business community and vitality of the community. For those seasonal workers who live in the community year-round, the use of Employment Insurance in the off season increases if other options are not available. And where an off season exists, there was a perception of competition with locals for the scarce job opportunities. In many communities, there was a recognition that workers needed to maximize their earning during the limited high season by working two to three jobs, which would allow them to potentially save enough to make it through the off season. For example, one respondent stated, *"It's really difficult for people to get a start here. Families, it's hard to live on one income especially when people could make 50-75% more doing the same thing in Alberta, unless both are working, it's hard to stay."*

The majority of these issues were felt to be community issues; however some respondents also indicated that the fluctuation of seasonal labour had significant impacts at the business or organization level including high costs for continuous recruitment, retention and training. One respondent indicated that *"employers are slammed in the shoulder season when they are not ready for guests (e.g. this Easter weekend was beautiful weather, the town was slammed with people and now they're all gone until the May long weekend.). We get all geared up from May to September and then owners are very tired because they do so much of the work."*

In a few communities, the presence of migrant workers was felt to be causing some social problems. For example, one respondent indicated that *"It is a double edged sword. We need them to run and operate [the business] smoothly. There are some social problems with [some] kids who come to work the orchards and vineyards - Some are here to work, but most to play. There is growing animosity between locals and [these] workers...their bad reputation is resulting in some not getting hired. Part of the issue is there is no place to camp affordably so they squat where they can..."* Or in another community a respondent indicated that *"locals dislike the seasonal workers. Called 'toques with dogs' since they come in with a dog, then leave their dog."*

Beyond the impacts on the community, some respondents also identified that the fluctuation in seasonal labour also had impacts on the guests of the resort communities. As one respondent put it, *"Guests get impatient and lack an understanding of the plight of seasonal work (when businesses go from nothing to slammed). Or in another community, "it impacts the overall [community] experience. The transient workforce is mostly here to play and they work is to sustain their leisure. There is often a lack of commitment to the employer and/or the experience of guests. We need long-term commitments (two to three years); a different attitude; more commitment to the employer, guest, resort, personal career; and more community buy-in."*

The significance of recruitment and retention issues

Currently, the labour supply for the Resort Communities comes from a variety of sources. As shown in Table 8, within BC, resorts are targeting labour supply from urban areas like Vancouver and the lower mainland, regional population hubs like Kamloops, and nearby communities such as Squamish and Pemberton for Whistler. Other Canadian sources include the Western provinces as well as Quebec and Ontario. Some communities target international markets in English-speaking countries like New Zealand, Australia and the UK, other European countries such as Germany and Belgium, and others such as Japan, the Philippines, India and Mexico.

Within BC	Other Canada	International
• Vancouver	• Alberta	• Philippines
• Chilliwack	• Prairies	• Australia
• Mission	• Quebec	• New Zealand
• Agassiz	• Ontario	• Japan
• Kamloops		• Germany
• Squamish		• UK
• Pemberton		• Belgium
• Kootenay Region		• India
		• Mexico

Attraction and Recruitment

Respondents were asked to what extent recruitment was an issue for the tourism and hospitality industry. About 70% of the communities indicated that recruitment was a challenge for community employers. Many linked the nature of this challenge to the shortage of affordable and accessible housing options for workers, noting, for example, *“We cannot attract people who have nowhere to live.”* Some identified issues with recruiting specific types of employees such as Chef and housekeeping positions. Interestingly, approximately 30% of communities did not feel recruitment was an issue at present – particularly the well-branded winter ski resort communities. A number indicated that they have been experiencing a trend where they receive more applicants than they have jobs available. Despite this, most indicated that they were well aware of the volatility of the labour market and recognized that without effective strategies in place, they could experience shortages in the future.

Retention

Retention appeared to be a more consistent issue for the Resort Communities. For some, it was a more significant issue as well. For example, *“Retention is a much bigger issue. This is not a place you can live year-round. It’s an unsustainable industry with high turnover. It is rare to get someone beyond three to four summers.”* Or, *“Recruitment is not a problem. Retention is hard however. Employers try to be upfront and honest with people if they want to stay past October.”*

Labour Productivity

Many recognized that retention challenges are due to the nature of the workforce in that it has a high reliance on foreign workers, which does not lend itself well to returning seasonal staff. There was also an indication of in-season retention issues. This was noted to be a challenge in a few communities where, for example, employees in high demand such as chefs and servers were found to move to other positions within the same community, primarily for higher wages or other benefits. In others, there was a perception that employees would take a position with an employer temporarily while they pursued employment for a “more desirable employer” who could provide either higher wages or better perks (such as a seasons pass).

Some of the dynamics influencing the ability to retain employees were noted by respondents. For example, one respondent indicated that retention is a challenge for employers due to *“costs, competition with other employers for workers and a lack of understanding about who offers what benefits to enhance competitiveness.”* Some felt that wages were a core issue along with the inability to offer extended employment. This creates a situation where employees are not willing to commit to training as they don’t necessarily see themselves committed to the community or the tourism industry. Or as one respondent stated *“Salary is a big problem, people can get better money elsewhere. Being part-time for three or four months of the year to make enough money to spread out over 12 months is really hard.”*

The realities of the strong lifestyle motivation of employees, combined with the reality of people working several jobs, create challenges for employers to “work around” the employees’ life priorities. As one respondent indicated, *“It’s not a result of employment conditions. This is a result of employee mentality. Since the community is recreationally based, staff wants to work for recreation opportunities. The challenge is how to keep staff on and working, when they want to recreate during work times.”* Some communities were targeting in-migrants with different motivations as *“we know they are here for the entire season.”*

Few people indicated that recruitment or retention issues had been brought forward by employers in the community with the expectation of assistance with their human resources challenges. However, there was a strong indication that there was a broad recognition of the challenges associated with seasonal work in the resort communities.

Strategies to address recruitment and retention challenges

Overall, there were few innovative strategies being used by the resort communities to address recruitment and retention at the community level. Similarly, there was limited collaboration on any initiatives among core community stakeholders with respect to recruitment and retention. Some indicated that they thought employers might be sharing employees across seasons and others referred to Chamber-led initiatives such as the Spirit Pass, Ambassador Programs or Discount programs. Most respondents deferred to strategies they understood employers to be using. Table 9 provides a summary of the recruitment strategies being used in the resort communities, while Table 10 provides a summary of the retention strategies being used.

In terms of recruitment, strategies ranged from “tapping into local labour pools” or “seeing who shows up” at the start of the season to more organized efforts to host job fairs or international recruitment visits by some of the larger employers in the Ski resort communities. One of the more innovative sets of programs was found in Whistler - the Blade

“How do you employ people for short periods of time? How do you house people for short periods of time? Homes are too expensive to afford on tourism wages... You can’t build housing for 3 months of the year. Makes retention a big problem. Makes recruitment a big problem.”

Runner Program. This program is offered with the Squamish First Nation and offers interviewing skills and information on the company. There is another Peak Experience Program running in Whistler as well with the three local high schools where they gain work experience for 12 days, four days each in different areas (e.g. lifts, safety, etc.).

In keeping with the finding that retention is a more serious issue for the resort communities, Table 10 summarizes the range of strategies being used to retain employees. These range from simple strategies such as being honest with employees at the start of the season about longer term opportunities to “right of recall” whereby previous employees can reclaim their former position in the next season. A few communities were proactively welcoming the employees into the community (Revelstoke) and to build product knowledge (Fernie). Some job-sharing initiatives between employers in the same community were present (Kimberley) as well as the use of ambassador programs (Tofino) and community-wide perks such as the Spirit Pass (Whistler).

Note: recruitment and retention strategies listed in Tables 9 and 10 are merely sample practices that were identified by interview respondents. The list is not comprehensive – i.e., other communities may have similar strategies that were not documented in the summary tables.

Community-based supports for employees and employers

In an effort to understand what types of supports were available for employees and employers within the Resort Communities, staff from local or regional Employment agencies were interviewed. Just under half of the communities had an employment centre or agency in their community while most had supports within their region. For those that did have an agency or centre in their community, most of the supports provided include job-search assistance, résumé assistance and some training. Most of the programs are targeted to support employees as distinct from employers although some had recognized the need for a shift. Among the responses from administrators, there was a very limited awareness of the types of supports available within their local or regional agencies.

On the specific types of supports provided:

- No communities had a community labour market strategy
- Visa/work permit assistance for in-migrants was provided in about 15% of communities
- Job search and placement assistance for employees were provided in about 40% of communities
- Health coverage and medical assistance for employees was rare and if provided was employer-based
- Transportation services for employees were provided in about 20% of communities, although most recognized that services were ineffective
- Housing supports such as local bylaws enabling on-site staff housing were limited (approximately 20%)
- Community-wide on-boarding supports such as training and programs available to staff (approximately 20%)
- Community wide perquisites were available in about 15% of communities with some exploring options
- Centralized recruitment assistance provided to employers such as job fairs or coordination of overseas recruitment campaigns (approximately 20% with many deferring to their Mountain resorts)

Few individuals identified the need for more information or support to assist them in addressing recruitment, retention and training in their communities. However, for those who did, respondents indicated that they could use: a) statistics on jobs or some form of monitoring tool, b) information on what other communities or Chambers of Commerce are doing, and c) potential ways to collaborate among stakeholders within their community.

Table 9: Summary of recruitment strategies used in the BC resort communities

Strategy	Communities (not exhaustive list)	Description
Tapping into other labour pools	Harrison Hot Springs	Proximity to larger urban centres like Vancouver and Chilliwack, or nearby Mission, allows businesses to tap into larger labour pools.
Temporary Foreign Worker Program	Osoyoos, Revelstoke	Program that allows employers to hire foreign workers on a temporary basis to fill immediate skills and labour shortages, when Canadian citizens and permanent residents are not available.
"People just show up here"	Numerous – e.g.: Revelstoke, Tofino, Sun Peaks, Ucluelet, Whistler, Rossland	Employers can rely on a seasonal worker influx where many people who are attracted to the lifestyle or amenities of the community show up and are looking for work. While many employers in these communities still undertake active recruitment domestically and overseas, they can rely on a predictable stream of applicants arriving in the community each peak season.
Oversees recruitment visits	Whistler, Invermere, Radium Hot Springs, Revelstoke	Large employers travel to other countries to recruit. Some employers, (e.g., in Revelstoke, Whistler) directly recruit foreign workers overseas.
Job Fairs	Kimberly, Whistler	Employer and community-based job fairs (actual recruitment, not merely career/business awareness) held at the beginning of each peak season. Resorts of the Canadian Rockies have two job fairs: 1. Late spring for golf course, 2. Fall for ski area.

Table 9: Summary of recruitment strategies used in the BC resort communities

Strategy	Communities (not exhaustive list)	Description
Use of local Chamber of Commerce programs	Radium Hot Springs, Whistler, Tofino	Local businesses utilize local Chamber programs for recruitment, training and/or retention of staff.
Partnership with adjacent communities	Radium Hot Springs, Invermere, Fairmont	Work with Invermere, Fairmont, in regards to recruitment.
Hire International workers	Sun Peaks	Recruiting international workers because they can live close to the resort (commute from Kamloops a significant challenge for staff). Visas are becoming easier to get for students and temporary workers.
Education specialty programs	Whistler	Blade Runner Program: offered by Whistler Blackcomb with the Squamish First Nation offers interviewing skills, information on the company; Peak Experience Program: with the three local high schools. Work experience for students (12 days; four days each in different areas e.g. lifts, safety, etc.); co-operative education programs with universities across the country: 40-50 a year.
Use of Local employment office (WorkBC)	Fernie (and others)	An online employment site with in-person support of the provincial government (WorkBC) that helps to connect employees with potential employers

Table 10: Summary of retention strategies used in the BC resort communities

Strategy	Communities	Description
Clarifying employee retention interests vis-a-vis limited long-term options	Osoyoos	Since people are in the community for the lifestyle or recreation, employers ask employees upfront if they are honestly going to remain in the community after October and explain the (limited) opportunities for permanent employment.
Providing competitive (above-market) total compensation packages	Sun Peaks	Providing above market-rate compensation, as well as benefits and perquisites such as a car allowance and job training. Even with these strategies, respondents indicated ongoing recruitment and retention challenges in light of little local labour supply.
Product Knowledge Trade Show	Fernie	CoC and Tourism Fernie run trade show linking seasonal workers with local businesses. There are prizes for seasonal workers who participate. The goal is to increase the knowledge of non-local resident workers about the community, which in return will make them feel more welcome in the community and remain in the community. Has been running successfully for two years, with 50 vendors and 250 participants.
Employee Perks/Incentives	Fernie, Golden, Kimberly, Invermere, Radium Hot Springs, Revelstoke, Sun Peaks, Tofino, Whistler	Fernie Alpine Resort provides a season lift pass to all employees; winter shuttle service from downtown to ski hill is free for workers. Golden provides season's passes to Kicking Horse Mountain and above-market compensation as incentives. Invermere –Columbia Valley Chamber office is considering a Spirit Pass-type passbook; Radium Hot Springs - large resorts have free golfing and skiing for staff; Revelstoke – early lift tickets; Sun Peaks - staff discounts on passes and other products/services; Tofino – discounts are offered in exchange for recommendations to local businesses; Whistler – offers local rates for residents in many businesses.
Transportation Assistance	Invermere, Fernie, Revelstoke, Sun Peaks	Provides free shuttles for staff - alternative to hitch hiking/dealing with poor transit. Sun Peaks Resort periodically enables staff use of company vehicles
Providing Staff Accommodation	Harrison Hot Springs, Osoyoos, Radium Hot Springs, Invermere, Sun Peaks, Whistler, Tofino, Ucluelet	Employer-based housing provided in numerous resorts.

Table 10: Summary of retention strategies used in the BC resort communities

Creating a positive work environment	Invermere, Fernie, Whistler, Tofino, Rossland, (and others)	Employers work to create a positive work climate for employees including offering staff events. "Ski school at Fairmont creates a very positive work environment. Not monetary, staff just feel it is great place to work – respect, training, recognition."
Employee 'Right of Recall'	Kimberly; Rossland; Sun Peaks	RCR (Kimberley) employees have 'right of recall' for their jobs, meaning that they are guaranteed their job back the following season if they want it. Unionization is also a key practice influencing recruitment and retention of ski employees - this strategy is a result of a mining community turning to tourism (Kimberley) and using a similar labour-relations model. Retention is covered by alpine union, and respondents indicated it results in a higher standard of living and job security.
Job Sharing - sharing employees between companies	Osoyoos, Kimberly, Revelstoke, Whistler	When two employers in a community provide work for the same employee and create full time / permanent work for that particular employee. This can take place during the same season, or employers may work together to secure employment for the worker during the off season. Kimberly is in the pre-planning stages - "Strategy is to develop a community-wide employee work share program: Through CoC to share staff between businesses to get full time hours for staff. This is only in the beginning phases, has not happened yet." Fairmont promotes the transferring of employees between golf-ski resorts.
Positive & worthwhile Training	Radium Hot Springs, Tofino, Whistler (and others)	A number of larger scale employers provide in-house training and support for new employees.
Partnership on leadership training	Ucluelet	A partnership with Leadership Vancouver Island and Tofino to build leadership capacity. Community-based program (developed through Leadership BC) integrates individuals from all sectors around the concept of leadership.
Welcome Week & Passports	Revelstoke	Welcome Week encompasses seven days of events in the community .There is free admission to local attractions and \$5 dinners. There is 'passport' that allows access to attractions to community and all Chamber members.

Table 10: Summary of retention strategies used in the BC resort communities

Unionized Ski Hill	Rossland	Becoming unionized wasn't a direct strategy for retention but the ski hill inherited it when the mountain was purchased. This has resulted in very little staff turnover. "There are staff who have 20-30 years' service in the ticket office."
Wage Increase & job security for Returning Employees and Employee settlement perks	Sun Peaks	Returning Sun Peaks staff receive an automatic wage increase upon returning. Assistance with flights, accommodations, and other settlement areas, both for first-time employees and returning.
Ambassador Program	Tofino	Provides four hours of training/education on local culture, First Nations, the environment and other topical issues regarding Tofino. It is a partnership of Tourism Tofino, the Chamber of Commerce, and the District of Tofino.
Spirit Pass Program	Whistler	Chamber members purchase discounted ski passes for their staff (also expanding into summer to include more service providers). Staff required to undertake training in customer service. Some employers will pay for whole or part of pass or lend the money to employees upfront with a repayment plan.

Conclusions

While recognizing that this is an initial, exploratory analysis, this baseline analysis of BC's resort communities reveals several notable trends, challenges, and needs within the resort system.

The main findings are:

- Approximately half of the resort communities have been working to expand into shoulder seasons and develop off-season experiences through special events or the introduction of new recreation activities.
- Community reliance on non-local resident labour varies significantly, as do perspectives on how well seasonal labour issues are being managed in the community.
- Local residents constitute the majority of employees during the low season, and even for most communities during the high season.
- All resort communities experience impacts at the community level due to the fluctuation in seasonal employment. Many of these are positive including the infusion of new energy, labour and spending. A number of them present challenges for the community including elevated housing prices, increased reliance on employment assistance and reduced spending during non-peak periods.
- Approximately 70% indicate that recruitment is an issue for them, whereas 30% are experiencing strong application levels for jobs.
- Retention is generally a more significant problem than staff recruitment (at present).
- Housing and accommodation – for temporary/seasonal staff and permanent employees – is a significant issue for most or all resort communities and acts as an impediment to recruitment and retention of staff.
- Many innovative recruitment and retention strategies exist at the individual employer level, but at this time, few strategies exist at the community level:
 - Notable exceptions are community-wide perquisites and training programs offered to seasonal employees, such as the Whistler Spirit Pass, Tofino's Ambassador Program, and Fernie's Product Knowledge Trade Show.

Short case studies

Case Study Context

The purpose of this portion of the *BC Resort Community Labour Market Strategic Analysis* project is to better understand the strategies and practices being used by employers in two of the 14 BC Resort Communities with respect to recruitment, retention and training of tourism and hospitality employees. This focused data collection in Tofino and Fernie will follow up on findings from the baseline study of local government and community Chamber of Commerce administrators, economic development officers and regional employment agencies that has been completed in all 14 communities.

This short case study approach is intended to provide greater depth of understanding in two specific communities regarding existing labour market practices – specifically focusing on seasonal employee attraction and recruitment, retention and training.

Tofino Case Study

Community Snapshot

Tofino is a seaside community located on the West Coast of Vancouver Island. Many of the visitors and residents are attracted to Tofino's beautiful beaches, natural landscape and world-renowned surfing climate. Tofino is located in the geographical region known as Clayoquot Sound, which spreads across 400,000 hectares of land and marine inlets and overlaps with parts of the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, Strathcona Provincial Park and other protected areas. The Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations have lived in Clayoquot Sound for several thousand years. The community of Tofino itself spans only 28.6 square kilometers and is located on the tip of the Esowista Peninsula. It is home to 1,876 permanent residents, a 13.4% increase between 2006 and 2011. In the summer months, Tofino can experience up to 22,000 visitors on a daily basis (Tourism Tofino, n.d.). As July and August form Tofino's peak season, the community's seasonal population fluctuates dramatically, with a major influx of seasonal staff each peak season.

Tofino is culturally inspired by the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations, contains high quality surfing and beach amenities, and a mix of beachfront resorts, campsites, and cabins (Tourism Tofino, n.d.). Tofino's downtown core is vibrant with boutiques, world-renowned restaurants and adventure operators. In the summer months, residents and visitors can choose from an array of activities including surfing, fishing, kayaking, whale-, bear-, and bird watching, camping, hiking and First National cultural touring (Hello BC, n.d.). In the winter months, during Tofino's low season, residents and visitors can experience storm watching from the Kwisis Visitor Centre in the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, at Chesterman Beach or from the protection and warmth of one's own resort room (Tourism Tofino, n.d.). Tofino is at the end of the road; to get there, visitors can fly with Tofino Air, a seaplane service, or by a combination of ferry and vehicular travel. Ferries depart from

Washington State, Tsawwassen (South Vancouver), or Horseshoe Bay (North Vancouver) into cities such as Victoria and Nanaimo. Additionally, visitors can also charter flights through Kenmore Air located in Seattle or from Vancouver through Tofino-Long Beach Airport (Tourism Tofino, n.d.).

Research Profile

Once a remote fishing village, the District of Tofino has boomed into an international tourism destination. The Clayquot Sound Land Use Decision in 1995 drew international attention to the area both in the media and in visitation (Dodds, 2012). Tourism in Tofino first boomed in the 1980s with whale watching, and soon Tofino began to thrive on adventure and ecotourism with the region's abundant lush rainforests, endless surf and spectacular scenery. Resorts, accommodations, restaurants and other tourism services followed as visitation and demand grew. There are now more than 330 businesses and non-profits represented by the Tofino-Long Beach Chamber of Commerce (TLBCC), a comparatively large number for a community of fewer than 2,000 people (TLBCC, 2012).

In a 2005 study of the social impacts of tourism, 42% of respondents indicated that the tourism industry was their primary source of employment, and an additional 26% indicated that they were somehow involved in the tourism industry (Vines, 2005). Resident attitudes and perceptions of tourism in Tofino have been at times negative (O'Brian, 2007; Vines, 2005; Welk, 2006). The District of Tofino has recently recognized the need for a tourism master plan that would encompass and address the socio-economic impacts of tourism on Tofino (District of Tofino, n.d.).

Details from the Community Baseline Study

The bulk of Tofino's tourism is centered on the "100 days of summer" with outdoor activities representing the main draw to the community. Visitors come from all over the world to experience Tofino's unique environment, exciting activities such as whale watching and surfing, and its growing culinary experiences. There has been some success in expanding the off-season by promoting storm watching as a distinctive West Coast experience in the winter months. Events and festivals in the shoulder season are also helping to increase visitation in the slower months of October to May. The community is currently developing plans to position Tofino as an education destination.

With the influx of summer visitors, Tofino also experiences an influx in seasonal workers. The year-round population of 1,800 people increases to roughly 4,000 to 5,000 in the summer months, as more workers, typically youth, come to the seaside resort town to fill the employment demand. This ebb and flow of tourists and workers places a strain on community infrastructure including accommodations, water and sewage. In addition, the massive influx of workers can create some social tensions as well. This has been at least partly ameliorated through the introduction of the Force of Nature Ambassador Program, which provides new staff and long-term residents with tools and information to better understand and communicate to visitors the unique cultural and environmental features that make Tofino such a remarkable place.

Findings

The findings reported below are based upon semi-structured interviews with employers. In Tofino, many respondents either owned several businesses across and/or offered a range of services (e.g. full service resorts

with accommodation, food and beverage, and tours). The respondents are classified by the primary focus of their business and represent the following:

- Three employers in the Food and Beverage Sector
- Five employers in the Accommodation Sector (who owned or operated eight actual properties and two restaurants separate from the accommodation)
- Seven employers in the Retail/Service/Tour Operator Sector (representing nine businesses, two of which also offer accommodation and food and beverage)

The questions asked of each employer, regardless of the sector, are shown in Appendix B. Where an employer owned or operated multiple businesses or properties, the interview covered all of these.

This section outlines the findings from the short case study of Tofino. A detailed summary of responses is found in Appendices D and E.

Several unique themes for Tofino were evident in the analysis of employer responses to the structured interviews, including but not limited to:

- The lure of the community and lifestyle in the recruitment and retention of staff.
- A case-by-case approach to retention and training.
- A lack of affordable and attainable housing as a major barrier to recruitment and retention.
- A high need for seasonal labour and desirability of some turnover.
- A need for increased support services for the tourism industry.

Community and Lifestyle: “The biggest perk is our location”

Many seasonal employees come to Tofino for very much the same reasons that tourists come to Tofino: to play! The allure of the destination is not only a perk for employees, but it is a major recruitment tool:

“Tofino is a destination place. People come here because it’s amazing. People get the taste and want to come back...the area does a lot on its own, the lifestyle, the people it attracts” (Retail employer).

The marketing efforts of Tourism Tofino extend beyond the tourist to also attract potential employees who then “appear at the doorstep” of most businesses. The community and the lifestyle it offers play a major role in the recruitment and retention of staff. Employers have reacted to the draw of the lifestyle by being flexible with schedules and by utilizing the activities and amenities of Tofino and area as additional perks - e.g. staff activities and recreational outings.

Recruitment, Retention and Training: “It’s really on a case-by-case basis”

Very few employers had formal recruitment, retention and training strategies, especially among the small and medium-sized businesses; flexibility was paramount. Due to the limited amount of full-time, year-round employment, significant seasonal attrition is not only expected but necessary. Employers recruit according to whether they need staff for just one season, or more long-term, and tend to take a very ad hoc approach as a result. Among small and medium-sized businesses, recruitment is generally by word-of-mouth, employee referrals and the occasional posting on Tofino Box (community information board) or Craigslist. Some employers had relationships with universities where they can hire trained and quality staff - e.g. kayak guides from Thompson River University and horticultural students from the Niagara Parks School of Horticulture.

Table 11: Tofino Innovative Recruitment, Retention and Training Strategies	
WHO: Tourism Tofino, the Tofino-Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, & the District of Tofino	WHERE: Tofino, BC
WHAT: Ambassador Program	PURPOSE: Training
DETAILS: The Tofino Ambassador Program is committed to building a strong, healthy community and encouraging a positive attitude among responsible citizens. The program offers customer-service training, leadership skills, and historical and cultural training for seasonal staff, residents, employees and business owners. Upon completion of the course, participants receive an Ambassador Card that grants discounts and benefits to further explore the amenities of the area in order to share their experiences with others.	
WHO: Shelter Restaurant	WHERE: Tofino, BC
WHAT: Goal Setting Program	PURPOSE: Retention
DETAILS: Managers and employees set personal, professional and financial goals with frequent follow-up meetings to evaluate employee goals. Such goal-setting allows managers to better understand the needs of employees, allows management to provide employees with perks that are relevant to their needs, and contributes to a culture of continual personal and professional development.	

Retention strategies were also mostly on a case-by-case basis, depending on whether the employee needs and/or wants to remain with the business long-term. Staff activities and events, combined with creating an overall sense of community in the workplace, were the most common retention techniques among small and medium-sized businesses.

Training is primarily delivered on the job, or required as a condition of employment (e.g. captain's licences, surf instructor certification). Many had orientation manuals and/or staff handbooks. Most employers will happily make additional training available to interested staff, but it is typically driven by employee requests or through a promotion. Some employers cited the cost of training as a barrier to their desire to train employees.

The larger businesses, primarily resorts, experience recruitment, retention and training somewhat differently than do the small and medium-sized businesses. While some also take a case-by-case approach to retention and training, recruitment techniques were more targeted. Word-of-mouth was still a common technique, but other tools such as online postings to WorkBC, Craigslist, and other free job boards were much more common. Some of the larger businesses have targeted foreign labour markets through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program.

The most common form of collaboration among employers was with respect to job sharing for employees who are not able to be employed full-time with any single employer. This was prevalent among most employers, especially smaller businesses. While no formal job-sharing programs or agreements exist, employers are open to employees working at other establishments, and they work with the employee to accommodate a flexible schedule that allows this to happen. For many employees, working two jobs is the only way they can afford to live in Tofino and is often the only way to be able to stay in the community for the long term.

Beyond the sharing of employees, there was little collaboration between businesses and community agencies regarding recruitment and retention, with the exception of an employment partnership between an accommodator and the local First Nation. However, examples of collaboration exist on other levels, such as the Tofino-Ucluelet Culinary Guild, which group-sources local and regional food. The Ambassador Program, which trains new and existing employees and community members to be tourism ambassadors for Tofino, was highly praised among employers as a fabulous community-based training strategy. *“The Ambassador Program is just fantastic...an orientation for new and existing staff...both individual businesses and community need assistance from others.”* (Accommodation employer). With a focus on customer service, the Ambassador Program familiarizes employees with the abundant tourism experiences that exist in Tofino, through a four-hour course, as well as opportunities to experience many of the tours and services for free or at a reduced rate.

Accommodation: “Do you have a place to live?”

Accommodations are by far the biggest barrier to the recruitment and retention of staff, according to employers. The first question many employers ask of potential employees is: “Do you have a place to live?” In the summer, there are no shortages of jobs in Tofino; however, there is a shortage of affordable accommodation, especially for seasonal employees earning entry-level wages. Additionally, one employer noted that for most employees, “homeownership is unattainable in Tofino,” adding that you either have to “rent or be a millionaire.” This puts a strain on seasonal employees and even management in some cases, as employment and housing are not mutually exclusive.

Many resorts have on-site accommodations that range from dormitory-style to private suites, and in some cases off-site accommodation in apartments or houses. Employees are offered accommodations at a reduced rate, and at least one employer offers a ‘rent return program’ that rewards staff for the completion of their employment agreement, typically six months to one year, with a monetary return for each month they paid for staff accommodation. Some smaller businesses rent or have rented houses or apartments for their staff, or have renovated their property to create rooms for staff on site at a reduced rate. For some employers, staff housing is a major perk for their employees, while other employers have done away with staff housing due to the inherent costs and have shifted their efforts to hiring local workers in an attempt to negotiate the accommodations barrier.

Seasonality: “Most people just checking for a pulse”

Due to the intense increase in visitation during summer months, a large seasonal workforce is needed in Tofino. There is an abundance of applicants, and the real challenge for employers lies in finding “that golden employee” within the pool. Further challenges include retaining employees into the busy fall shoulder season, which extends into early October. Many employers would like to hire employees from industry-related post-secondary education institutions; however, the school schedule overlaps with the tourism season, and

therefore students need to return to school in early September, which dissuades employers from hiring students.

Due to this seasonality, some end of season attrition is necessary, as employers require staff who only want to work the summer. Lower-skilled occupations such as Housekeeping tend to be harder to fill and retain. Skilled occupations such as Cook and Chef, as well as management positions, also tend to be hard to fill. This could be due to factors such as a lack of affordable and attainable housing, or due to experiencing a reduction in income due to a decrease in tip-earning potential, especially in the case of food and beverage servers. The high cost of living in Tofino has resulted in many employees' working two or three jobs during both peak and off seasons.

In other ways, the seasonality is a perk for employees who desire flexibility and time off to travel. *"To be able to take that holiday, go visit home during the shoulder"* (Tour Operator respondent) is important to both employers and employees.

Support Services: "We're cut off in more ways than just the road"

The remoteness of Tofino has an impact on the access to programs and services for employers and employees. Many workers live in Ucluelet, where housing is more affordable, and commute to work in Tofino. Other services such as indoor recreation opportunities are lacking in Tofino and, again, people rely on Ucluelet's amenities to support such needs. Local programs, supports and policies have been created to help address some of the challenges facing the tourism industry, such as the Ambassador Program previously discussed and the creation of festivals and events to enhance the shoulder seasons. There is a great need for policies and programs to support affordable and attainable housing.

There was a desire for provincial and federal programs that would support businesses in the form of wage subsidies, small loans, coordinated sharing of employees with mountain resorts and better alignment of industry-related post-secondary school schedules with the tourism seasons.

Conclusions

From the findings of the case study, the situation found in Tofino confirms some and diverges from other propositions outlined in the literature review (see Table below). The need for seasonal labour is primarily met by the influx of seasonal migrants to the community. Many workers want to be in Tofino for the lifestyle and the community itself, and this is seen as a major perk to working in Tofino. Without more detailed information on employee's perspective, it is difficult to say to what extent the blurring boundary between work and leisure influences employment decisions; however, the employer's efforts at creating a sense of community and fun in the workplace hints at the blurring of the line. From the perspective of the employer, many jobs in tourism are seen as transitional and not long-term careers for youth, especially in smaller businesses where room for advancement is limited.

Firm-level strategies varied in terms of intensity and necessity. Some employers specifically target in-migrants in their recruiting, while many others do not feel it is necessary, as so many prospects apply on their own accord. Strategies to retain employees mostly centered on management practices and philosophies to create a fun, safe and family-like atmosphere at work.

High rates of turnover exist in entry-level as well as management/supervisory positions. The fall shoulder season can experience an early exodus of seasonal workers, often resulting in a shortage of experienced employees. Competition for off-season jobs is limited, as most people are informed of this limitation from the beginning and therefore do not plan to stay in Tofino for the winter, or do not desire to stay.

Collaboration among stakeholders exists but not in areas related to employee recruitment and retention. Training opportunities such as the Ambassador Program are highly desired and popular with both employers and employees. Employers also cited an increased need for additional support from local, provincial and federal governments in a variety of labour market areas. Community efforts in the form of the coordination of special events and festivals in the shoulder season have been successful strategies for increasing visitation in these periods, and therefore have resulted in some lengthening of the seasonal demand for labour.

The tourism labour market in Tofino is variable, and employers are learning to embrace its fluctuations and the spirit of play embodied in the tourism experience for both employees and guests. Employees are attracted to Tofino for its natural and recreational amenities, and often a job is a means to an end. As employers understand the needs of their employees, they are adapting their strategies to a case-by-case basis in order to find a balance in turnover and to retain employees from one season to the next.

#	Table 12: Proposition	Tofino
1	There will be high demand for seasonal labour;	YES
2	Heavy reliance on in-migration to supply the local labour market	YES
3	High competition for shoulder and off-season jobs	NO
4	Local workers want to stay in the community for lifestyle and/or family reasons;	YES
5	Migrants' desire to experience the lifestyle and/or amenities of the resort communities will be strong;	YES
6	A blurring boundary between work and leisure will be noted and will influence employment decisions.	?
7	Youth may see tourism jobs as transitional and not as long-term careers	YES
8	There will be evidence of strong recruitment strategies at the firm level targeting in-migrants;	SOMEWHAT
9	Collaboration among stakeholders in the resort communities will be evident in an attempt to identify markets and recruit employees using the community amenities as attractors.	NO
10	There will be high rates of turnover, particularly in positions that are more accessible (i.e. requiring less experience, education or training);	YES
11	Management practices and philosophies will influence employees' loyalty to an organization;	YES
12	Creative strategies at the firm level are evident to motivate employees to remain with employers or in the community;	SOMEWHAT
13	Efforts at the community level are evident to address issues that are influencing retention such as expanding seasons, addressing cost of living and affordable housing, etc.	NO
14	Local, provincial and federal policies and resources will exert an influence on the ability of resort communities' to recruit and retain seasonal employees	YES/SOMEWHAT

Fernie Case Study

Community Snapshot

Fernie is an alpine resort destination located in the Elk Valley area of the East Kootenay Region of southeastern British Columbia. Bordered by the Rocky Mountains, Fernie's permanent population of 4,448 resides in a beautiful small-town community supported primarily by the mining, utilities, construction and tourism industries (Statistics Canada, 2011). Part-time residents consist of recreational homeowners or renters and made up the equivalent of 1,600 full-time residents in 2008 (Halcrow, 2010). Since the 2006 Census, Fernie's population has increased by 5.5% and the community is experiencing increasing pressure to accommodate the needs of the growing population in order to enhance the future stability of the community (Halcrow, 2010; Statistics Canada, 2011).

Fernie originated as a small coal town, and the coal industry grew once the Canadian Pacific Railroad was developed in 1898. Today, the community's preserved historical downtown is complemented by an alpine resort and mining culture. As mining remains a strong pillar of the Fernie economy, tourism is continuously being developed to help make Fernie recognized as a world-renowned destination. As the economic impacts of tourism fluctuate on a seasonal basis, the town of Fernie remains reliant on the consistency of the economic impact of the mining, utilities and construction industries. Fernie is best known as a 'mountain town,' and the alpine ski resort attracts residents and visitors from all around the world. Fernie has many natural and cultural amenities to offer; some of the winter amenities include skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing and snowmobiling. In the summer months, residents and visitors can enjoy fishing, mountain biking, hiking, and golfing. To access Fernie, visitors can use the Canadian Rockies International Airport (YXC) located in Cranbrook, BC, about one hour drive west from Fernie. The airport has daily flights connecting visitors to both Calgary and Vancouver International Airports. Visitors and residents also connect using Highway 3 (the Crowsnest Pass Highway), which connects Fernie to Alberta in the east and to Cranbrook in the west. However, as the highway can become dangerous during the winter months, tourists are advised to take alternative transportations such as flying in or taking the Greyhound Bus line into the community (Tourism Fernie, n.d.).

Research Profile

"Fernie is a world class destination that draws new and returning visitors, that encourages visitors to stay longer and spend more, and that provides tourism services and infrastructure which reflect the cultural, recreational, environmental and economic values of the community."

(Fernie and Area Resort Municipality Initiative, 2012).

The British Columbia Resort Community of Fernie is well suited for ski-based tourism. Fernie Alpine Resort and Island Lake lodge are world-renowned for their powder skiing and draw many visitors to the region (Fernie and Area Resort Municipality Initiative, 2012). Thus the entire community is well known internationally for high-quality skiing. In a 2012 study of visitors and seasonal workers, 86% of respondents highlighted the fact that they traveled to Fernie for the skiing or snowboarding at Fernie Alpine Resort (Tourism Fernie, 2012b). In particular the draw was the snow quality; 50% of respondents indicated that they traveled to Fernie for vacation or seasonal work primarily based on the snow conditions (Tourism Fernie, 2012b). In addition to

winter operations, mountain biking and fly fishing are both experiencing strong growth, and adventure tourism companies are growing to meet increased demands for tourism in the region (Fernie and Area Resort Municipality Initiative, 2012).

As a tourism destination Fernie has experienced rapid growth over the last 10 years. Other than a low year in 2005, Fernie room revenues have been on the rise since 2000 (Tourism Fernie, 2012a). The room revenues have more than doubled in the period between 2000 and 2011 (Tourism Fernie, 2012a). The City of Fernie Resort Development Strategy is working to find ways to increase the occupancy rate of tourist accommodations and activities during the shoulder (spring and fall) seasons through the expansion of infrastructure and services (Fernie and Area Resort Municipality Initiative, 2012).

While the Resort Community of Fernie may be well suited for tourism due to the surrounding amenities, Fernie suffers from challenges in affordable and attainable housing. Five issues have been raised:

- Home ownership is not attainable for many working people. As house prices rise, fewer young households are able to purchase a home.
- There are limited housing choices for renters. There is little available rental housing for low-income households, single parent families and people with disabilities.
- Rental housing conditions are variable.
- The lack of housing impacts employee recruitment and retention.
- Housing issues lead to other social and community issues.

Fernie Affordable and Attainable Housing Strategy, 2007

The Fernie and Area Resort Development Strategy highlights the fact that even though the community is focused on tourism, there is also a community-focused vision for the area. *“Fernie is an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable community where everyone has the opportunity to pursue an excellent quality of life”* (Fernie and Area Resort Municipality Initiative, 2012).

Findings

Seasonality in the Local Labour Market

The winter season in Fernie is the peak tourism season. Winter tourism runs December to April and it is mainly based on skiing. With this historical reliance on skiing as the main community attractor, there has been little development of the shoulder and low seasons. The shoulder seasons are June to September. The low seasons are October to November and April to May. There has been a big push over the last few years to build out the summer tourism, which is the secondary peak tourism season. This peak primarily occurs in July and August, and is mainly centered on mountain biking, hiking, and related outdoor recreation activities.

While the community does not have a tracking mechanism for the number of seasonal jobs in Fernie, the best estimation is that there are approximately 1,600 seasonal jobs in the community (Halcrow, 2010). Of those jobs, the community does not track the number of in-migrants who are employed during the peak seasons.

However, it is estimated that as many as 70% of the workers in the peak season are non-local residents. It is estimated that in the low seasons as many as 90% of the jobs in the community are filled by local residents.

In Fernie there is a large in-migration of seasonal workers in late November, and the majority of these workers then leave the community in mid-April. During the low and shoulder seasons much of the work force is laid off or goes on vacation. A much smaller number of workers are employed again for the secondary peak tourism during July and August.

The impact of the fluctuation of seasonal workers in the community creates social issues, high costs for accommodation and problems for local businesses. During the low and shoulder seasons, local businesses have significantly fewer people in the community to whom they can sell their goods and services. This results in much lower revenue but also creates a reduction in the number of staff scheduled to work. Fernie suffers from housing issues, and respondents indicated that this may be in part due to a lack of staff accommodations provided by the largest employers. In addition, there is a high cost of living in Fernie, which causes overcrowding in rental properties. During the peak seasons additional social issues were identified, such as vandalism, noise and 'party houses.'

There is also a lack of adequate transportation for seasonal workers, so many workers hitchhike to their jobs.

Worker recruitment and retention are issues in Fernie. There was a shortage of workers for this past peak tourism season (2012). This is especially prevalent in skilled occupations such as Chef and Cook. However, unlike Tofino, many of the local businesses use Temporary Foreign Workers to fill the void due to lack of qualified and available staff. There are some strategies in place in Fernie to assist with recruitment and retention. There is a local job fair run by the Elk Valley Job Seekers Work BC office. There is also a Tourism Fernie Product Knowledge Trade show, which is designed to increase the knowledge and connection to the community's amenities and tourism products for new workers in Fernie. This trade show highlights local businesses that set up booths and offer information, product knowledge and discounts for newcomers to the community. The overall goal is to help new seasonal workers feel attachment to the community and have a better understanding of the services offered.

The employer interviews raised a number of dominant themes unique to Fernie:

- The importance of a sense of community for staff.
- The destination image being important for recruitment.
- Competition between resort communities for staff.
- A need for community-wide training opportunities.

Recruitment and Labour Shortages

There is a high demand for seasonal labor by employers in Fernie. However, there seems to be some varying perceptions about how well the demand is being filled. Interviews suggested a labour shortage for this past peak season. However, the employers in Fernie highlighted that there have been past years with shortages, and overall the past season's shortages were not as dire as those previously.

It is also important to note that there is not necessarily a high demand for seasonal employment for all occupations. Employees seem to be selective in their job preferences. In Fernie, new seasonal workers start by seeking employment on the local ski hill. Then, if they do not get a job with Fernie Alpine Resort (FAR), they move on to look for other employment in the community. This appears to occur for two reasons: first, the ski pass offered to employees of FAR is highly desirable for seasonal workers and worth about \$2 per hour worked over the season. Second, the FAR Job Fair occurs before the Work BC Community Job Fair. Some respondents indicated that the FAR Job Fair may exhaust much of the potential labour supply and limit recruitment opportunities for other employers.

Interviews with employers in Fernie suggest that the availability of labour is decreasing, with employers witnessing a general decline in the overall number of job applicants over the last five years. This may be a broader issue in BC Resort Communities as a whole and may be due to labour market saturation, competition between (resort) communities for labour, increasing migration of workers to Alberta, and/or other factors. This also raises questions about how the more recently developed ski-based resort communities such as Revelstoke and Golden (and possibly Jumbo in the near future) will be able to recruit a sufficient number of adequately trained workers for resort businesses.

Employers in Fernie indicated very basic recruitment strategies at the firm level, as recruitment is greatly assisted by the destination's image and reputation. Fernie is sufficiently established as a destination to draw a number of potential recruits each season, even without any formal recruitment activities.

The employers and employees in Fernie have demonstrated strategies to respond to the fluctuation in labour demand. While the system is characterized by boom and bust cycles, the community's dynamic and resilient employers are able, in part, to respond to changes in labour availability.

An additional observation employers made is that the recruitment of workers to the community in the broad sense is tied to the previous year's snow season, with the number of job applicants seemingly correlated to the snow quality of the previous season at Fernie Alpine Resort.

Across the BC Resort Communities, the baseline study highlighted a notable shortage of Cooks and Chefs. However, the employers in Fernie suggested that the problem may be deeper and also extends to servers. It was identified that server was a highly sought-after job in Fernie, because it is very high paying due to tips and offers flexible hours with low levels of responsibility. Serving staff decline management opportunities since an upward move would result in less take-home income and also less recreation time. Nonetheless, there are shortages for this important occupation, likely due to the sheer volume of experienced servers required in the community.

Employer Strategies – Recruitment and Retention

Employers are using various strategies to deal with fluctuations in tourism demand throughout the year.

Across the board, employers are keeping staff employed through the low and shoulder seasons by reducing employee hours, enabling staff to remain in the community. At the same time as reducing shifts, employers are also encouraging staff to take holidays during the low and shoulder seasons. Many employers offer staff as

much as two months off (typically unpaid) during the low and shoulder seasons to ensure income to those staff who desire to work during these seasons.

Employers have also found strategies to assist with recruitment and retention of employees. Many of the employees are drawn to Fernie for the recreational opportunities such as the skiing. However, not all staff are here for skiing, and as a result many employers have stopped offering staff ski passes and started offering fitness credits to their staff. Employees can select where to use their fitness credit, and when they purchase their desired pass, the employers cover the cost. This program was originally implemented by the mining industry in Fernie and then adopted by smaller businesses.

Employers in Fernie also highlighted the different expectations and requirements in their work. Employers have learned to be very flexible and work with lifestyle options of the staff. It was noted that the majority of seasonal staff are on Working Holiday Visas, and wish to enjoy the amenities in the community. Employers acknowledge that their staff come to Fernie because of the community’s many attractive lifestyle amenities, not because of the specific job. The seasonal workers come for the same reasons as tourists, and in fact are classified as tourists when not working.

Overall, employers highlighted the importance of creating a sense of community in the work environment. Employers suggested that creating a family environment in the workplace helps with employee retention. The employers struggle with staff who become homesick and then simply leave and go home. When staff do not have a connection to the community, they do not feel they have social supports and ties to the community. Employers assist in creating an attachment to place through an enjoyable workplace with many activities.

Table 13: Fernie Innovative Recruitment and Retention Strategies

WHO: Tourism Fernie and Chamber of Commerce		WHERE: Fernie, BC	
WHAT: Product Knowledge Trade Show		PURPOSE: Retention in Community	
DETAILS: Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Fernie run trade show to link up workers with local businesses. They offer prizes to seasonal workers that participate. The goal is to increase the knowledge of transient workers about the community. They hope that seasonal workers will feel more welcome in the community and perhaps stay in the community longer. The Tourism Fernie Product Knowledge Trade Show been running for two years with 50 vendors and 250 participants.			
WHO: Fernie Alpine Resort		WHERE: Fernie, BC	
WHAT: Offer Ski Pass		PURPOSE: Recruitment	
DETAILS: The ski pass offered to employees of FAR is highly desirable for seasonal workers and worth about \$2 per hour worked over the season. The guarantee of the ski pass is enough to make Fernie Alpine Resort the most popular place to work in Fernie.			

WHO: Bridge Bistro, Corner Pocket Brasserie, Club House, CP Catering	WHERE: Fernie, BC
WHAT: Owing businesses with different seasons	PURPOSE: Retention
DETAILS: The owners of these restaurants own several businesses that require different volumes of staff at different times of the year. The Corner Pocket is located the base of Fernie Alpine Resort and requires staff in the winter, as distinct from the Club House, which is located at the Fernie Golf Club, thus requiring staff in the summer. The Bridge Bistro is open all year. CP Catering is open year-round but books most events for the shoulder and low seasons when the other restaurants are slow or closed. This enables staff to move between businesses and allows owners to keep staff employed throughout the year. In turn, staff stay around longer since they have constant employment.	
WHO: Park Place Lodge, Max Restaurant, Pub Bar and Grill	WHERE: Fernie, BC
WHAT: Fitness Credit	PURPOSE: Retention
DETAILS: Many of the employees are drawn to Fernie for the recreational opportunities such as the skiing. However, not all staff are here for skiing, and as a result many employers have stopped offering staff ski passes and started offering fitness credits to their staff. Employees can select where to use their fitness credit, and when they purchase their desired pass, the employers cover the cost up to \$1,000.	
WHO: Alpine Lodge, Yamagoya Sushi, Yama on the Go	WHERE: Fernie, BC
WHAT: Help with vehicle costs	PURPOSE: Retention
DETAILS: Owners cannot offer staff accommodation to staff. Instead they offer gas cards for staff or cover costs for vehicle repairs. In some cases they will purchase snow tires for employees' cars.	
WHO: Big Bang Bagel	WHERE: Fernie, BC
WHAT: Hire new staff at end of ski season	PURPOSE: Recruitment
DETAILS: Hire new staff right after winter season to ensure that good staff are around for the summer. Many staff finish their jobs elsewhere and decide to stay in Fernie for the summer. Big Bang hires those staff right after busy times end, so they have good staff during the next busy season. Goal is to keep them all year-round when possible. In shoulder seasons they are overstaffed with new employees to ensure that good staff are around, hold on to good staff and train new staff during slow times. The goal is to have staff that will be really useful during the busy season. Used to try to be lean/ or low staff in shoulder season. However, discovered that it was not worth it because it meant that they did not have good staff for busy times.	
WHO: Big Bang Bagel	WHERE: Fernie, BC
WHAT: Sense of Community	PURPOSE: Retention
DETAILS: The staff love to work at Big Bang Bagel. The owner even admits that the work is not something that is enjoyable. However, they are able to create a sense of community at work that makes the staff want to work there. In fact, they have several staff that stay on casual after they move on just so they can be a part of the staff events.	

Training Strategies

Training was raised as an issue for employers in Fernie. Many highlighted that ski community training is particularly challenging due to visitation patterns. The ski resort's busiest days are Dec. 27 – Jan. 3 and training starts on Dec. 15. As such, new staff will experience the busiest period of the season only days after beginning work.

Many employers also indicated that training programs are not always comprehensive. Generally, staff are offered one day of training prior to commencing formal employment for the organization. At this point, training is on the job, which can result in some orientation challenges and potential service delivery shortfalls. There was a strong desire by employers in Fernie for community support agencies to offer additional training for seasonal staff. Many employers admitted that they needed assistance with training their staff and would pay to send their staff to additional training if it was offered in the community. The employers were specifically interested in generic service training. Many were very excited about a customer-service workshop that was offered in the community.

Conclusions

From the findings of the case study, the situation found in Fernie confirms many of the propositions outlined in the literature review for the overall project (see Table below). However, there are some areas that require caveats. As highlighted above, not all migrants to the community will desire to experience the lifestyle or amenities of the community. In response, employers have developed strategies to support all workers and offer incentives to non-skiers. There was an overarching view that the majority of workers in a seasonal community view jobs as transitional and not as long-term careers. However, the important caveat is that it is not just youth who are taking jobs in resort communities for transition. Many young professionals are also using seasonal work in resort communities as a transition in their lives.

From the findings of the case study, the situation found in Fernie diverges from several of the propositions outlined in the literature review. Due to the expected and unsolicited influx of seasonal workers each season, there was not strong evidence of recruitment strategies at the firm level. In fact many employers highlighted the overall community image as a destination as the main recruitment strategy. There also appeared to be little collaboration among stakeholders in the community regarding labour market development (recruitment/retention and training in particular). There were several cases of competition among stakeholders, in particular employers competing for critical shortage occupations, such as Chef. There was no evidence of high rates of staff turnover throughout the peak season - in fact most employers highlighted the need for the departure of staff at the end of the peak tourism season. Finally, there was little apparent evidence of efforts at the community level to address issues that are influencing retention, such as expanding seasons or addressing the cost of living.

#	Table 14: Proposition	Fernie
1	There will be high demand for seasonal labour;	YES
2	Heavy reliance on in-migration to supply the local labour market	YES
3	High competition for shoulder and off-season jobs	YES
4	Local workers want to stay in the community for lifestyle and/or family reasons;	YES
5	Migrants' desire to experience the lifestyle and/or amenities of the resort communities will be strong;	YES, BUT NOT ALL
6	A blurring boundary between work and leisure will be noted and will influence employment decisions.	YES
7	Youth may see tourism jobs as transitional and not as long-term careers	YES, BUT NOT JUST YOUTH
8	There will be evidence of strong recruitment strategies at the firm level targeting in-migrants;	NO
9	Collaboration among stakeholders in the resort communities will be evident in an attempt to identify markets and recruit employees using the community amenities as attractors.	NO
10	There will be high rates of turnover, particularly in positions that are more accessible (i.e. requiring less experience, education or training);	NO
11	Management practices and philosophies will influence employees' loyalty to an organization;	YES
12	Creative strategies at the firm level are evident to motivate employees to remain with employers or in the community;	YES
13	Efforts at the community level are evident to address issues that are influencing retention such as expanding seasons, addressing cost of living and affordable housing, etc.	NO
14	Local, provincial and federal policies and resources will exert an influence on the ability of resort communities' to recruit and retain seasonal employees	YES

Comprehensive case study – Whistler, BC

Community Snapshot

The Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) is an international alpine resort destination that is located in the Garibaldi Range of the Coast Mountains in southwestern British Columbia. It is located in the traditional territory of the Squamish and Lil'wat First Nations. Situated in the Whistler Valley and at the base of Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains, two of the three highest ski mountains in North America, the RMOW boasts abundant outdoor recreation opportunities for visitors and residents alike. The RMOW's permanent population of 10,531 in 2010 is primarily employed in the service industry, which hosts an average of 28,122 visitors daily. In 2006, 88% of the total experienced workforce were employed in the service industry with 'other services' (comprising accommodation, food services, arts and recreation services, and other) representing almost half of all employment. In addition to Whistler's permanent population, an average of 2,754 seasonal employees and 3,672 commuting employees further support the tourism labour needs of the resort. The combination of residents, visitors and additional workers boosts the yearly daily average population equivalent to 31,794 (Population and Demographics, 2011).

The development of Whistler as a community and international tourism destination started in 1912 with the creation of Rainbow Lodge and the completion of the Great Pacific Northwestern Railway. Originally servicing summer tourists with abundant fishing and hiking opportunities, Whistler was enthusiastically developed into a winter alpine resort in the 1960s with the goal of hosting the 1968 Winter Olympic Games. Although the Olympic dream would not come to fruition for another three decades, the Garibaldi Lift Company opened the slopes of Whistler Mountain in 1966, creating the foundation for world-class skiing. In 1975, the Resort Municipality of Whistler was incorporated as the first resort municipality in Canada with the vision of becoming a world-class all-seasons resort town. Soon after, Whistler Village, Blackcomb Mountain and the north face of Whistler Mountain opened in December 1980. Since then, the RMOW has continued to grow and enhance its amenities and reputation as one of the top ski destinations in the world (History, 2013; History of Whistler, 2011).

"Consistently ranked the number one mountain resort in North America" (About Whistler, 2013), Whistler is home not only to fabulous mountains, lakes, rivers, parks and forests but to many award winning businesses including four championship golf courses, over 200 shops, more than 90 restaurants and bars and nearly 100 accommodations. Whistler's location 120km north of Vancouver provides easy access for domestic and international travelers alike. In winter months, visitors enjoy alpine skiing and snowboarding, Nordic skiing, backcountry experiences including heli and cat skiing, dog sledding and ice skating. Summertime activities include mountain biking, water sports, golfing, horseback riding, summer skiing, hiking and off-road

adventures. Year-round, visitors can experience zip lines and bungee jumping, sightseeing, health and wellness spas, arts and cultural events and exhibits, and world-class dining, shopping and nightlife.

Whistler's reputation as a world-class ski-resort destination led to the successful bid and delivery of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, fulfilling the dream of Whistler's original visionaries. The lasting legacies of the Games have further positioned Whistler as a world-renowned ski resort and have helped to advance its community vision for sustainability. Infrastructure such as new housing developments, upgrades to the Sea to Sky Highway, and a new natural gas pipeline, along with the creation of the Whistler Olympic/Paralympic Park, Whistler Olympic Plaza and an accessible playground are among some of the many benefits the RMOW experienced as a result of hosting the Games (2010 Games, 2011).

Today, the RMOW is striving to ensure the sustainability and resiliency of the community as can be seen through Whistler2020, a shared plan and vision for the continued success of the resort into 2020, and the official community plan (OCP) adopted in 2011, which supports the Whistler2020 vision: "To be the premier mountain resort community – as we move toward sustainability" (The Resort Municipality of Whistler, 2011, p. 3).

Research Profile

Since its inception in 1974, the Resort Municipality of Whistler has been a comprehensively planned resort (Gill & Williams, 2008). The vision for a world-class ski resort that started with Whistler Mountain's founders in the 1960s has carried through the years and has resulted in the creation of a pedestrian-based village at the base of Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains and several residential and business zones in the valley. Research surrounding the sustainable development of Whistler has been well documented, primarily through the analysis of Whistler's incorporation of The Natural Step (TNS) for sustainability planning (Gill & Williams, 2008; 2011).

TNS is a science-based systems framework that makes the fundamental principles of sustainability easy to understand and implement for organizations, individuals and communities (About The Natural Step International, n.d.). Whistler began adopting the model in the early 2000s as it was embarking on a planning process to address issues such as "increasing levels of tourist flows, rising real estate development pressure, escalating infrastructure costs, diminishing levels of affordable resident and employee housing, mounting ecosystem stresses and emerging climate change impacts" (Gill & Williams, 2008, p. 123). Many of the issues addressed through TNS process are foundational to the operations of the RMOW as a resort destination which have trickling effects to the recruitment and retention of staff.

Communities play a role in the recruitment and retention of staff by attracting employees with their amenities and ensuring that proper amenities such as accommodations are in place for seasonal workers. In previous research on the tourism labour market in Whistler, it was found that much of its success is "...attributed in large measure to the priorities of several of Whistler's most influential community organisations" (Christensen Hughes, 2002, p. 23). The sense of cooperation and community in addressing staffing issues is apparent through the various initiatives of some of the town's major stakeholders and tourism businesses. Table 15 identifies the best practices undertaken in Whistler as identified in Christensen Hughes' 2002 case study of the resort municipality. In the 10-plus years since publication, Whistler has experienced many changes, most notably hosting the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. Therefore, it is realistic to assume that many of the findings

of Christensen Hughes' 2002 study may have changed; however, the findings provide context and background to the literature and the community of Whistler.

Organization	Recruitment Initiatives	Retention Initiatives
Whistler Resort Association	Attracts tourists and potential employers	Creates a family atmosphere to retain its employees
Whistler Chamber of Commerce	Employment centre that coordinates job postings	Supports business needs; provides training
Whistler Housing Association	Affordable housing; aims to create a fully integrated community (e.g. encourages suite/basement development in private homes)	
Whistler Blackcomb Mountain: Intrawest Corporation	Provide many benefits	Heavy focus on employee happiness to return/ recommend; share workforce with golf course and transfers with sister resorts on opposite cycles; HRIS use and tracking; management philosophy

Adapted from Christensen Hughes, 2002.

Details from the Community Baseline Study

The bulk of Whistler's tourism is centered on well-established winter alpine activities and a growing inventory of summer activities. Visitors come from all over the world to experience Whistler's alpine environment, exciting activities such as skiing and mountain biking, and its growing sightseeing opportunities. The RMOW has experienced some success in expanding the spring and fall shoulder seasons by hosting festivals and events such as Ski Fest in April, Tough Mudder in June, and the Whistler Readers and Writers Festival in October.

Whistler hosts a large number of seasonal and transient workers in the winter months with a mass exodus of workers occurring in April. Many people visit Whistler on Working Holiday Visas (WHV) with the intent of working for one season before moving on to another destination or returning to their home country. The majority of workers on WHVs are primarily youth from Australia, in addition to other countries such as the UK, Ireland, New Zealand and others. Many businesses rely heavily on these international students and youth to fill seasonal vacancies.

Whistler is striving to provide its visitors with consistently high-quality service throughout the resort, which is a difficult endeavor in light of the largely transient workforce. Many seasonal workers are motivated by the abundant leisure opportunities in Whistler and see their jobs as a means to a financial end. One strategy, the Spirit Pass Program, was introduced to provide workers with a discounted mountain pass through their

employer. This is normally provided as a condition of receiving customer-service training, which equips seasonal employees with local area knowledge and the customer-service skills required to deliver a consistent tourism product to visitors. Other activities, such as Welcome Week, bring together new and veteran employees with employers and the community to foster a sense of inclusion and pride of place.

Findings

The findings reported below combine results of the in-depth, in-person interviews, online employer surveys, online employee surveys and both sets of focus groups. The compensation data has been reported separately.

Interviews were recorded (unless the participant was not comfortable with such) and detailed notes were taken. Interview took about 30-45 minutes each. The findings reported below are based upon these interviews. In Whistler, the respondents included:

- Eight employers in the Food and Beverage Sector
- Four employers in the Accommodation Sector
- Four employers in the Retail/Service/Tour Operator Sector (who included multiple areas of Whistler Blackcomb)

The questions asked of each employer, regardless of the sector, are shown in Appendix I.

Seasonality

Fluctuation in the tourism seasons in Whistler requires employers to hire a large number of front-end, entry-level employees for the peak winter months (December to March) and to a lesser extent during the peak summer months (July and August). The number and types of employees required across seasons varies greatly in Whistler from zero employees to hundreds, depending on the operation (see table 16). Based upon the responses of the online employer survey, this table showcases some of the extreme seasonality present in that community, as well as some of the diversity of operations in terms of size.

Table 16: Employer Survey Data: Range, Mean, and Median of Employee Types across Seasons

Employee type	Peak Season			Shoulder Season			Off Season		
	Range	Mean	Median	Range	Mean	Median	Range	Mean	Median
Full-time permanent	1-134	14	5	1-130	13	4	0-130	10	3
Part-time permanent	0-20	5	2	0-15	4	2	0-15	4	2
Full-time seasonal	0-50	8	4	0-20	3	0	0-5	0.4	0
Part-time seasonal	0-50	6	3	0-20	3	0	0-5	0.6	0

One employer not shown above is Whistler Blackcomb, the largest employer in Whistler. Based upon interviews, Whistler Blackcomb has approximately 3,600 employees in the peak winter months and 1,250 in the busy summer months. Of those employees, roughly 500 are in the same full-time position year-round and 600 are employed full-time year-round with different positions held in winter than summer. Seasonal staff constitutes about 1,500 to 1,600 returning employees, and an additional 850 or so new hires join the team each winter season. Such fluctuations in staff numbers is apparent with all employers in Whistler, and their recruitment, retention and training techniques have evolved to respond to the seasonality of the industry.

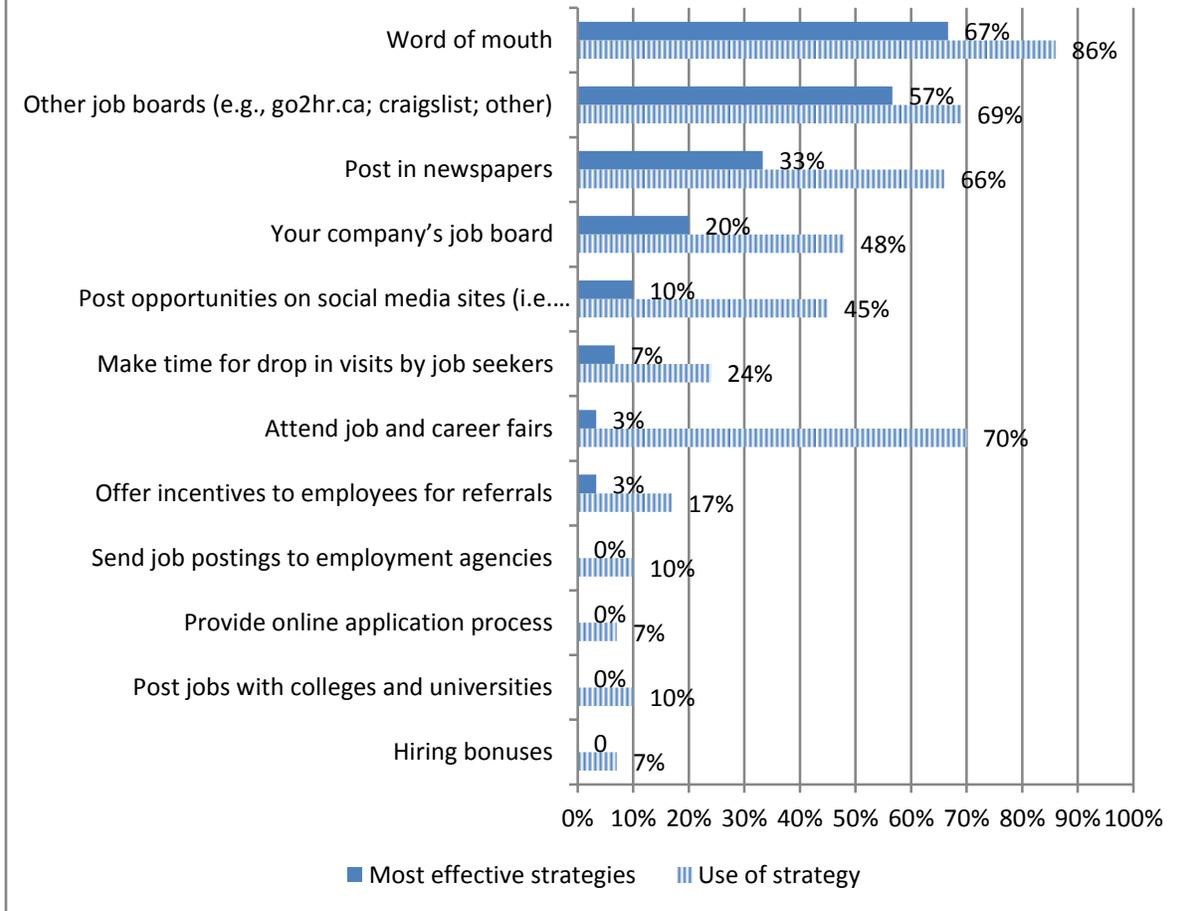
Some employers cope with the variance in workers needed by reducing employee hours, or encouraging vacation in the shoulder and off-seasons, to help reduce the number of layoffs. Year-round positions are highly valued, and many employees who live in Whistler year-round often have to take additional jobs or extended vacations in the shoulder seasons to make living and working in Whistler a reality.

Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment in Whistler is primarily done by word of mouth and employment postings online and in the local newspapers (Figures 3 and 4). There is a general feeling that currently there are few substantial issues with recruitment in Whistler. Employers highlight that they “have 2,000 to 3,000 applicants for 80 positions some years.” However, when looking deeper there seems to be an issue recruiting high quality staff. “... It is difficult to get people with a background in snow sports and northern climate experience”.

In recent years, some of the larger companies have “recruited heavily from Australia, which is great because they can get a two-year visa, but the amount of training required to get them up to speed is huge.” Many of the smaller businesses rely on the spillover from the larger businesses overseas recruitment strategies and their Whistler-based winter job fairs.

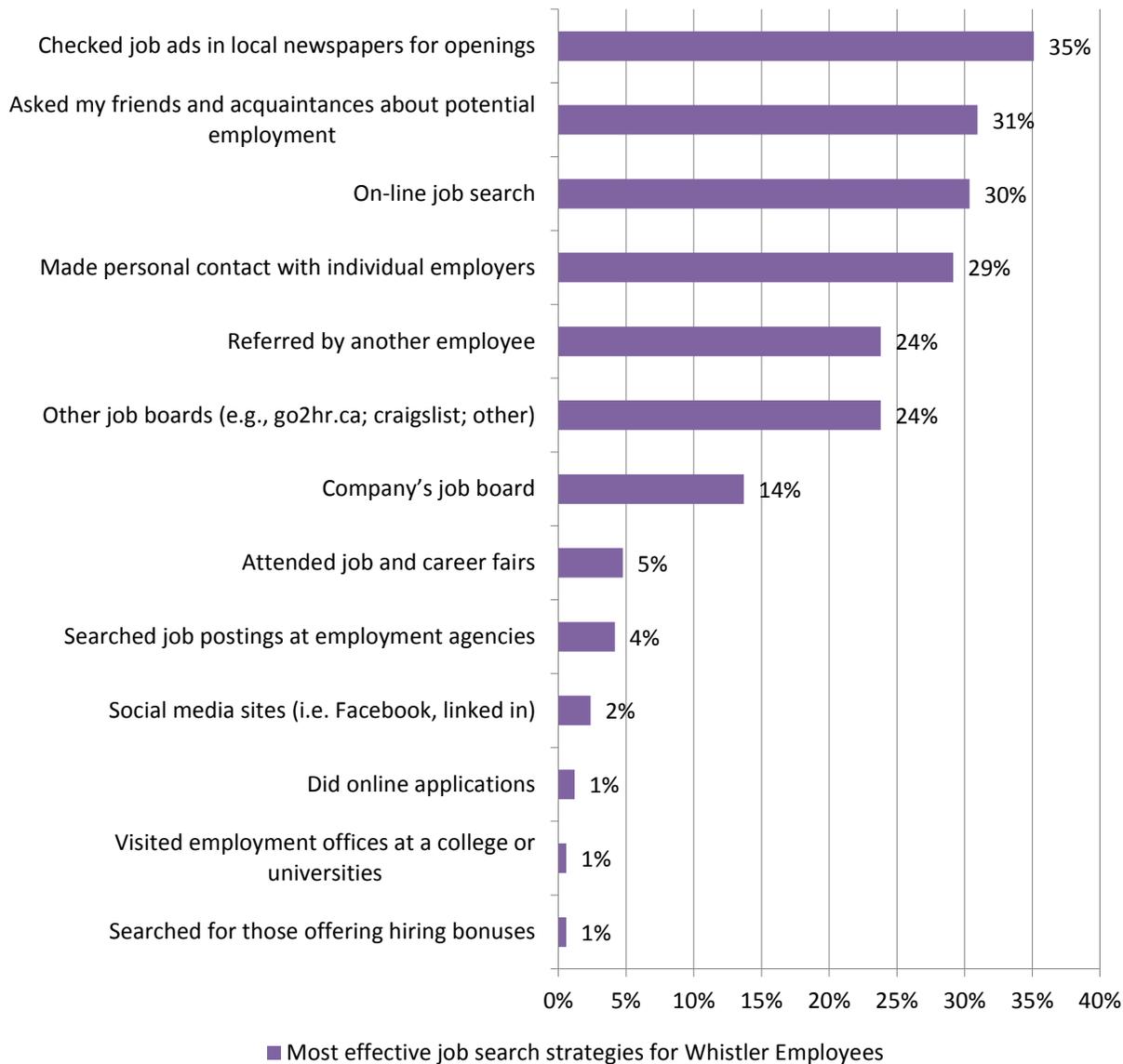
Figure 3: Most used and most effective recruitment strategies for Employers



The majority of employers (60%) have recognized the value of having experienced staff return after working a single season. These employers remain in contact with their former seasonal staff during the off-season and encourage re-application.

However, some companies in Whistler see their seasonal staff as easily replaceable. This is based on factors such as 1) the perception that many seasonal employees are only interested in working one season and 2) that there will be a flood of applicants at their doors the next season. In the employer survey, 27% of respondents indicated they do not keep in contact with their employees or encourage re-application.

Figure 4: Most effective job search strategies for Whistler Employees



These employers often only need staff to complete the single season or the terms of their employment. Many of the companies are only “committed to staff for winter season.” This is because the “job is made to be filled seasonally” and the vast majority of positions are entry level with little room for advancement. Businesses look at recruitment and retention as they “know going in that we are not going to retain all of our staff. It is actually one of our objectives to not retain all of our employees.” There are advantages to turnover such as new employees bringing new ideas and fresh perspectives to an organization. “... I think it is good to have new people in there. I’ve noticed complacency and that people lose their excitement if there isn’t new staff around.”

Employers attempt to ensure their staff make it through the entire season - i.e. until the end of their employment term. For most employers retention means 'until the end of the season.' Terms of employment are typically for one season; therefore, many employers do not consider an employee leaving at the end of the season to be turnover. However, 52% of survey respondents indicated that high rates of quits among seasonal employees before end of season was a very significant (10%) or significant (42%) human resource issue. Most employers are only able to provide low compensation for seasonal workers, and they acknowledge that sometimes employees are not earning enough to buy some necessities, such as groceries. For this reason many employers offer free meals to staff while they are at work to ensure they have enough energy to make it through their shift; "for people who aren't making a lot, a free meal is important." Other managers utilize strategies such as "service recognition using what really motivates them, like grocery vouchers"

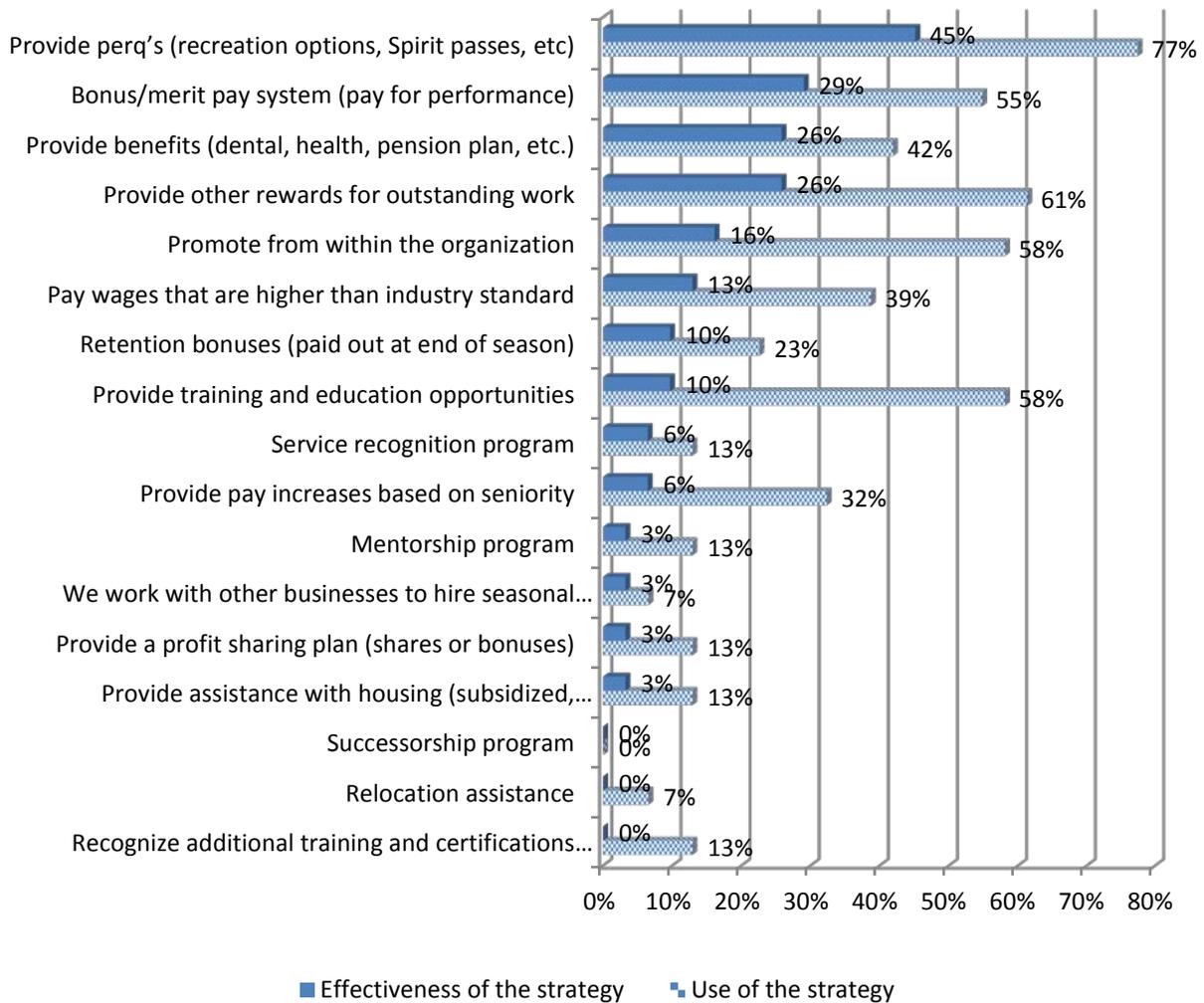
Retention techniques among Whistler employers were focused on providing perks (77%), rewards (61%), training (58%), promoting from within (58%), and bonuses (55%) for employees (Figure 5). Nearly all employers interviewed cited promoting from within as an important retention tool. Among survey respondents, 100% of medium and large companies utilized internal promotion as a retention tool whereas 46% of small companies promoted from within. This is likely due to the fact that the smaller the business, the fewer the available positions for advancement.

Converting seasonal staff into management or long-term employees resembles a huge funnel in Whistler. A typical scenario may look something like this. Employers begin recruitment by casting a relatively wide net and often without considerable scrutiny of applicants. Those who demonstrate management potential and remain beyond the winter season are potential supervisors. From the group that makes it to a second season, a few are selected from there to take on roles as lead hand or shift supervisors. Then from that group, those who remain with the employer for a third season have a strong possibility of landing middle management positions.

However, very few staff endure for multiple seasons, as "eventually staff say 'I just can't get ahead on only working 9.5 months a year.'" The few that make it through the funnel often have to overcome challenges, such as holding down multiple jobs in order to remain financially self-sufficient. However, this natural filtration system helps to attract people who truly want to be in the community and are willing to make sacrifices. The challenges of Whistler "filters out those who aren't ambitious or who don't have it together enough to negotiate finding a job and a place to live."

Employers cited challenges around the recruitment and retention of skilled workers, especially in the culinary trades and with supervisory or management roles. One employer stated, "Where we need more retention is lead hand and senior staff," while another employer added, "The level just below supervisor is where the turnover hurts us the most." In some cases, employees do not desire to advance to management positions because of the lower flexibility in scheduling, and often a pay-cut – particularly in the case of servers moving into a salaried position.

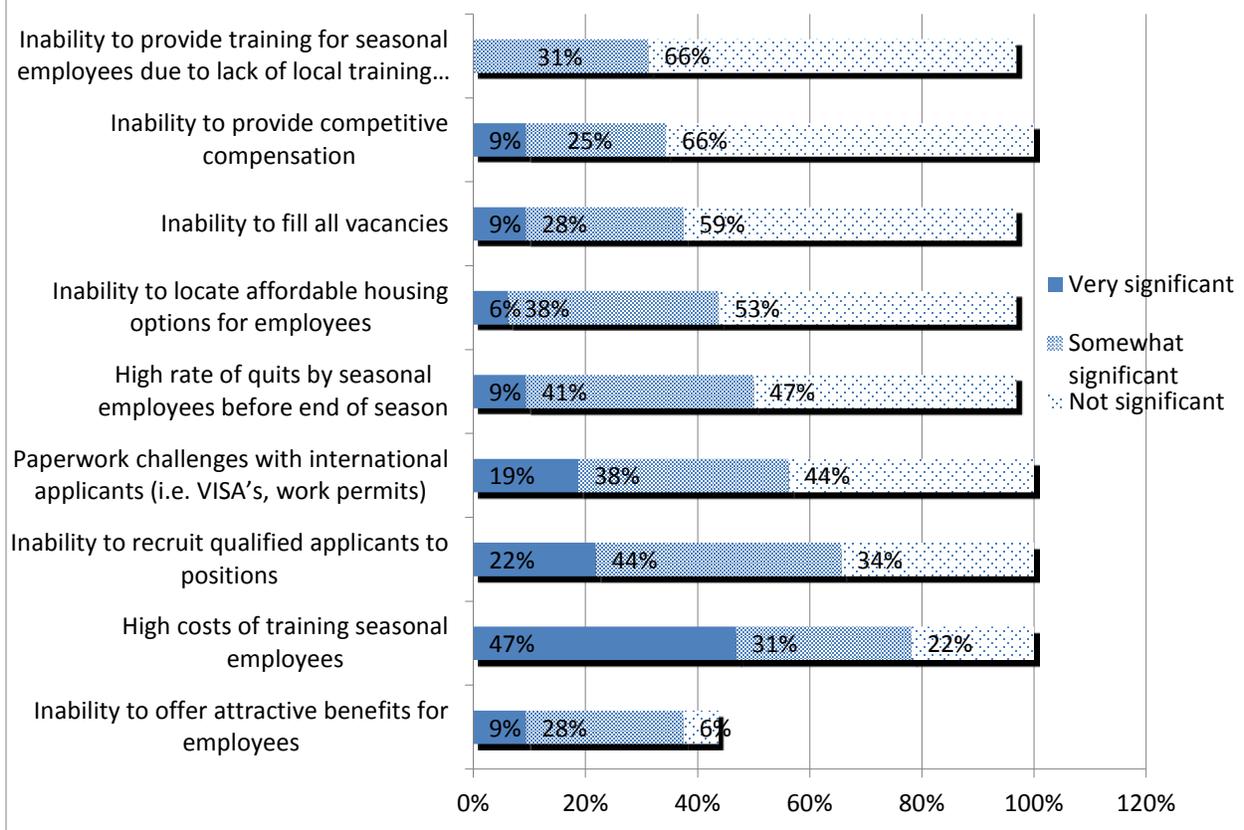
Figure 5: Most effective and most used retention strategies by Employers



Training

Numerous employers in Whistler indicated as much as an 80% attrition rate from season to season. This means that a huge allocation of resources, both time and money, is put toward seasonal training and on-boarding. Survey respondents indicated that the high cost of training was their top human resource issue, as opposed to the ability to train staff, which ranked last (Figure 6). 78% of respondents indicated that training costs were a somewhat or very significant issue, whereas the ability to train was only somewhat of an issue for 31% of respondents. The larger businesses understand that “training is a significant cost to us, but it is just the cost of doing business for us.” However, training is much more challenging for smaller businesses, which find it “frustrating spending so much time training staff, then they leave.”

Figure 6: Significance of human resource issues for Whistler Employers



According to employers surveyed both online and interviewed in person, there is a sense that larger businesses “don’t spend a lot of money on training” and as a result “staff see training as lacking” and “staff question why there isn’t more training.” The larger businesses say the answer is, “We don’t have the resources or time as store operators to properly train staff.” However, there is also a wide breadth of training required. “We have staff that don’t know what moguls or chair lifts are. Some haven’t even seen snow, so we need to explain everything!” Yet, some employers are encouraged by the opportunities they are able to give young workers to develop skills that they can transfer to other employment. “People come here with no experience then go on with life skills, with confidence...it’s a rare breeding ground. Some people who have gone on to be engineers or doctors praise the skills learned here.”

One area where some of the larger employers do well is pre-arrival orientation and on-boarding. They have found that offering online orientation before staff depart for their working holiday is important. “People get really nervous before they get here and back out at the last second. Pre-arrival online orientation training gives them one thing that is not a completely unexpected.”

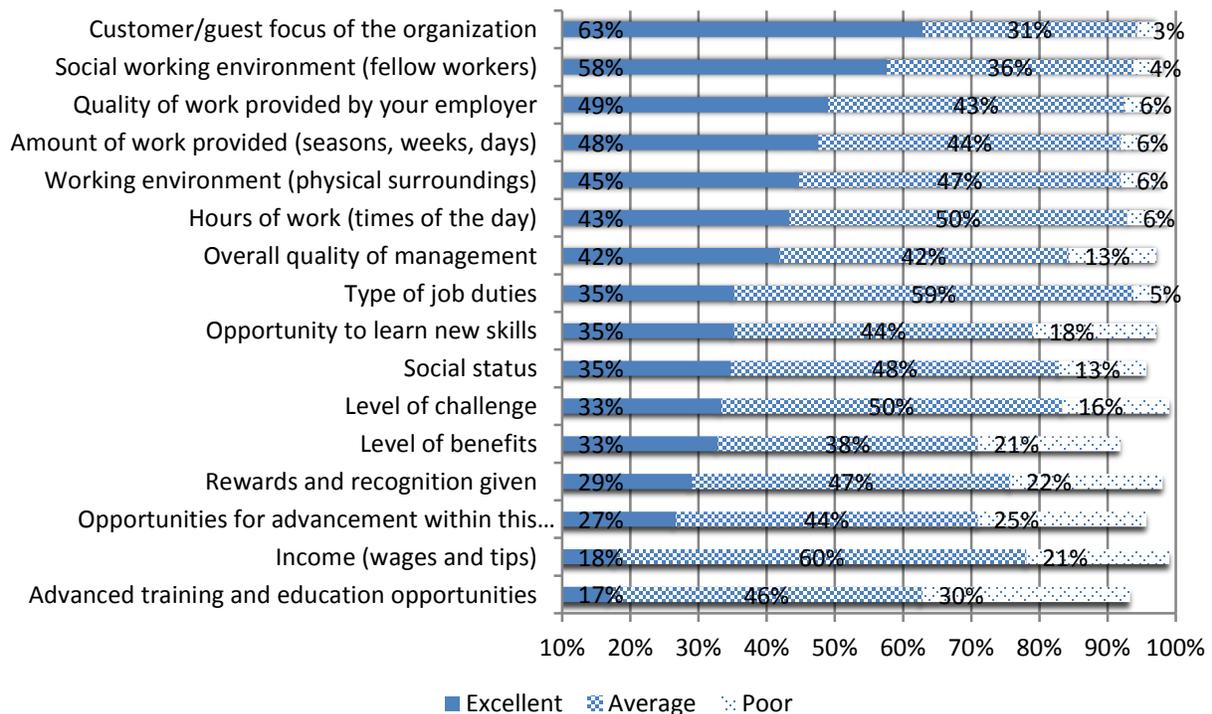
However, some larger employers also demonstrated concern about the high volume of visitors and the ability of seasonal staff to provide high-quality service in this environment, particularly with little training. Due to the

nature of the season, staff start at a very slow time and do not see busy days until the Christmas holidays, which are the busiest days of the year. Many suggest that they “don’t have training programs that are well designed to deal with volume,” while others indicate that “there is no way to train volume.”

Overall there was a feeling that staff in Whistler desire more training. “It would be great if we could offer more courses more often for personal growth... Many are just out of school or on a school break, so they need to use their brains.” Responses to the employee survey further support the need for greater training in Whistler. Employees have a high level of education, with 81% of respondents having completed post-secondary education and only 1% possessed some high school education. “Staff are hungry for more. They want to learn. The transient workforce is fresh out of school so that education component is a big part of how they identify with themselves and their peer group.”

However, employee satisfaction with training and education opportunities ranked poorest among respondents (Figure 7). The disconnect in training is further evident through the use of training as a retention tool; 58% of respondents to the employer survey indicated they use training as a retention tool, although only 10% perceive it to be effective. “People haven’t jumped at the opportunities even though they say they want training” and yet when employers seek feedback from employees they find that “employees aren’t satisfied but they also don’t have any ideas of what we could do.” According to employee survey respondents, employees have a desire for advanced training and education opportunities, specifically around the business management aspects of employment (Figure 8).

Figure 7: Employee satisfaction with current position



Despite the many challenges noted above and elsewhere, employees are generally quite satisfied with their current positions. In 14 out of 16 occupational satisfaction categories, more employees rated their current position as “excellent” than “poor.” Not surprisingly, the lowest satisfaction was in areas where employers have relatively less ability to address the concerns, typically due to the high costs of meeting employee needs (e.g., increased pay, investments in training).



Community-wide training initiatives exist in Whistler such as Welcome Week, Village Host and the Spirit Pass Program. Welcome Week was viewed by many employers as an important community function; it is a time for

new staff to familiarize themselves with the community and make connections to ensure they have a commitment to the Whistler community.

The Spirit Pass Program provides employees with customer-service training. The need for consistent customer service across all businesses in Whistler is seen as a very important factor to the success of the resort community. Such opportunities are important because they “get everyone on board with customer service...we don’t want a bad rap for Whistler as it being a place with horrible customer service.” Employers feel that training is a community issue because if individual employers “can’t fill the roles of the resort, we can’t function. People can have a great time here, but if they have a bad experience elsewhere, that reflects on the whole resort.”

Accommodation – Housing hierarchy/ High Cost of Living

Many seasonal employees are interested in working for a single season. This is partly due to the high cost of housing in Whistler.

While employers highlighted the ‘housing hierarchy’ in Whistler, this theme was more strongly reinforced by employees during the focus groups. Many staff start off in staff accommodation, as it is easy to secure and predictable. “Whistler Blackcomb is an incredible draw, not only because it is cool to work for the ski hill, but there is also staff accommodation... one less thing to worry about.” New staff can ensure that they have a place to stay as soon as they arrive. However, as staff become more seasoned in Whistler they desire to move away from staff accommodation, which are relatively meager and can be crowded. Staff who stay in Whistler after the winter season are rewarded with many new housing options due to the exodus of staff in the late spring. Many of the staff accommodations are empty over the summer until the start of winter, when a new crop of seasonal workers arrives and the cycle begins anew.

Affordable and available housing was frequently mentioned in employer interviews as a major challenge to recruiting and retaining managers. Home ownership in Whistler is very difficult due to the high housing prices. In April 2013 the benchmark price of a typical detached home in Whistler was \$880,000 (MLS Home Price Index, 2013). One of the largest hotels in Whistler “couldn’t find a banquet manager, restaurant manager or food and beverage manager for over six months. People with families just aren’t willing to move here. Whistler has the stigma, and it’s true that it is a very expensive place to live.”

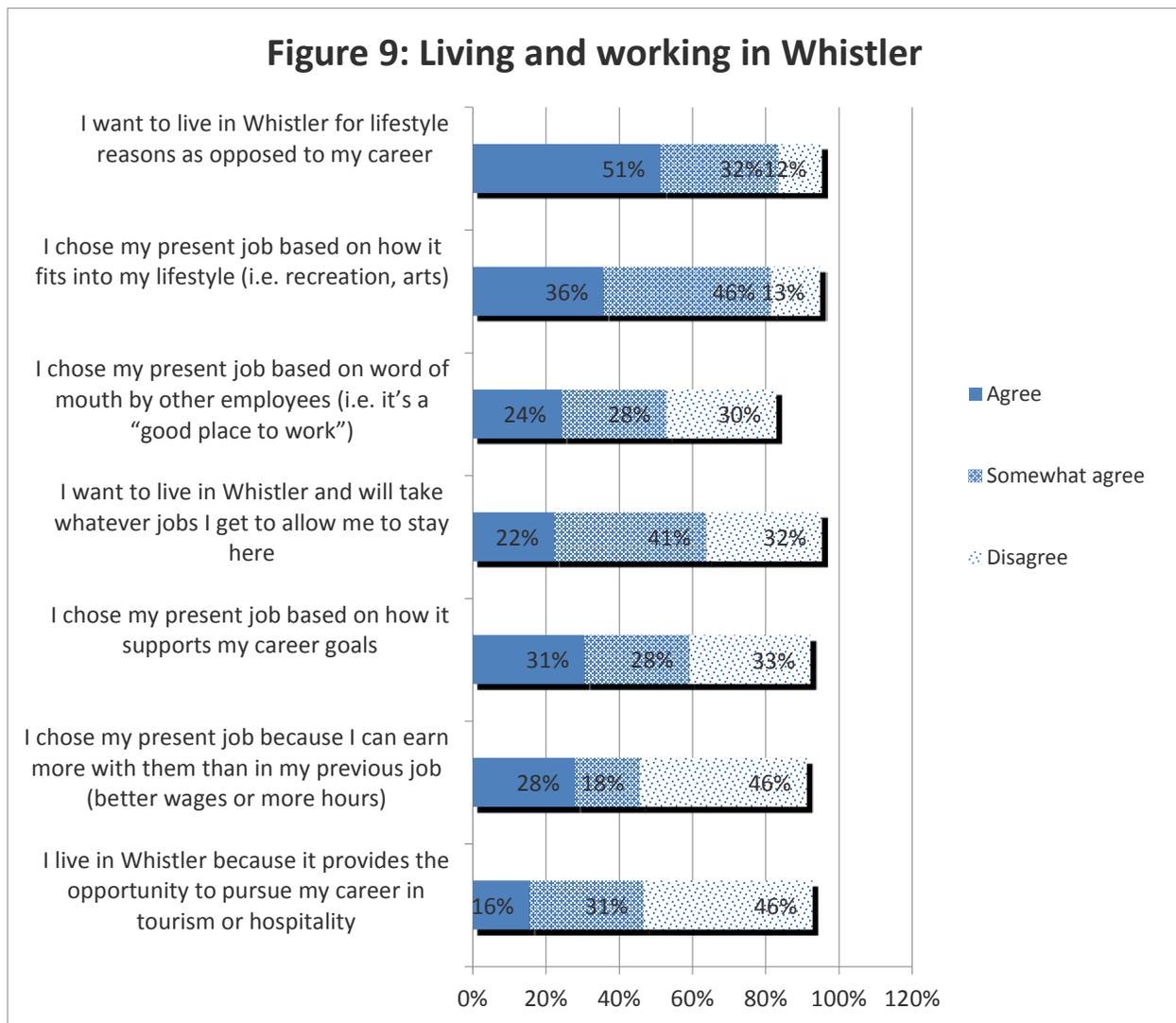
Lifestyle – scheduling (shift trading), ski passes, flexibility

“Best resort in the world- it’s an attractive place to live and work”

Lifestyle is by far the most appealing aspect to living and working in Whistler (Figure 9). The vast majority of the employees work in Whistler for lifestyle, as opposed to career development reasons. “Most staff are here to ride the park...” However, this is not necessarily due to their age or career level:

“Not a lot of our staff are here for the money. A lot of staff are professionals that are here for a working holiday, they are just working to meet people and make a little money for daily expenses. They are not here to save money, or here for a career... They are here for the experience.”

However, this may not be true for all employees who work in Whistler. There are a number of employees who commute to work in Whistler who live in the Sea to Sky area or even as far away as Surrey. The vast majority (88%) of respondents to the employee survey lived in Whistler; however, many employers interviewed indicated that some of their staff commute from other towns. Therefore the motives of commuting employees may be different; however, possibly due to a low response rate among commuting employees, no statistically significant difference in motives was found.



Employers have a good understanding of their staff’s motivations. “A lot of people are here to ski. There are those individuals that are here just to ski and those that are here to make money. The work force has different motivations.” Most staff are only in Whistler for a season; thus, “It is a very transient group. Most people that come here aren’t looking for a career.” In terms of employment, “Staff are only in Whistler short term, they aren’t looking for a career. They are looking for something short term to fill in the gap between skiing, snowboarding and mountain biking.”

In addition to ski time, a friend group seems to be important to seasonal staff: “Most of them don’t have friends outside of work.” Another added, “They haven’t found people they are close with, so they get lonely and go home.”

Some employers have found that creating a welcoming, family-type of environment is a key to retention: “One of the biggest reasons people enjoying working here is the team and family.” Some offer weekly, or even daily, family dinners for their staff as a way to provide a free meal but more importantly to have the opportunity to bond with their colleagues.

To keep staff employed year-round, employers have to be creative: “In an effort to keep them around we will allow them to move to part-time even though we don’t want them to.” However, this is a Catch-22, since “the ones that like to ride are the ones that are likely to move to part-time, because they get a night job to allow more riding time.” The employers that are successful understand and accept that “people are here on vacation. So we need to be flexible with their schedule.” One innovation that Whistle Blackcomb has adopted to deal with scheduling is Internet-based software called ‘When to Work.’ This program allows managers to set schedules and publish them online. Staff are able to trade or give published shifts away to other staff. This software gives staff the flexibility to enjoy their working holiday while still having the connection to work. In addition, ‘When to Work’ allows management to update the schedule in real time based on weather or visitor demands. Employees are encouraged to check the schedule before coming to work, because their shift could be changed or removed based on demand. The cost savings by being able to reduce or increase staff hours in real time helps to maximize labour productivity.

Conclusions

From the findings of the comprehensive case study, the situation found in Whistler largely confirms the propositions outlined in the literature review (see Table 17 below). This situation diverges from that found in Tofino and Fernie, which may be due to: a) Whistler’s relatively high degree of resort development, and also b) the number of methods used to triangulate thoughts of both employees and employers.

#	Table 17: Proposition	Whistler
1	There will be high demand for seasonal labour;	YES and both employers and employees appreciate this
2	Heavy reliance on in-migration to supply the local labour market	YES, particularly from some markets (Australia)
3	High competition for shoulder and off-season jobs	YES, but competition is mitigated. Employers try to take the competition out of it. They make seasons clear, make no guarantees, etc.
4	Local workers want to stay in the community for lifestyle and/or family reasons;	YES, but for how long? Is there an ultimate timeframe for staying vs. forever?
5	Migrants' desire to experience the lifestyle and/or amenities of the resort communities will be strong;	YES, BUT NOT ALL. There are many temporary workers happy with commuting from places like Surrey.
6	A blurring boundary between work and leisure will be noted and will influence employment decisions.	YES, BUT NOT FOR ALL. For a certain type of worker this holds true, but the line between work and play is clear and often even structured (scheduled ride breaks, etc.)
7	Youth may see tourism jobs as transitional and not as long-term careers	YES, BUT NOT JUST YOUTH.
8	There will be evidence of strong recruitment strategies at the firm level targeting in-migrants.	YES, BUT MOSTLY LARGER EMPLOYER(S).
9	Collaboration among stakeholders in the resort communities will be evident in an attempt to identify markets and recruit employees using the community amenities as attractors.	NO, BUT SOME INFORMAL COLLABORATION OCCURS. No community-wide job fair exists
10	There will be high rates of turnover, particularly in positions that are more accessible (i.e. requiring less experience, education or training).	YES, BUT NOT JUST ENTRY-LEVEL. Some occupations with supply shortages (e.g., cook/chef) have high turnover within the community.
11	Management practices and philosophies will influence employees' loyalty to an organization.	YES
12	Creative strategies at the firm level are evident to motivate employees to remain with employers or in the community;	YES, but some employers only seek to retain employees for one season; others seek to retain skilled, motivated workers.
13	Efforts at the community level are evident to address issues that are influencing retention such as expanding seasons, addressing cost of living and affordable housing, etc.	YES. There are efforts at the employer level as well. Some success has been achieved in expanding the season and housing supply.
14	Local, provincial and federal policies and resources will exert an influence on the ability of resort communities to recruit and retain seasonal employees	YES, but the urgency can vary depending on the issue and context. Immigration, temporary worker, and housing all seen as beneficial.

Compensation Analysis

Introduction

As part of the Comprehensive Case Study of the Whistler tourism labour market, the role of monetary and non-monetary compensation was also explored. This section of the report provides a more detailed analysis of the following:

- Employee perspectives on compensation – its relative importance as a factor influencing their career and job decisions
- Compensation strategies used by Whistler employers
- Actual compensation levels for select occupations, including related perquisites and benefits.

As discussed earlier, the Whistler Employer Survey indicated that providing competitive compensation for employees can be a challenge for some employers, as salaries are typically the largest component of tourism business costs, and the seasonality of their operations constrains their overall revenues. This is extremely important to note, as compensation - both monetary and non-monetary - has been shown to play a significant role in the recruitment and retention of seasonal staff (Zampoukos & Loannides, 2011; Christensen Hughes, 2002; Baum, 1993). As seasonality and a high level of undesirable staff turnover are major challenges prevalent within Whistler, it is important to identify whether there is a disconnect between employee perspectives and the current compensation supports that are provided by Whistler employers.

The purpose of this section of the case study is thus to understand the role of compensation in attracting and retaining seasonal tourism workers in Whistler. In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding on the role that compensation plays in attracting and retaining seasonal tourism workers, the following research questions were answered:

- 1.) How important are different forms of compensation for employees with respect to recruitment and retention?
- 2.) What forms of compensation are employers using to recruit and retain employees into tourism and hospitality jobs (monetary and non-monetary)?

Employee Perspectives on Compensation

Compensation plays a significant role in the recruitment and retention of seasonal employees, (Zampoukos & Loannides, 2011; Christensen Hughes, 2002; Baum, 1993). However, it is also known that place-based or social factors can have a large influence on an employee's decision to take a position or to remain in a job. This influence may be so strong that employees often base occupational choices on lifestyle reasons rather than economic ones (Mellander, Florida, & Stolarick, 2011). Over 51% of employee survey respondents stated that they wanted to work at their current job in order to be able to remain in the community of Whistler. Among the top six reasons, four relate to lifestyle while the other two relate to employees wanting to use their experience or education in their current position. None of them was related to compensation.

Monetary reasons for employees' seeking out their current job were rated significantly lower than the lifestyle motivations, with only 14% of respondents citing they strongly agreed with the fact that the low income in their previous job was a motivator in attaining their current position. Similarly, only 12% of respondents agreed with the statement regarding needing extra money quickly. It is important to recognize that the respondents of this question are more motivated by lifestyle factors than economic ones. However, it is equally important to recognize that some employees are still relocating to different jobs for monetary reasons, suggesting that compensation is, in fact, a consideration in career and job choices of resort employees.

While compensation is not a primary factor for job seekers, it is nonetheless a common and effective retention tool of employers, and therefore it is important to understand satisfaction with compensation levels. Figure 7 suggests that employees are relatively neutral on this point, with the majority (60%) indicating an "average" level of satisfaction with their total compensation packages. For this same question, 18% of respondents cited their current income as excellent, and 21% indicated it was "poor."

This is notable in that a similar percentage of respondents who were dissatisfied with their compensation as the percentage of workers who indicated that they were working a second, third, or fourth job (19% of respondents). Put another way, for 81% of the sample, their primary income is sufficient for meeting their immediate financial needs.

In terms of non-monetary compensation, 'perks and benefits' of the employee's current job were cited as a core motivation to pursue their current position. Although only 27% of respondents cited this as a major motivation in accepting their current position, combining the percentages of respondents who strongly agreed and agreed with this statement makes it clear that over 50% of employees considered the perks and benefits offered by the employer when accepting their current position. When examining employee satisfaction levels with their current position, a higher proportion (33%) claimed their benefits were "excellent" while 21% claimed they were "poor."

In summary, data from Whistler employees suggest that, on balance, compensation is not a primary motivating factor for job seekers to pursue and accept a position with a resort employer. In addition, there is an even split between those who are satisfied with their compensation levels and those who are not satisfied. It is important for employers to recognize that more than one in five employees may be dissatisfied with their compensation, because while compensation is not a primary consideration for job seekers, it is an important factor to retain employees. And while increasing monetary compensation can be challenging for many employers, the use of non-monetary compensation may be further used to both recruit and retain staff.

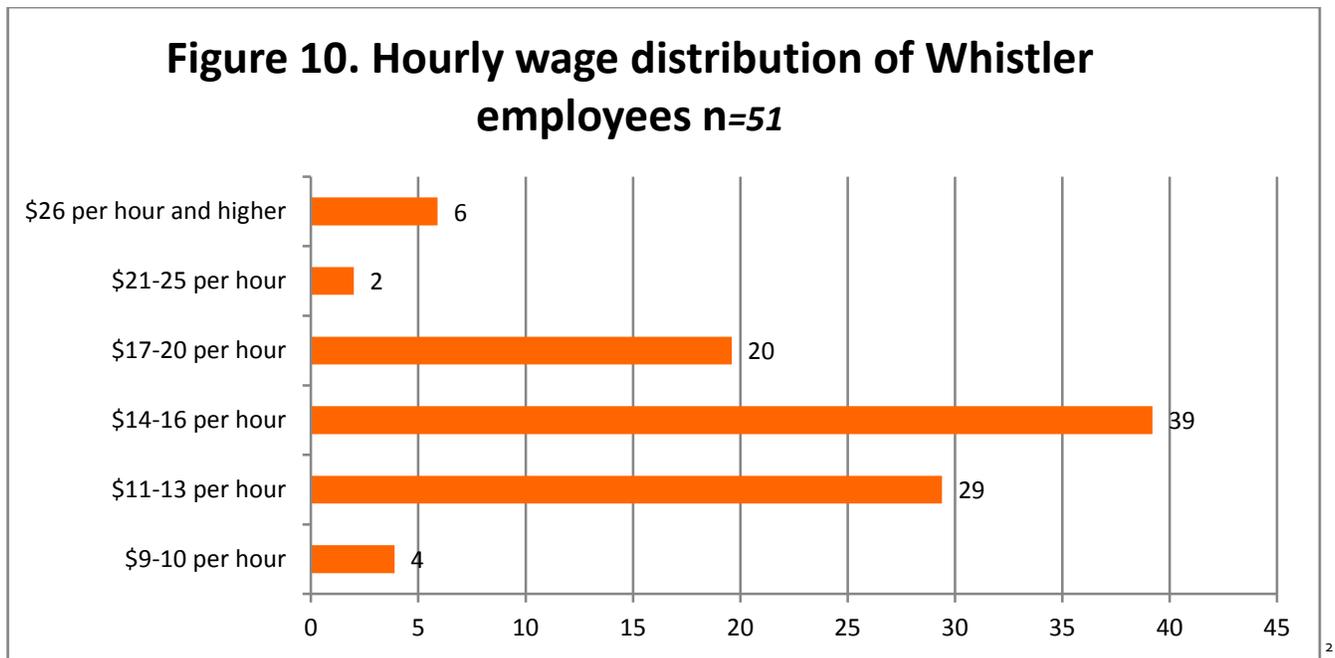
Compensation strategies used by Whistler Employers

It is clear from the employee's perspectives discussed in the previous section that both monetary and non-monetary compensation plays a role in the recruitment and retention of employees – particularly retention. The purpose of this section of the report is to examine the compensation strategies used by Whistler employers. To do so, this section will focus on whether the compensation strategies used by employers match the compensation strategies desired by employees.

The employer survey indicated that only 9% of the sample felt that offering a competitive compensation package was a significant issue for them, whereas 67% indicated it was not at all an issue at present. This finding suggests that, at present, employers are not having challenges recruiting and retaining staff at present compensation levels. However, with the labour market tightening as a result of population demographics, as well as the fact that one in five employees

is dissatisfied with their compensation levels, individual employers will all need to evaluate whether their compensation practices are supporting the development of an engaged and productive workforce.

Figure 10 showcases the hourly wage distribution of Whistler employees. While the response rate for this question was relatively low (51 responses out of a possible 271), the results suggest that the majority of employees fall into the income range of \$11-20. This is also supported by recent compensation analyses undertaken by the CTHRC in partnership with go2 (CTHRC, 2010) for primarily entry-level and semi-skilled positions.



In order to determine how to best allocate limited resources, employers can use the data presented within this section and examine the differences that exist between the retention strategies being currently used by employers and the preferred retention strategies cited by Whistler employees. Gaining this understanding will also help employers gain more insight into the main issues facing the tourism labor market including pay, working conditions and job satisfaction - all of which contribute to the challenge of recruiting and retaining employees (Ladkin, 2011).

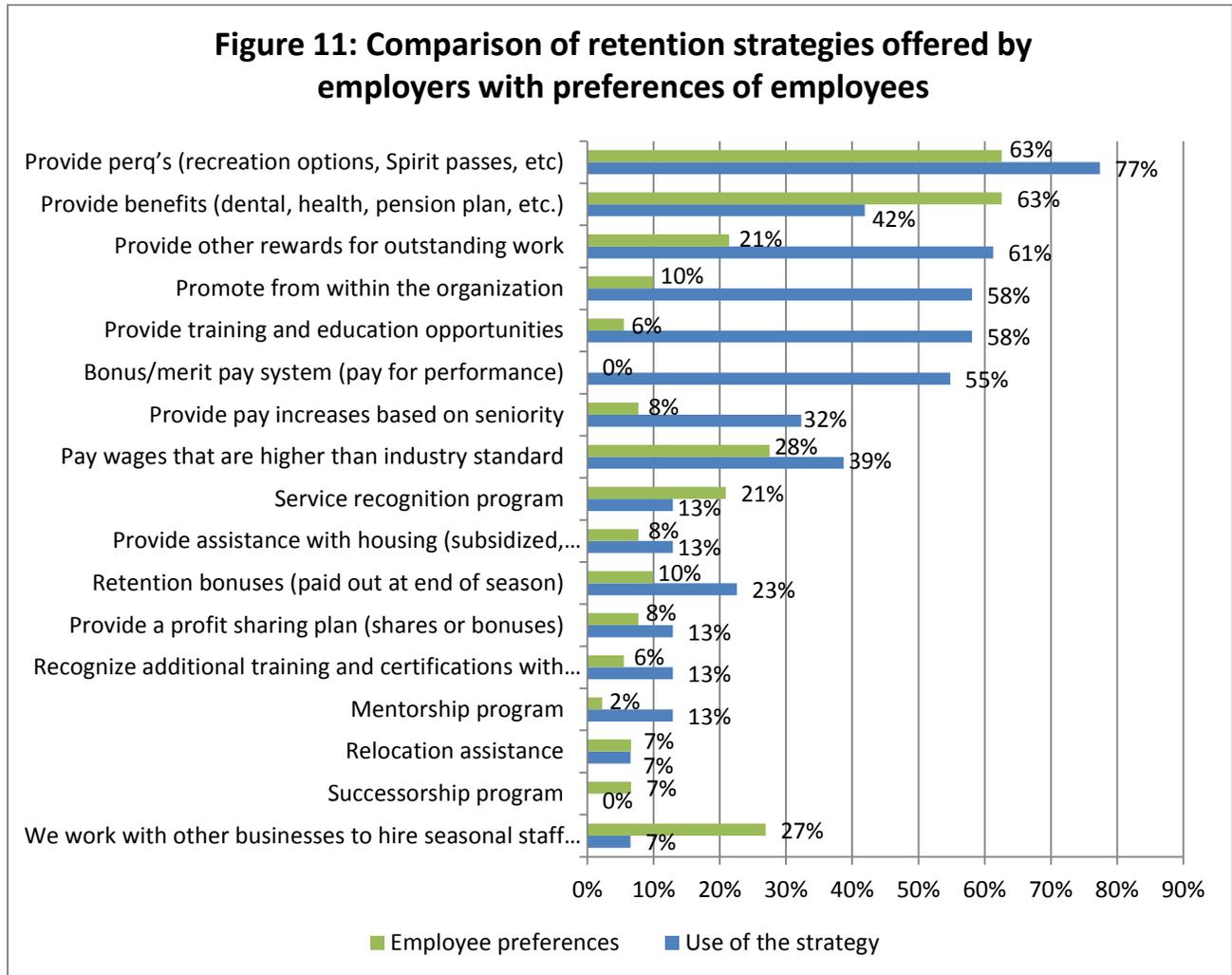
Figure 11 shows a comparison of the retention strategies offered by employers and the preferences of employees. Overall, the figure indicates that employers are offering a suite of retention strategies that are largely in alignment with the preferences of employees, with some exceptions.

Of the strategies that are currently being used by employers, the use of perquisites is the strategy that is being utilized most by employers and is most preferred by employees. The Spirit Pass, recreation opportunities, flexible hours, ski passes and commission were perks often mentioned by employees. One respondent mentioned that "the free seasons pass is what attracts me the most" to working for the employer. Other respondents also mentioned the importance of their employer providing a pleasant and friendly work environment. When asked, "What does your employer do to keep you working with them?" one respondent said, "Continues hiring people I like working with; without my friends, I'd

² The graph on hourly wage distribution of employees is limited by the small response rate on this question. It is important to note that this graph represents the hourly wage distribution only for the 51 respondents who answered this question.

never work here.” This quote sheds light on the importance of employers providing a friendly and family-like atmosphere.

Common employer strategies that are *relatively* less desirable for employee respondents included “providing education and training opportunities” as well as “bonus/merit pay (incentives) for high performance.” Desired strategies of employees that are not as commonly offered included “working with other businesses to provide full-season employment” (job sharing) and service recognition programs.



Compensation by Occupation

Understanding the importance and use of monetary and non-monetary compensation from the entire sample is helpful to understand broad trends in the Whistler labour market. This section provides detailed information on the level and types of compensation provided for specific occupations in Whistler. The summary Table 18 provides information on 38 occupations including the title, wage range, average, perks and benefits provided, as well as training and education requirements.

Key Findings of Compensation Analysis:

1. Monetary compensation aligns closely to the hourly wages from the employee survey where the majority of wages fall between the \$11-\$20 an hour range. The wage range for positions such as servers does not include gratuities, which can be significant component of compensation. As mentioned earlier in the case study, server positions were often talked about as the "best employment choice" for employees due to the earning ability and the flexibility of hours, which allowed people access to recreation (i.e. skiing during the day).
2. There are relatively few positions that offer health, dental and medical benefits, whereas employees rated this as one of their top three most preferred retention strategies.
3. Perks are relatively under-utilized by employers (45% usage), particularly in light of their employees citing perks as their most preferred retention strategy.
4. The most common type of perks offered include Spirit Pass and other recreational passes (i.e. gym), and the widest range of perks are offered to recruit servers and bartenders. Also interesting to note is that two of the occupations where employers had difficulties filling positions were Cook/Chef and housekeepers, yet the range of perks offered for these jobs were limited in comparison to other jobs.
5. Employers are not requiring significant education or training when recruiting for positions overall. Some occupations such as Chef require experience and often a professional credential, as do many Guide positions.
6. Use of benefits is relatively rare in the positions (42% usage), except in higher demand occupations such as Server, Bartender, Housekeeper and Retail Sales staff. These benefits are typically health and dental, and some employers are offering this after a probation period.
7. Training does not appear within the data; however, tuition reimbursement was being offered for some server positions.

Table 18: Compensation by Occupation – Whistler Labour Market

Job Title	Range	Average	Training or education requirements	Types of Perks used	Use of Benefits
Night Audit	\$14--\$16	\$15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1-3 yrs of experience - BC driver's licence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - annual 4% vacation entitlement - benefits package - ski pass - food and beverage discounts - commission on sales - staff housing 	-
Front Desk/Guest Services/Receptionist	\$12--\$16	\$14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High school diploma - Post-secondary education is an asset - hospitality & customer service experience - Chamber courses - Class 4 DL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spirit Pass - Ski pass - commission - gym pass - discount on store products/services - free access to company activities - social events - monthly reward - gift certificate - customized hours - end-of-season bonus - comment card bonuses - tips 	- Manulife/health benefits (after 3 months)

Job Title	Range	Average	Training or education requirements	Types of Perks used	Use of Benefits
Server/Bartender	\$10--\$25	\$13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - latte art training - previous serving / bartending experience required (Red Seal, FOODSAFE and Serving It Right are assets) -wilderness first aid - Food Safe certifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - retention bonus -service performance rewards - discount hotel travel program - uniform provided - food and beverage discount - Spirit pass - seasonal gear loan - room & board - free pound of coffee per week - free beverages during work - 30% discounts - ski pass - gratuity at the discretion of guests - RSP savings plan/stocks - tuition reimbursement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for full time/ MSP - dental/medical/ prescriptions - Great West Life insurance
Banquet Captain/Server	\$17--\$19	\$18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Serving It Right -serving/managing experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spirit Pass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MSP - dental - Great West Life insurance
Baker	\$12	\$12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - basic food prep experience 	-	-
Cook/Chef	\$12--\$20	\$15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience planning meals and cooking for groups of up to 16-48 people (Red Seal, FOODSAFE and Serving It Right are assets) - wilderness first aid - FOODSAFE - Certification & culinary schooling first-aid certification (min. 40-hour course) - Level 1 Ski Operations certificate an asset - 1-4 yrs of experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spirit Pass - seasonal gear loan - room & board - gratuities for excellent service 	-

Job Title	Range	Average	Training or education requirements	Types of Perks used	Use of Benefits
Executive Chef	\$40-\$60K/yr	\$40-\$60K/yr			
Kitchen Staff/Dishwasher	\$10.25--\$14.10	\$10	- training prior beneficial also onsite training - interest in working in the kitchen - 1-3 yrs of experience	-service performance rewards -discount hotel travel program -uniform provided -food and beverage discount -Spirit Pass -taxable benefits -tips	
Restaurant Manager	\$16.50--\$20	\$18	-2-3 yrs experience		
House keeper/Room inspector	\$13--18.50	\$14	-On job training -previous experience required	-ski pass -gym pass -monthly reward -performance based -piece rate system -comment card bonus -tips	-Manulife
Cleaning Supervisor		\$19			
Retail Sales Supervisor	\$17	\$17		-Vacation: 4% accrued	-Extended medical and dental
Retail Store Worker	\$10.25-\$13	\$12	-high school diploma	-depends on performance -purchase stock at discount	- health and wellness package (after 3 mths)
Sales Associate	\$12--\$15	\$13	-sales and product knowledge -modular on-line program -spirit program -in-store training	-ski pass -discounts on store products - incentives = approx \$1.00/hour	
Guide	\$12--\$15	\$14	-First aid required -Knowledge of the Coast Mountains -being Whistler-based -access to a vehicle is an asset	-Spirit Pass -tips	

Job Title	Range	Average	Training or education requirements	Types of Perks used	Use of Benefits
Adaptive Ski Instructor	\$14	\$14	-adaptive sport training -sport certifications -first aid -university education in related field	-ski pass -training & additional education -professional and sport skill development -discounts at Whistler Blackcomb -scaled wage system	-Yes through Business Unit at Whistler Blackcomb
Zip line Guide	\$12	\$12	-high school diploma -related post-secondary education is an asset	-free access to company activities -social events -Spirit Pass program -gratuities -booking commissions	
White-water Rafting Instructor	\$17.5	\$17.5	-first aid -Rafting Guide Certification		
Snowboard Instructor	\$19	\$19	-first aid -Guide Certification		
Boot fitter	\$11	\$11			
Administrative - General	\$15.50	\$15.50			
Summer Programs Assistant	\$15	\$15	-Adaptive sports training -sport certifications -first aid -university education in related field	-training -additional education -professional and sport skill development	
Shuttle Driver/Bus Driver	\$10--\$14	\$13	-high school diploma -Class 2 or 4 driver's licence	-free access to company activities -social events -Spirit Pass -gratuities -booking commissions	

Job Title	Range	Average	Training or education requirements	Types of Perks used	Use of Benefits
Cashier/Sales	\$11--\$15	\$13	-Previous experience needed -Forklift license or Certification -WEST Fundamentals of Wine or ISG Level I required as supervisor		
Art Sales	\$11--\$15	\$13			
Esthetician	\$10--\$14	\$12	-industry training	-discounts on services and products -discounts on Ski pass -commission on services and products	
Spa Therapist	\$15	\$15			
Massage Therapists	Commission based	Commission based	-Industry training	-discounts on services and products -discounted Ski pass	
Yoga/pilates Instructor	\$35 per class	\$35 per class	-200 hr yoga certification or Pilates certification	-free yoga and Pilates	
Personal Training Coach	\$21-\$26	\$23	-previous experience required		
Car Washer	\$14	\$14		-flex hours	
General Labour	\$12--\$16	\$14			
Part Time Technician	\$15	\$15	-previous experience needed	-training uniform allowance	
Maintenance Technician	\$17	\$17		-ski pass -gym pass -monthly reward -performance based	

Conclusion

As an established resort community, Whistler is working to better understand the complexities that are associated with the labor market challenges within the community. Part of this entails the perspectives of tourism employers and employees with respect to the role of compensation in employee decision making.

The forms of compensation that are being used by employers to recruit and retain employees were explored as well as the level of importance that employees hold for these differing forms of compensation. Overall, it becomes clear that seasonal challenges exist within the labor market of Whistler, but employers are making an effort to use different forms of compensation to better recruit and retain seasonal staff. These appear to align with the preferences of employees, except with the possible exception of benefits.

Overall, compensation is not a major factor influencing the decisions of employees to seek and accept a position; however, it does appear to be a factor influencing their decisions to remain with employers. Employers do not currently have significant issues with providing competitive compensation for employees, which suggests that compensation adjustments may be a tactic to be pursued by those with high turnover rates.

In terms of non-monetary perquisites, there is consistency between employers' use of these as recruitment and retention strategies, and as preferences among employees – i.e. they are commonly desired by employees and commonly granted by employers. The most common perks are for access to recreation opportunities within the community.

Graduate and Student Survey

BC Resort Communities struggle to recruit and retain high-quality employees working in the tourism and hospitality sector. One particular segment of the labour market that is an important component of the resort community labour markets is students and graduates of the BC post-secondary system³.

This portion of the study was conducted to determine the extent to which students and graduates of tourism and hospitality education programs in BC are working in the resort communities, as well as trends in their overall experiences. Respondents provided specific information on mobility, attraction and exit from employment in the resort communities.

Findings:

Respondents were studying or had studied in a range of programs throughout BC, including Selkirk College, Vancouver Island University, Capilano, University of Northern BC and Thompson Rivers University. The majority of the respondents were from Selkirk College and Vancouver Island University.

The majority of those who responded said they were currently living on Vancouver Island (Nanaimo, Comox, Port Alberni and Ucluelet). Several were currently living in Whistler and the remainder currently reside in communities such as Smithers, Prince George, Nelson, Invermere, Fernie, Kamloops and Sun Peaks.

The current employment status of respondents is shown in Figure 12. As shown, 27% of respondents were either employed full time in a tourism or hospitality related position or employed full time, but not in a tourism or hospitality position (23%). A smaller percent (9%) were working part time in tourism and/or hospitality positions in either winter or summer work, finding work in other sectors (Marketing and sales, retail, forestry) during the off season, and 9% were not currently employed.

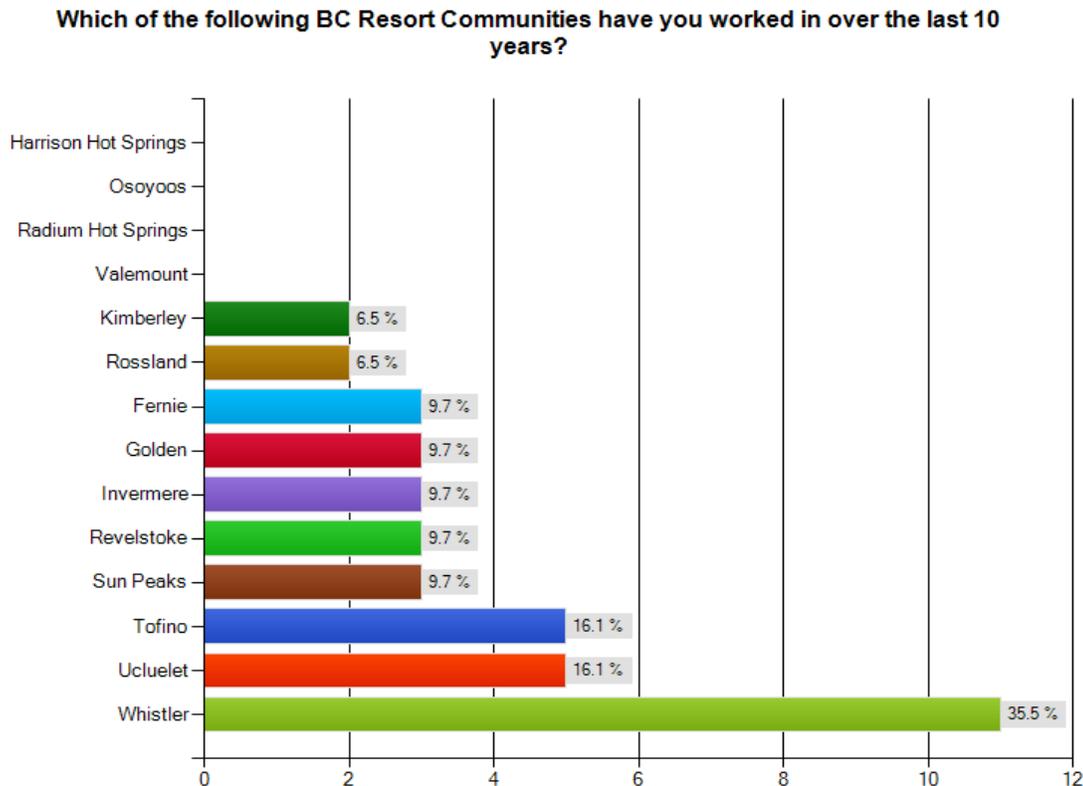
Attractiveness of BC Resort Communities to BC Students and Graduates:

Respondents were given the opportunity to indicate which resort communities they had worked in over the past decade. As shown in Figure 12, Whistler had the highest percentage (36%), followed by Ucluelet and Tofino (16%). Students also worked in Sun Peaks, Revelstoke, Invermere, Golden and Fernie at (10%) None of the respondents had worked in the communities of Valemount, Radium Hot Springs, Osoyoos or Harrison Hot Springs.

Respondents reported a variety of reasons for being attracted to the resort communities they worked in. Many commented on their passion for skiing and snowboarding, kayaking, mountain biking, and the outdoors, and those who identified they had worked in Whistler said things such as, “Wanted to work for the best of the best, which is what Whistler Blackcomb is all about” and “Whistler is the Hollywood of skiing.” Other responses to working in Whistler were its proximity to a larger metropolis (Vancouver) and further motivations of lifestyle and recreation.

³ LINK BC has a full listing of the public post-secondary tourism education institutions and programs on its website at: <http://linkbc.ca/network-schools/>

FIGURE 12: RESORT COMMUNITIES WHERE STUDENTS/GRADUATES HAD LIVED/WORKED



Others commented on available housing options and proximity to family and friends and the added convenience and opportunity to gain work experience in the tourism sector. Regardless of which community students worked in, they were attracted primarily by the availability of recreational opportunities. Additionally, the lifestyle in relation to surroundings and community offerings such as the arts, sports and intimate community experiences was the initial attraction. Only one respondent commented on the chance to further career possibilities within a company.

Most students and graduates felt pulled between wanting to live the lifestyle that resort communities provide and not having the financial means to actually partake in many local activities. Many attempted to work two jobs but were finding it unsustainable, as one respondent explains:

“People in BC give the excuse ‘you live here for a reason; for the lifestyle, not the pay cheque’. I’m not sure what kind of lifestyle they’re living when the cost of living is nowhere near matching what we are paid in BC for the jobs we are doing, and working in tourism means working 6+ days a week for long hours.”

While this inability of tourism employees to participate in many local tourism activities may not be a major factor impacting the ability of employers to recruit and retain quality staff at present, it may be in the future as the labour market tightens.

Additional “Other” impediments to tourism employment in resort communities included comments about unsupportive employers, and long-term staff not being helpful and even being “unfriendly” to seasonal staff.

Mobility Decisions of Graduates:

When respondents were asked about the strategies employers used to welcome them when they started, an orientation to the business (82%) was the highest-rated response for those who moved into the resort community. The opportunity to attend community events, meetings or forums was lower (27%) and depended directly on the work they were responsible for. For example, one respondent indicated, “Invited to meet with the HR Director and SVP of Operations to welcome myself and other students to the company. They also used this as an opportunity to learn more about our aspirations and work term project.”

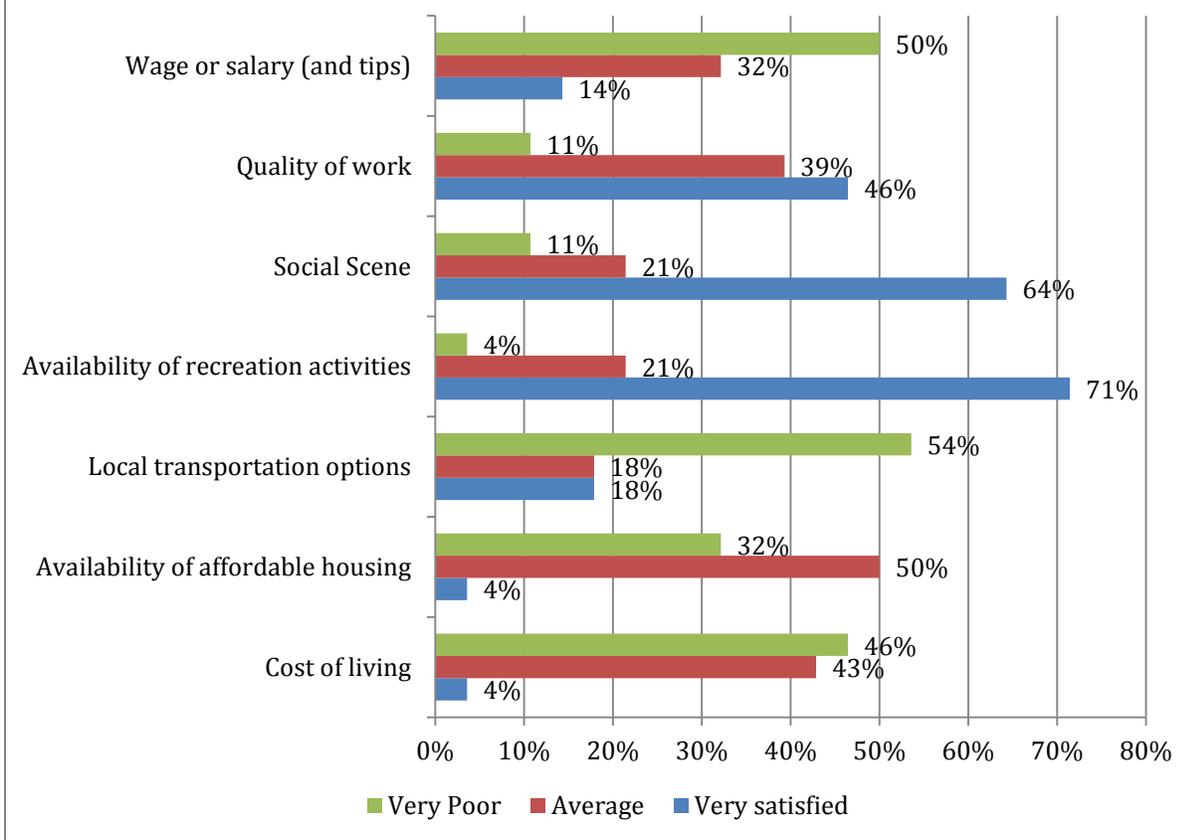
However, few (14%) of the employees were given a formal community welcome. As one respondent indicated: “The welcome to the community was from the people I worked with and friends who lived here, not my employer.” Employees indicated that they had received other perks (68%) such as ski passes and other local discounts. About half of the respondents were offered assistance in locating housing and fewer than half were provided subsidized housing. Finally, a few comments were provided about receiving ‘swag’ (promotional items), benefits, and costs covered for moving to the community, but respondents indicated that these were not major factors influencing their employment decisions.

Respondents were asked about their satisfaction with a variety of features when living/working in the resort communities. As shown in Figure 13, students and graduates were most satisfied with the availability of recreation activities (71%) followed by the social scene (64%), nightlife, friends and events etc. The quality of work was very satisfying for approximately half of the respondents (46%); however wages (50%) and the cost of living (46%) were “very poor.” Respondents also felt the availability of local transportation (54%) in resort communities to be very poor. Finally, nearly one third (32%) felt the availability of affordable housing was very poor.

When asked why they left the resort communities, respondents were most likely to leave due to the need to return to school (30%), or alternatively the season was over and their employment agreement came to an end. Others left because they did not want to continue to live in the community (10%) or for a more personal decision such as a spouse’s inability to secure employment, family commitments, etc. Other respondents left the community because of their inability to afford the purchase of a home in the resort community (30%). Approximately 5% of the respondents are still residing in the resort community.

Other respondents went to other resort communities (20%) when offered other employment. Others (20%) reported not being able to secure employment within the resort community after the season was over. A number of respondents (40%) answered “Other” for a variety of reasons, including their spouse being relocated for work, inclement weather, and family commitments that pulled them away from the resort community.

Figure 13: Graduate and student satisfaction with living/working in the resort communities



Role of Higher Education in the BC Resort Community Labour Market:

Students and graduates were asked to indicate how they were exposed to the resort communities while in College or University. The two highest responses (47%) indicated that professors introduced students to the resort communities through classroom case studies, or they were exposed to the communities through field trips or during their education. Others completed a Cooperative Education Work term (43%) or Practicums / Internships (24%) in the community. Some located the communities when searching for jobs through Campus Career posting sites and/or Employment Centres, but many students and graduates found their own jobs through their own networks of family and friends as well as through professors.

There was some evidence that there may be differences between educated employees and other seasonal employees. Some students and graduates commented on how foreign workers and other temporary workers becoming a regular hiring choice for employers. Students and graduates expressed frustration at this practice, suggesting that it can cause lowering of wages. This was perceived to be taking the jobs of educated and experienced professionals in the field of tourism and hospitality.

Some of the discussions and conversations with educators who attended the Tourism Educators Conference (TEC) in the Spring of 2013 were about the success they had taking students on field trips. Students were taken to see the summer construction, specifically the ski lifts, and then returned in the winter to see the operational aspect of the business(es). These field trips also included Hotel/Hospitality and Culinary students. Given the proximity of many of the communities to programs such as those at Selkirk College or College of the Rockies, there is clearly a good connection geographically; however, respondents also saw possibilities for other communities such as Tofino/Ucluelet and Valemount.

Many of the educators do not specifically target the 14 designated resort communities. However, one innovative link was noted from Invermere (specifically Panorama Resort). There is an informal arrangement whereby Panorama employees who undertake studies while continuing to work will be reimbursed for their tuition – with one year’s tuition reimbursed for each year worked at the resort. This is considered a very effective retention strategy.

Other ways educators are interacting with resort communities were through their advisory boards and through a version of the Link BC Student-Industry Rendezvous event - a networking event for students and industry.

Impediments to Stronger Linkages

One of the potential reasons that linkages between education institutions and the resort communities are not stronger is that educators do not necessarily limit their students’ work placement opportunities to those in the tourism and hospitality sector. Students are encouraged to test out different positions – both within the tourism/hospitality sector and in other sectors – as well as at different levels within organizations (entry level to management). Another shared comment from educators was that most students were not willing to start at the lower end of the compensation spectrum and were unwilling to work for free - i.e., through unpaid internships.

Educators indicated that many students were securing jobs through their own networking efforts and with varying degrees of support from educators, dependent on the specific program and availability of supports. There was also a tendency for students to want to return to their hometowns for their work terms.

Overall, the educators thought the communities could be working better with resort community employers and community agencies. This would include students who want to work in the smaller rural communities and those seeking experience in larger, reputable businesses.

Conclusion

The results of this analysis provide firsthand evidence from the students and graduates who worked in several of the 14 resort communities in BC. The survey captured their motivations to work in the communities, their welcome, their overall satisfaction and reasons for exit. In conclusion, the findings indicate that there could be stronger linkages between educators and employers in the resort communities in ways that allow this segment of the labour market to become more aware of resort community employment and satisfying career opportunities.

Overall, students and graduates who lived and worked in one or more of the communities reported the following benefits of the experience:

- Gaining experience in their chosen fields of study.
- Support and assistance from their employers with respect to student/graduate professional development (in some but not all cases).
- Further industry connections.

Some students and graduates moved from one resort community to another, working for example, in the mountain resorts during ski season then to resorts primarily oriented toward summer activities for that season. Comments suggest that students and graduates will work in places like Banff, Alta., where there is a concentration of employment opportunities, as well as in other mountain areas.

Many students/graduates returned season after season to the same community. In fact, a number of graduates remain in the resort communities where they work full time in the industry now.

On a disconcerting note, some students highlighted the strong pull of going to work outside of their sector (i.e. Northern BC to work in the oil and gas sector) because of the relatively low wages and limited housing opportunities within resort communities, bringing into question the viability of pursuing their chosen field of work in the long term.

The findings suggest that while a number of former graduates have found valuable and meaningful employment in resort communities for their chosen fields, career development challenges remain, in particular:

- Relatively low compensation levels for entry-level positions, particularly in light of the high cost of living in many resort communities.
- Affordable and available housing – both for short-term rental and for ownership.
- Opportunities for professional advancement.

There is a high probability that the identified challenges of recruiting and retaining long-term employees will continue. Resort community employers and related agencies that promote the community as being exciting, rewarding places to live should also recognize the relatively higher aspirations and needs of those who have committed to a career in the industry through their education. Tourism and hospitality graduates will also need to be aware of the challenges of establishing long-term careers in the sector – particularly in communities where employment is highly seasonal and as a result has a limited number of permanent, high-paying career opportunities.

Discussion, questions and potential actions

This report provides a valuable first-ever attempt at understanding labour market practices and issues within BC's resort communities. Armed with this evidence, this final section will review key results in response to the study questions while posing some questions to stimulate dialogue both within and between the resort communities. Opportunities to capitalize on the existing and best practices already in place will be suggested as potential actions.

Conclusions

Responses to the study questions:

The evidence gathered allows a response to the four study questions posed.

1. What is the experience of BC Resort Communities with respect to labour market issues and what lessons have they learned that can advance the resort network to enhance the productivity of seasonal labour markets?

BC Resort Communities have gained a wealth of experience with seasonal labour markets due to their unique positioning in the province. The resort communities are all located close to natural and cultural amenities that allow for the creation of employment opportunities centralized around the provision of recreation and tourism experiences. They share a need for a supply of labour that can provide high-quality services to visitors and the challenges inherent in a fluctuating environment where employment opportunities are limited by demarked seasons. This niche provides them with an important vantage point to reflect on seasonal labour and to offer suggestions for enhancements.

Table 19 summarizes the experience of the resort communities with respect to labour market issues. Seen throughout this report, this table summarized the extent that each of the propositions posed in the literature review was supported with evidence.

The evidence indicates that there is high demand for seasonal labour in the resort communities such that it produces a heavy reliance on in-migration to supply the local labour market during peak season. Despite this, the majority of jobs are perceived to be held by locals in both the peak and off-seasons for most communities. Workers are attracted to the communities for their ability to satisfy lifestyle motivations. Many see their jobs in tourism and hospitality as a "means to an end" in that their job allows them an opportunity to experience the amenities through recreation pursuits. Employers have responded to these needs and have developed creative strategies to motivate employees to remain working with them, or to stay within the community. These and other management practices appear to exert a positive influence on employees' loyalty to their employers.

There were a number of areas where there were inconsistent findings between the communities, which suggest that the local labour market conditions may vary in the resort communities.

#	Proposition	Baseline	Fernie	Tofino	Whistler
1	High demand for seasonal labour	YES	YES	YES	YES
2	Heavy reliance on in-migration to supply the local labour market	YES	YES	YES	YES
3	High competition for shoulder and off-season jobs	SOMEWHAT	YES	NO	YES
4	Local workers want to stay in the community for lifestyle and/or family reasons	NA	YES	YES	YES
5	Desire to experience the lifestyle and amenities of the resort communities will be strong	NA	YES, BUT NOT ALL	YES	YES, BUT NOT ALL.
6	A blurring boundary between work and leisure will be noted and will influence employment decisions	NA	YES	Unclear	YES, BUT NOT FOR ALL.
7	Youth may see tourism jobs as transitional and not as long-term careers	NA	YES, NOT JUST YOUTH	YES	YES, BUT NOT JUST YOUTH.
8	Strong recruitment strategies at the firm level targeting in-migrants	SOMEWHAT	NO	SOMEWHAT	YES, BUT MOSTLY LARGER EMPLOYER(S).
9	Collaboration among stakeholders in the resort communities will be evident in an attempt to identify markets and recruit employees using the community amenities as attractors	NO	NO	NO	NO, BUT SOME INFORMAL COLLABORATION OCCURS.
10	High rates of turnover, particularly in positions that are more accessible (i.e. requiring less experience, education or training)	SOMEWHAT	NO	YES	YES, AND NOT JUST ENTRY-LEVEL
11	Management practices and philosophies will influence employees' loyalty to an organization	NA	YES	YES	YES
12	Creative strategies at the firm level to motivate employees to remain with employers or in the community	SOMEWHAT	YES	SOMEWHAT	YES
13	Efforts at the community level to address issues that are influencing retention such as expanding seasons, addressing cost of living and affordable housing, etc.	SOMEWHAT	NO	NO	YES
14	Local, provincial and federal policies and resources will exert an influence on the ability of resort communities to recruit and retain seasonal employees	SOMEWHAT	YES	YES/SOMEWHAT	YES

Consistent evidence affirming proposition	
Inconsistent evidence of proposition	
Consistent evidence opposite to proposition	

Examples of inconsistent responses were found with respect to high competition for shoulder and off-season jobs, which was found in some of the communities in the baseline study as well as Fernie and Whistler, yet not in Tofino (and other communities in the baseline). When looking closer, there appears to be a correlation between competition and resort communities that experience a defined winter season. This might be due to the relative size of the labour fluctuation post-season and also the limited number of communities that can offer a “ski lifestyle” to which employees are committed.

Another area where there was some inconsistency was in the extent that strong recruitment strategies were evident at the firm level targeting in-migrants. These were most notable in Whistler and by larger employers. High rates of turnover were found to some extent in the baseline study, in both the Whistler and Tofino cases but not as much in Fernie. It appears that some communities, such as Whistler, are aware of and have been responding with strategies to address the challenges that impact recruitment, retention and training.

There was only one area where the proposition was clearly not supported by the evidence. There was little evidence of collaboration between stakeholders within the communities (or with adjacent communities) to identify labour markets and recruit employees using the amenities as attractors. This lack of coordinated recruitment (in particular) and also retention (with already noted exceptions) suggests an opportunity for the resort communities, which will be expanded on further in the following section on “Potential Actions.”

2. What are the existing and best practices to manage labour market issues such as seasonal recruitment, training and retention of staff?

There are a range of practices in place to recruit, train and retain employees both at the firm and community level.

Attraction and Recruitment

Some of the existing practices in place to attract and recruit employees ranged considerably and included tapping into local labour pools, seeking out international workers and other in-migrants, and using local employment offices and job fairs (refer to Table 9).

One of the best practices evident in the resort communities was the recognition of the motivations of employees and the strength that the “attractiveness of place” exerts on employees. There was a consistent understanding that the desire to be in the community results in employees who are “pulled” to live, work and play in the area. This understanding of “work as a means to an end” was understood and promoted, and employers overall showed support by recognizing this and creating positive work environments, flexible schedules and by providing a range of perks.

Retention

According to go2, the voluntary turnover rates (employees quitting) for BC's Tourism Industry is 30.7% compared to 8.6% for the private sector. The likelihood of turnover increases for part-time employees (100% more likely to quit compared to full-time) and for seasonal employees (50% more likely to quit than full time). Within the tourism sector, variations also exist where, for example, turnover rates range from 42.2% in recreation and entertainment, 36.8% in food and beverage, 26.8% in hotels and accommodation and 21.7% in travel services.

These statistics illustrate the high likelihood of a "culture of turnover" within the resort communities, which rely on seasonal workers in all sectors.

Many BC resort community stakeholders suggested that retention is generally a more prominent issue than recruitment at present, and in response there was a range of retention strategies being employed to address voluntary turnover. Building on the recognition of lifestyle as a motivator for employees, retention strategies used by employers were in alignment with those most desired by employees. For example, the use of non-monetary forms of compensation such as perks (ski/recreation passes in particular) was cited as the most effective retention strategy by both employers and employees.

Whereas non-monetary forms of compensation are in alignment, the findings of the study suggest that compensation levels – particularly for entry-level jobs - as a whole are relatively low in most cases and require a number of employees to obtain multiple jobs. Employers have responded to this reality with flexibility in scheduling and by providing a range of other monetary forms of compensation, such as rewards for outstanding work, bonus/merit pay, and paying higher than industry standard in some cases. Similarly, there was some – thought quite limited - evidence of job sharing taking place, both within the same community and season, as well as between seasons in the same community (e.g., employee working in golf during summer and ski during winter).

Previous peer-reviewed studies have found that there are several workplace-related conditions that need to be improved in the tourism sector, such as overall workplace culture, supportive management and general working conditions, with flexibility in hours being cited as common problem areas. However, this research demonstrated that these are in fact key retention strategies being used by employers. The management philosophy and practices, the customer service orientation and attempts to create a positive work environment were all evident as retention strategies among employers in the case communities.

Training

As the labour supply originates from a diverse set of origins, many employees are entering into the job market with limited formal training or education in the industry. According to the compensation data in Whistler, employers are not requesting significant education or training for job applicants other than in specific occupations such as Chef and Guide. These realities are corroborated by evidence from employees in Whistler, who indicate that advanced training and education opportunities were rated lowest in terms of current job satisfaction. Employees there expressed a desire for more training opportunities in management tasks such as strategic planning, finances, marketing, leadership and research, and in operational knowledge such as technology and organizing festivals and events.

Similarly, in the focus groups, there was evidence that employees were looking for opportunities for lifelong learning. Collectively, this evidence concludes that there is a strong need for additional education and training opportunities within the resort communities.

According to the baseline study, there were limited community-based training and education opportunities being provided. Much of the training that exists is being developed and offered by employers. All three of the case studies provided further evidence of the significance of training as a dominant human resource issue for the resorts. For example, in Whistler, employers indicated that the high cost of training employees was their top labour market issue overall. For larger businesses, the ability to provide in-house training (despite the high costs) was evident, but for the smaller businesses, training was even more difficult. The range of occupations in need of training varies widely, including those needing customer-service training and those needing highly technical skills. Another apparent training gap is with respect to local area knowledge (culture, history, environment, tourism products). Additionally, there is a limited time horizon for training to take place in preparation for the start of the season, and staff often have only a week or two to prepare before visitors arrive. While some of the larger companies have been able to develop pre-arrival orientations and on-boarding programs online, again smaller operations are less likely to have these in place. With the high costs associated with training, and the continual replacement of seasonal staff due to high attrition, training can be considered one of the areas of greatest need emerging from this study.

Employers are not the only potential trainers that can address these challenges. Community-based organizations, employment agencies and provincial organizations could also provide assistance with training. While there was evidence among these stakeholders regarding the need for increased training opportunities in the baseline study, there were few, if any, community or organization training opportunities in place to assist employers. This may be a potential area for stronger community responses to the labour market challenges for seasonal workers (and possibly permanent staff as well).

Additionally, there are formal supports for education and training external to the communities that may provide a response to the training challenges present in resort communities. BC has one of the largest, most extensive tourism and hospitality education training systems in the world. A range of programs exist at Colleges and Universities around the province ranging from specialized programs in ski resort operations, culinary arts programs for Chefs and more general tourism management degree programs. Dozens of short courses are also available to employees and management, in-person or online, in areas such as customer service, occupation-specific training (e.g., through *emerit*), health and safety, and others. Based on the assumption that these individuals have invested in an education in the industry and therefore may be more inclined to remain working in it, further steps to capitalize on this labour source may be worth pursuing.

3. What strategies can assist BC Resort Communities with recruitment, training and staff retention?

Moving forward, the study identifies a number of areas where resort communities can work both within and between communities to strengthen supports for recruitment, training and retention of workers.

Recruitment

1. Capitalize on branding

Resort communities have competitive advantage in the recruitment of seasonal workers due to their overall positioning among potential markets. The Destination Marketing Organizations have played a key role in positioning these communities in the mindsets of visitors and potential employees.

Question for consideration:

- Are there ways that resort communities can capitalize on their attractiveness and branding to position themselves either individually, or collectively, to attract additional labour supply?

Potential actions:

- Enhance collaboration – within communities and by provincial agencies – to collectively brand the BC Resort Communities as “places to work and play.”
- Within communities, highlight the attractive amenities and the employment opportunities to potential employees.
- Develop community-wide job fairs for peak season recruitment in resorts.
- Better coordinate international recruitment through an existing process (e.g., Destination Canada) – note: go2 already attends Destination Canada on behalf of BC tourism employers.

2. Housing – Availability and Affordability

Housing issues are a dominant recruitment and retention issue for the majority of the resort communities. If employees are uncertain or unable to access affordable housing options when they first arrive or post-season, they will continue to seek other options. Current reliance on employers to provide housing is still inadequate and unrealistic given the number of small businesses in the communities. Some communities, such as Whistler, have also made significant improvements in local housing supply, through investments in non-market housing related to hosting the 2010 Olympics. Additionally, some were questioning if it was the role of the employer to provide housing infrastructure, and others did not want their employees living and working together all the time due to human dynamics issues.

Question for consideration:

- Is there an opportunity for stronger collaboration on affordable housing – within and between communities - to continue to address recruitment challenges?

Potential actions:

- Employer collaboration (with support from community or provincial agencies) to provide seasonal housing for staff (on-site, seasonal/modular, or generalized assistance / information on options).
- Assess in greater detail practices from communities that have had at least partial success in enhancing affordable housing options for community residents and employees, such as the Resort Municipality of Whistler.
- For resort communities in close proximity to other communities, develop transportation options to transport employees to/from work between the two communities.

3. Community Perquisites (Seasons pass, Spirit Pass, etc.)

There was ample evidence that perks such as a season's pass (which directly addresses the motivation of many employees) were key recruitment tools. Where available, the resorts offer early bird rates for purchase and consider expanding the range of products/services offered as part of these programs.

Question for consideration:

How can the concept of perks be strengthened both within and between resort communities to directly influence job search decisions?

Potential actions:

- Seek ways within communities to expand upon existing perks, enhancing quality and coverage of activities and products available to employees.
- Develop a BC resort communities perk program to encourage staff that have already been trained and worked a season in one resort, to relocate to another resort during the shoulder or off-season.

Retention

4. Benefits

One of the preferred retention strategies for employees was the provision of benefits (i.e. health, dental). In Whistler, 42% of employer respondents to the survey indicated that they provide benefits to their staff.

Question for consideration:

- Are there options to develop economically feasible community-based benefits programs that would minimize costs to employers?

Potential actions:

- Identify avenues for the provision of benefits programs including minimal buy-in, rates, options.

5. Returning for a second season

There was evidence that many employers are actively engaging their employees prior to exit to return for a second season, and are remaining in contact with them during the off-season to encourage re-application. As these employees are already trained and can re-engage quickly upon their return, there may be merit in becoming more active recruiters of these employees. Money saved in training can be used for re-signing bonuses or enhanced perks for employees.

Potential actions:

- Take a more pro-active approach to identify employees who would consider returning in the next peak season. Invite them to return and investigate what their needs would be upon return (i.e. wages, advanced training, more responsibility).
- For involuntary departures where individuals are leaving for another year of education or training, consider the use of tuition reimbursement as an incentive.

- Enhance the usage and effectiveness of end-of-season retention bonuses (for staff who stay to the end of the season).

6. Job sharing

There was some evidence that employers recognize the need of employees to work more than one job. This was often accommodated via flexible scheduling. There may be further room however to enhance supports for employees by developing a more formal job-sharing initiative between employers within resort communities, or between similar employers in different resort communities. This may provide employees with supports and enhanced options to enable them to remain in their job(s) while dispersing the financial obligation on individual employers during shoulder and off-seasons.

Potential actions:

- Identify the interest of resort employers for job-sharing options for staff both within communities and in other resort communities.
- Develop a job-sharing initiative that incorporates membership options, partners and roles, shared perks and benefits.

Training

7. Community-wide training

As discussed earlier, training was one of the most dominant themes emerging from the case study data. Beyond the expressed interest among employees for training in management type tasks, there was also a strong interest in customer-service training. Many employers expressed an interest in a community-based program since customers of one business are also customers of another.

Questions for dialogue

- Are there opportunities for resort communities to collaborate around shared training needs to alleviate expenses among employers, enhance preparedness for the seasons, improve customer service orientation and satisfy the expressed needs of employees?

Potential actions

- Assess the feasibility of a resort community pre-season training program with standardized components (history, culture, geography, saleable products, service quality) but customized local area content. Consider utilizing return staff to assist with training to enhance their own knowledge and skills through teaching and to begin developing workplace culture.
- Encourage community-based organizations to respond to the training and education needs from the study by identifying specific training options presently available in/near the community.
- Reward employees for taking education and training options provided within the community (connect training with rewards – e.g., similar to the Whistler Spirit Pass).

8. Capitalize on BC Tourism and Hospitality education system

How can the existing strength in BC's tourism and hospitality education and training system be leveraged to address the labour challenges identified?

As identified earlier, there is room to create stronger and more defined linkages between the existing tourism and hospitality education system in BC and the BC resort communities. Doing so may create better “feeder programs” for the resort communities, reduce training costs, and potentially address voluntary turnover rates by securing long-term, career-minded employees. There may be additional opportunities to encourage educators and/or other agencies to collaborate with the communities to provide “in community” training options to assist them in preparing for peak-season operations.

Potential actions:

- Encourage LinkBC and go2 to highlight the results of the study to Educators and to assist in creating stronger linkages with BC Resort Communities.
- Highlight the existing training and education programs – credit and non-credit – available throughout BC to the resort communities. Also highlight the experiential education supports such as Cooperative Education programs, Campus Career Centers, etc., which can be utilized to target students during recruitment.
- Encourage faculty in the programs to connect students to the resort communities through case studies, field experiences and research to expose the employment options available within them.

4. How can better linkages and communications between BC resort communities be developed to maximize knowledge on effective labour market practices?

The strategic analysis can be used to assist employers in the resort communities to understand the existing labour market landscape within the province. In order to create better linkages and address some of the potential issues identified, the analysis will need to be shared widely and used to facilitate dialogue within and between communities. Upon completion, go2 will develop a communications and outreach plan to ensure that the report is widely distributed and that key findings are assessed for possible follow-up action.

Potential actions:

- Share the report in whole, and in summarized form, with all of the participants of the baseline study with a request to share the results within community.
- go2 could use an outreach approach to engage community stakeholders in dialogue on some of the priority areas and to provide expertise on potential strategies that unfold
- go2 can also play a broker role between communities to assist in creating opportunities for cross-community strategies around recruitment, retention and training

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Appendices:

Appendix A: Expanded Methodology

Appendix B: Additional Summary Tables for the Tofino Case Study

Appendix C: Additional Summary Tables for the Fernie Case Study

Appendix D: Additional Summary Tables for the Whistler Case Study

Appendix A:

Methodology – Expanded version

These Appendices will expand upon the abbreviated version of the methodology provided in the report to allow those interested to understand more about how the data was collected for the analysis.

Baseline Study

The Sample Frame was generated through a web-based search for senior level administrators in each of the 14 BC Resort Municipalities, and with employment organizations within each community. Additional names were added for staff in Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development offices, where they existed. It is presumed that these individuals would be the best people to understand the labour market situation in the community. The list also includes key members of the project's steering committee. This list was generated, reviewed for consistency, and then individuals were contacted for an invitation to participate in the study in April 2013.

This portion of the study gathered data through in-depth interviews via telephone to talk to the respondents identified above. The calls took place in late March and early April and were completed by the same research team member so that consistency in approach was kept. Calls were voice recorded and notes taken during the call.

Essentially, the questions aimed to answer these questions:

- a. To what extent is the attraction and retention of seasonal labour an issue for each community;
- b. What strategies, if any, have emerged at the community and organizational level to address these issues⁴;
- c. What information or initiatives might assist each community to address these issues better?

⁴ Strategies of the business or firm level will be analyzed in the short case studies using an online survey to tourism and hospitality employers. Other communities will be able to use this tool with their own employers post-project if they are interested.

Baseline Interview Questions

FOR CAO's, Economic Development and Chambers

Q.1 I'd like to begin the interview asking you about the nature of your tourism seasons in your community. When are your tourism seasons and what sorts of experiences are provided for visitors in those seasons? *(Goal is to understand the seasons present in each community and the general tourism products offered)*

Q.2 Has there been an attempt in your community to expand the length of the traditional seasons and if so, how has that been done? *(Goal is to understand if strategies to extend the season – and therefore employment opportunities – have been a priority in each community)*

Q.3 To the best of your knowledge, to what extent are the jobs created in these tourism seasons filled by local residents? Or, put another way – to what extent does your labour market require people from outside your area to fill jobs? *(Goal is to determine the perception of resident vs. in-migrants for jobs in tourism and hospitality)*

Q.4 Would you say that the recruitment and retention of seasonal employees is a challenge for your community? If so, in what ways? *(Goal is to establish the perception of recruitment and retention as an issue in each community)*

Q.5 Are you aware of any strategies that have been developed in your community to address the attraction and retention of seasonal employees? If so, can you tell me who is involved and what they are doing? *(Goal is to identify the practices used to address seasonality issues in each community)*

Q.6 Can you think of any information that might be helpful to your community to assist in addressing seasonal labour market issues? *(Goal is to identify information needs for each community to advance labour market practices)*

And for Employment Offices

Note: For communities where an employment organization exists, these questions were posed to a staff member to understand the role and perceptions of the local labour market in tourism and hospitality. These questions complement the data obtained by CAO's, Chamber and EDO officials and seek more specifics on the services and programs available, in use and needed in each community.

Q.1 I'd like to begin the interview asking you to tell me a little bit about the types of services and programs you provide? *(Goal is to understand the availability of employment services in each community)*

Q.2 Which of these services or programs would you say is most used for seasonal workers in tourism and hospitality?

Q.3 Can you tell me more about the services available to help employers with recruitment?

Q.3. Would you say that recruitment is a significant issue for employers in tourism and hospitality?

Q.4 Are there specific occupations that employers have difficulty filling?

Q.5 Where are employees being recruited from? *(Prompts – local community or external communities, or specifics like high schools, other resort communities etc.)*

Q.6 To the best of your knowledge, to what extent are the jobs created in tourism and hospitality filled by local residents? Or, put another way – to what extent does your labour market require people from outside your area to fill jobs?

Q.7 Can you tell me more about the availability of services to help employers to retain staff?

Q.8 Are you aware of examples in the community where employers are collaborating around staff retention?

Q.9 How is your agency funded to do the work that it does? *(Goal is to determine partners involved in community employment services)*

Q.10 Are there services or programs that you think are missing in your community that would assist with the recruitment and retention of seasonal employees in tourism and hospitality?

Q.11 And finally, can you think of any information that might be helpful to your community to assist in addressing seasonal labour market issues?

Short Case Studies Methodology: Tofino and Fernie

The short case study portion of the overall project used in-depth, in-person interviews to talk to respondents from the sample frame generated by the business directories of the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) and Chamber of Commerce in Tofino and Fernie. The interviews were scheduled from April 14 to 20, 2013 with one member of the research team being based in each community. This allowed for intra-community consistency in the approach and also allowed the researcher to cultivate a general sense of growing a relationship with the community and snowballing any *ad hoc* interviews while there. Further details on the sample frame and methods can be found in Appendix C.

Case Studies: Sample Frame and Methods

The sample frame used for this portion of the project was generated by starting with the business directories of the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) and Chamber of Commerce. Both organizations in Tofino, Fernie, and Whistler have extensive directories of tourism and hospitality employers in the community, and once these directories had been compared, and businesses checked for the accuracy of their contact details, a pseudo-representative sample was contacted. This sample did not include all the employers, but a percentage of each sector, and within sectors a variety of sizes and scopes (i.e. for accommodation, not only the large hotel chains were asked to participate; for activities, not only skiing or surfing operators were asked to participate). The initial invite to participate was sent out primarily by email or via phone; however, some invites were initiated in person via a walk in to the business during the research trip.

The sample frame for each community, from which the pseudo-representative sample was selected, included:

In Tofino:

- 13 employers in the Food and Beverage Sector
- 27 employers in the Accommodation Sector
- 20 employers in the Retail/Service/Tour Operator Sector

In Fernie:

- 15 employers in the Food and Beverage Sector
- 21 employers in the Accommodation Sector
- 19 employers in the Retail/Service/Tour Operator Sector

In Whistler

- 59 employers in the Food and Beverage Sector
- 62 employers in the Accommodation Sector
- 87 employers in the Retail/Service/Tour Operator Sector

The actual respondents were then based: a) on who accepted the invitation to participate, b) the discretion of the field researchers – in terms of trying not to have too many responses in one sector vs. another, and c) the insight of those surveyed in the baseline surveys who often identified a number of ‘must talk to’ employers.

Interviews were recorded (unless the participant was not comfortable with such) and detailed notes were taken. Each interview took on average 30-45 minutes, and data was analyzed separate to the other short case study community (Fernie or Tofino) and the comprehensive case study (Whistler).

The specific questions asked of employers are shown below. Where an employer owned or operated multiple businesses or properties, the interview covered all of these. A detailed summary of responses can be found in Appendices D, E, F, and G.

Case Studies: Interview Questions

- Q.1 I’d like to begin the interview asking you about the nature of your business – sector, scope, seasonality? How many employees to you have in each season-peak, off season? Do they tend to be from one place (i.e. Australia, local, etc.); ask for number or percentages, etc.
- Q.2 How does your business recruit new employees?
2a - Follow up – to what extent is recruitment an issue – what is staff turnover like for seasonal employees? Does it differ with basic vs. higher level jobs?
- Q.3 How does your business retain current employees?
3a - Follow up – to what extent is retention an issue – what is retention like for seasonal employees – or how have you compensated for losses? Does it differ with basic vs. higher level jobs?
- Q.4 Does your work in either of these areas intersect with community-wide strategies?
- Q.5 Does your work in either of these areas intersect with other businesses?
- Q.6 How does your business train new employees, or offer ongoing training?
- Q.7 For your business, how does training connect to recruitment and retention? Is it offered as an important recruitment tool (you will get this cert if employed here), or retention tool (after XX months on the job we’ll give you this much in training, etc.).
- Q.8 What other perks do you use to recruit and retain employees?
- Q.9 What future strategies do you have for recruitment, retention and training?
- Q.10 Do you see other particularly innovative strategies at play in your community – among other employers?

Q.11 What is your ideal situation for recruitment and retention? Some turnover, more turnover, less turnover? What does the future look like for your business in this area? Does it differ for basic jobs vs. higher level positions?

Q.12 How do you perceive employees at your business to see these issues? Are they happy with the strategies to retain them, happy with the training?

Q.13 How do you perceive the community to be involved in the recruitment and retention of staff? What role do they play? Is it their issue?

Q.14 Do you have any final thoughts to add?

Q.15 Do you have any questions?

Comprehensive Case Study Methodology: Whistler

This comprehensive case study portion of the overall project used five separate methods: in-depth, in-person interviews to talk to respondents from an identified the sample frame; an online employer survey; an online employee survey; focus groups with both newly arrived (up to two years) and returning (three years and more) employees; and finally an examination of job postings to assess compensation trends.

Interviews were scheduled in late April and early May 2013 with two members of the research team in Whistler. As the two team members had worked intensively in Tofino and Fernie on similar interviews, and had also compared notes on the how and what of the process, intra-community consistency in the approach and also a general sense of growing a relationship with the community were cultivated. Researchers also snowballed any *ad hoc* interviews while there. The interview methods were the same as described for the short case studies earlier.

The Employee and Employer surveys were developed based on the literature review (see surveys in this section). Once developed they were tested for face validity by five operators in the resort communities, staff at go2 and staff at the Whistler Chamber of Commerce. When ready, the survey was distributed via Email announcements from the Whistler Chamber of Commerce with two follow up reminders. Response rates for the survey were n=53 employer surveys and n=267 employee surveys.

Compensation data was secured through questions in both the Employee and Employer versions of the survey as well as through content analysis of job postings in Whistler for the 2012 and early 2013 period. The data was used to identify the importance of monetary and non-monetary compensation to employees, employer compensation strategies, and to describe the compensation provided for a series of jobs in Whistler.

Employer Survey (distributed in Whistler, Fernie and Tofino)

The purpose of this short survey is to provide employers in Whistler with the opportunity to provide input on the labour market practices, issues and needs. It will sent out as a link on Survey Monkey (online survey) to a list of employers within Whistler to complete from Mid-April to Mid-May 2013. The data will complement data from in depth interviews conducted throughout the community with employers.

Introduction page will introduce the project, the goals of the study and provide information on who is soliciting the results and for what purpose. NOTE: Because it will be in an online survey format, the question flow may not read as well on paper – but know that there will be drop downs for most responses or matrices built in for choice type questions). What we are looking for in the review of the questions is:

- a. Are we missing anything important either in terms of questions OR in terms of the response options people have in the questions?
- b. Are the questions clear – if not what is confusing?

Employees are one of the most important resources in a strong tourism system. In order to assist organizations involved in tourism to recruit and retain valuable employees, we would appreciate your input in this survey.

About your organization...

- Q.1 What is the **name of the organization** you work for? (open ended)
- Q.2 What is your **current position title**?
- Q.3 What **sector of tourism** would you say your organization is in? Is it...(please circle **all** that apply)
 - 1 ACCOMMODATION
 - 2 FOOD AND BEVERAGE
 - 3 CONFERENCE AND MEETING FACILITIES/SERVICES
 - 4 ART, CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT
 - 5 OUTDOOR RECREATION, SPORT AND ADVENTURE TOURISM
 - 6 TRANSPORTATION
 - 7 ATTRACTIONS (including special events and festivals)
 - 8 TRAVEL AND TOUR OPERATIONS
 - 9 TRAINING AND EDUCATION
 - 10 TRAVEL TRADE (including tourism marketing organizations)
 - 11 OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY): _____
- Q.4 Which of the above is the primary sector of tourism that you identify with?
- Q.5 When thinking about the number of visitors your business services, how would you classify each of the months of the year – peak season, shoulder season, low season? (will click button for each month)

Month	Peak season	Shoulder season	Off season
January			
February			
March			
April			
May			
June			
July			
August			
September			
October			
November			
December			

- Q.6 Thinking about your requirements for labour, approximately how many employees work in your organization in each month by employment type? (will insert number which we can use to calculate total numbers of each type and organization size)

Month	Part time seasonal	Full time seasonal	Part time permanent	Full time permanent

January				
February				
March				
April				
May				
June				
July				
August				
September				
October				
November				
December				

Employment practices in your organization...

Q.7 How significant are each of the **human resource issues with respect to SEASONAL employees** for your organization?

	NOT SIGNIFICANT	SOMEWHAT INSIGNIFICANT	EXTREMELY SIGNIFICANT	NOT SURE
A High rate of turnover in seasonal employees	1	2	3	4
B High costs of training seasonal employees	1	2	3	4
C Inability to recruit qualified applicants to positions	1	2	3	4
D Inability to recruit enough applicants for positions	1	2	3	4
E Inability to locate affordable housing options for employees	1	2	3	4
F Inability to pay high wages	1	2	3	4
G Inability to offer attractive benefits for employees	1	2	3	4
H Inability to provide training for seasonal employees				
I Paperwork challenges with international applicants (i.e. VISA's, work permits)				

Q.8 What are the origin markets that you target your recruitment efforts towards? (open ended with ability to provide examples in text)

- Local community (please specify)
- Other BC communities (please specify)
- Other Canada (please specify)
- International (top countries)

Q.9 Which of the following practices does your organization use to **recruit seasonal employees**? (Please indicate all that apply)

1. MAINTAIN JOB OPPORTUNITIES PAGE ON ORGANIZATIONAL WEB SITE
2. PROVIDE ONLINE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR EASE OF PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES
3. SEND JOB POSTINGS TO EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE ORGANIZATIONS
4. POST OPPORTUNITIES ON SOCIAL MEDIA SITES (i.e. Facebook, Linked in)
5. WE SELL THE "LIFESTYLE" OF OUR COMMUNITY TO PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES (recreation opportunities, arts, culture etc)
6. ATTEND JOB AND CAREER FAIRS
7. OFFER INCENTIVES TO EMPLOYEES TO RECRUIT FRIENDS
8. POST JOBS WITH REGIONAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
9. POST IN NEWSPAPERS
10. WORD OF MOUTH
11. MAKE TIME FOR DROP IN VISITS BY JOB SEEKERS
12. Other (Please specify): _____

Q.10 Which of the above recruitment strategies would you say is the most effective for your organization? (Drop down menu with above choices indicated)

Q.11 Which of the following practices does your organization use to **retain employees**? (Indicate all that apply)

- 1 PAY EMPLOYEES ACCORDING TO PRODUCTIVITY (pay for performance)
- 2 PROVIDE OCCASIONAL REWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING WORK
- 3 PAY WAGES THAT ARE HIGHER THAN INDUSTRY STANDARD
- 4 PROVIDE BENEFITS (dental, health, pension plan, etc.)
- 5 PROVIDE PERKS (recreation options, ski passes, etc)
- 6 PROVIDE ASSISTANCE WITH HOUSING (subsidized, accessible)
- 7 PROVIDE PAY INCREASES BASED ON SENIORITY
- 8 PROMOTE FROM WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION
- 9 PROVIDE A PROFIT SHARING PLAN (shares or bonuses)
- 10 RECOGNIZE ADDITIONAL TRAINING AND CERTIFICATIONS WITH REWARD (pay or recognition)
- 11 PROVIDE TRAINING AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES
- 12 WE WORK WITH OTHER BUSINESSES TO HIRE SEASONAL STAFF DURING THE OFF SEASON
- 13 Other (Please specify): _____

Q. 12 Which of the above **retention strategies** is the most effective for your organization? Drop down menu of choices above

Q. 13 What supports or services for recruitment or retention of seasonal employees do you currently use within your own community?

Q. 14 Are there any services or supports for recruitment and retention that you feel are lacking in your resort community? If so, please specify.

Q. 15 Thinking about compensation levels, can you provide the starting wage, Perks and benefits provided for three of your seasonal positions?

Seasonal Position/ Occupation	Starting Wage Rate	Benefits provided	Perks provided
1			
2			
3			
Other – optional			

Any other comments you would like to share...

Q. If you would like to comment on anything else regarding tourism employment, please do so here. We welcome your comments.

Thank you for participating in this study. Your input will assist in the development of the tourism labour market in the BC Resort Communities.

Employee Survey (distributed in Whistler, Fernie and Tofino)

The purpose of this short survey is to provide employees in Whistler with the opportunity to provide input on the labour market practices, issues and needs. It will be sent out as a link on Survey Monkey to a list of employers within Whistler to share with their employees from Mid-April to Mid-May 2013. The data will complement data from focus groups conducted throughout the community with employees.

Introduction page will introduce the project, the goals of the study and provide information on who is soliciting the results and for what purpose.

Employees are one of the most important resources in a strong tourism system. In order to assist organizations involved in tourism to recruit and retain valuable employees, we would appreciate your input in this survey.

About your current job...

- Q. What is your **current position title**? (please specify)
-
- Q. What **sector of tourism** are you currently employed in? Is it...(please circle **all** that apply)
- 12 ACCOMMODATION
 - 13 FOOD AND BEVERAGE
 - 14 CONFERENCE AND MEETING FACILITIES/SERVICES
 - 15 ART, CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT
 - 16 OUTDOOR RECREATION, SPORT AND ADVENTURE TOURISM
 - 17 TRANSPORTATION
 - 18 ATTRACTIONS (including special events and festivals)
 - 19 TRAVEL AND TOUR OPERATIONS
 - 20 TRAINING AND EDUCATION
 - 21 TRAVEL TRADE (including tourism marketing organizations)
 - 22 AGRICULTURAL TOURISM
 - 23 OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY): _____
- Q. Which of the above is the primary sector of tourism that you identify with? *Drop down menu*
-
- PRIMARY SECTOR OF TOURISM
- Q. Approximately **how long have you been continuously employed** with your **current** employer? (please circle best response)
- 1 LESS THAN 3 MONTHS
 - 2 LESS THAN 6 MONTHS
 - 3 6 – 12 MONTHS
 - 4 1 – 2 YEARS
 - 5 3 - 5 YEARS
 - 6 6 - 10 YEARS
 - 7 11 YEARS AND OVER
- Q. Have you worked for this employer in the past?
- 1. Yes
 - 2. No
- Q. If you answered “yes” to the above, how many seasons have you been with this employer?
- Q. How would you describe the **level of your position**? Is it ... (best response)
- 1. ENTRY LEVEL (Positions requiring little experience to enter the organization)
 - 2. DEPARTMENT LEVEL (Skilled positions requiring some experience, non-supervisory)

3. MID-MANAGEMENT LEVEL (Positions supervising others, or assisting management)
4. MANAGEMENT LEVEL (Positions requiring a full range of management responsibilities)

Q.7 Thinking about your **current tourism related job**, what is your employment status in each of the following seasons? (please circle best response for each season)

- A WINTER (January to March)
- 1 PART TIME (less than 29 hrs. per week)
 - 2 FULL TIME (30 hrs. per week and above)
 - 3 LAID OFF (OFF SEASON)
- B SPRING (April to June)
- 1 PART TIME (less than 29 hrs. per week)
 - 2 FULL TIME (30 hrs. per week and above)
 - 3 LAID OFF (OFF SEASON)
- C SUMMER (July to September)
- 1 PART TIME (less than 29 hrs. per week)
 - 2 FULL TIME (30 hrs. per week and above)
 - 3 LAID OFF (OFF SEASON)
- D FALL (October to December)
- 1 PART TIME (less than 29 hrs. per week)
 - 2 FULL TIME (30 hrs. per week and above)
 - 3 LAID OFF (OFF SEASON)

Q. To what extent do you **perform each of the following activities** in your **current** position? (please circle the best response for each item)

	NOT AT ALL	SOME TIMES	A LOT	NOT SURE
A Provide face to face service to customers	1	2	3	4
B Administrative duties (answering phone, filing, fax, etc.)	1	2	3	4
C Handle bookings or reservations (trips, rooms, etc.)	1	2	3	4
D Handle payments from customers (cash, credit, etc.)	1	2	3	4
E Lead/guide/instruct visitors in activities	1	2	3	4
F Process data, information, forms	1	2	3	4
G Sell products or services (activities, souvenirs, etc.)	1	2	3	4
H Interpretation/education of visitors	1	2	3	4
I Work with technology (computers, equipment, etc.)	1	2	3	4
J Package experiences for visitors	1	2	3	4
K Organize events (conferences, festivals, etc.)	1	2	3	4
L Market my organization/region to potential visitors	1	2	3	4
M Manage human resources (recruit, hire, supervise, etc.)	1	2	3	4
N Train employees	1	2	3	4
O Communication to groups (presentations, meetings, etc.)	1	2	3	4
P Communicate in writing (emails, reports, memos, etc.)	1	2	3	4
Q Manage finances (accounting, payroll, etc.)	1	2	3	4
R Research (markets, visitors, destinations, etc.)	1	2	3	4
S Strategic planning (organization, destination area, etc.)	1	2	3	4
T Travel for business	1	2	3	4
U Transport visitors	1	2	3	4
V Other, please specify	1	2	3	4

Q.9 Which of the job activities listed above do you feel you need more training or education in to adequately perform your present job? (Please specify all that apply by indicating the letter (i.e. G, N, and S))

- | | | | | |
|---|-------|---|-------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | _____ | 4 | _____ | If additional, please specify: _____ |
| 2 | _____ | 5 | _____ | |
| 3 | _____ | 6 | _____ | |

How did you come to be employed in THIS ORGANIZATION

This next set of questions will have you think back to how you came to be employed in this job.

Q.10 Approximately **how long** would you say you have been consecutively employed in tourism related jobs? (please specify length of time for the most appropriate category)

- 1 _____ YEARS ON A PART-TIME AND SEASONAL BASIS
- 2 _____ YEARS ON A PART-TIME AND YEAR ROUND BASIS
- 3 _____ YEARS ON A FULL-TIME AND SEASONAL BASIS
- 4 _____ YEARS ON A FULL-TIME AND YEAR ROUND BASIS

Q. Thinking back to **before you were employed in this job**, what were you doing immediately prior? (Please circle the best response)

- 1 Working in another tourism job with the same employer
- 2 Working in another tourism job in this community
- 3 Working in another tourism job but in a different community (could add a prompt for which community in the online version)
- 4 Working in another non-tourism-related job in this community
- 5 Working in a non-tourism-related job but in a different community
- 6 Attending school (high school, College or University)
- 7 Unemployed
- 8 Home maker or parenting
- 9 Other (please specify): _____

Q. Which of the following **job search techniques** did you use when searching for your current tourism position? (Circle **all** that apply)

- 1 COMPANY'S JOB BOARD
- 2 OTHER JOB BOARDS (E.G., GO2HR.CA; CRAIGSLIST; OTHER)
- 3 ONLINE JOB SEARCH
- 4 SEARCHED JOB POSTINGS AT EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES
- 5 SOCIAL MEDIA SITES (i.e. Facebook, Linked in)
- 6 DID ONLINE APPLICATIONS
- 7 ASKED MY FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES ABOUT POTENTIAL EMPLOYMENT
- 8 ATTENDED JOB AND CAREER FAIRS
- 9 REFERRED BY ANOTHER EMPLOYEE
- 10 SEARCHED FOR THOSE OFFERING HIRING BONUSES
- 11 VISITED EMPLOYMENT OFFICES AT A COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITIES
- 12 CHECKED JOB ADS IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS FOR OPENINGS
- 13 MADE PERSONAL CONTACT WITH INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYERS
- 14 Other (please specify): _____

Q. Which of the above job search techniques was the most effective for you when searching for your current tourism position? (Please specify)

_____ MOST EFFECTIVE JOB SEARCH TECHNIQUE

Q. To what extent would you agree with EACH of the following statements about living and working in Whistler? Scale of agreement

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I want to live in Whistler and will take whatever jobs I get to allow me to stay here				
I live in Whistler because it provides the opportunity to pursue my career in tourism or hospitality				
I want to live in Whistler for lifestyle reasons as opposed to my career				
I chose my present job based on how it fits into my lifestyle (i.e. recreation, arts)				
I chose my present job based on how it supports my career goals				
I choose my present job based on word of mouth by other employees (i.e. it's a "good place to work")				
I chose my present job because I can earn more with them than in my previous job (better wages or more hours)				

Why did you choose This TYPE OF Employment...

Q. Which of the following reasons best describe your reasons for choosing to work in your current job? please circle the number that best describes your level of agreement to each statement)

I chose to work in this job because...	STRONGLY DISAGREE	SOME WHAT DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	SOME WHAT AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	N/A
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A	I earned too little in my previous job	1	2	3	4	5	6
B	I wanted to relocate to this community	1	2		3	4	5
C	I wanted to work for this employer	1	2	3	4	5	6
D	I wanted better working conditions	1	2	3	4	5	6
E	I wanted to work part time to supplement my income	1	2	3	4	5	6
F	I wanted an interesting job	1	2	3	4	5	6
G	I wanted to stay living in this community	1	2	3	4	5	6
H	I was attracted by the perks and benefits this employer provides	1	2	3	4	5	6
I	I was unemployed and needed a job	1	2	3	4	5	6
J	I wanted to work with people	1	2	3	4	5	6
K	I wanted to use my skills, training or education	1	2	3	4	5	6
L	I wanted to gain new experience	1	2	3	4	5	6
M	I wanted to develop my language skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
N	I wanted a job that was conducive to my lifestyle	1	2	3	4	5	6
O	I needed extra money quickly	1	2	3	4	5	6
P	I was downsized in a declining industry	1	2	3	4	5	6
Q	I did not see prospects in my previous occupation	1	2	3	4	5	6
R	I wanted to leave my previous job	1	2	3	4	5	6
S	I needed a job which did not require any particular qualification	1	2	3	4	5	6
T	I wanted to work in pleasant surroundings	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q. To what extent do you use your current job to provide for your income? (Please circle best response)

- 1 I USE THIS JOB AS MY PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME.
- 2 I USE THIS JOB TO PROVIDE ME WITH SUPPLEMENTARY INCOME (FOR OTHER PART TIME JOBS, PENSION, SEASONAL LAYOFF, ETC.)

Your views on employment...

Q.15 Thinking about your **current job**, how would you rate each of the items? (Please circle the best response)

	VERY BAD	SOME WHAT BAD	NEITHER GOOD OR BAD	SOME WHAT GOOD	VERY GOOD	
A	Opportunities for advancement within this organization	1	2	3	4	5
B	Quality of work provided by your employer	1	2	3	4	5
C	Income (wages and tips)	1	2	3	4	5
D	Level of benefits	1	2	3	4	5
E	Rewards and recognition given	1	2	3	4	5

F	Job opportunities in other organizations	1	2	3	4	5
G	Amount of work provided (seasons, weeks, days)	1	2	3	4	5
H	Opportunity to learn new skills	1	2	3	4	5
I	Hours of work (times of the day)	1	2	3	4	5
J	Type of job duties	1	2	3	4	5
K	Level of challenge	1	2	3	4	5
L	Social status	1	2	3	4	5
M	Working environment (physical surroundings)	1	2	3	4	5
N	Advanced training and education opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
O	Social working environment (fellow workers)	1	2	3	4	5
P	Overall quality of management					

Q. How would you rate your employer on being customer/guest focused?

1. Very good
2. Good
3. Average
4. Poor
5. Very poor

Q. Which of the following statements best describes **your attitude towards your future in tourism employment?** (Circle the best response)

- 1 I PLAN TO CONTINUE WORKING IN TOURISM BECAUSE IT IS MY CHOSEN CAREER PATH.
- 2 I WILL WORK IN TOURISM JOBS UNTIL SOMETHING BETTER COMES ALONG.
- 3 I HAVE NOT FORMED ANY DECISIONS ON MY FUTURE IN TOURISM.

Your job preferences...

Q. Which of the following statements does your current employer use to keep you working with them? (Please circle **all** that apply)

- 14 BONUS/MERIT PAY SYSTEM (pay for performance)
- 15 PROVIDES OTHER REWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING WORK
- 16 PAYS ME WAGES THAT ARE HIGHER THAN INDUSTRY STANDARD
- 17 PROVIDES ME WITH ADDITIONAL BENEFITS (dental, health, pension plan, etc.)
- 18 PROVIDES BENEFITS (dental, health, pension plan, etc.)
- 19 PROVIDES PERKS (recreation options, ski passes, etc)
- 20 PROVIDES ASSISTANCE WITH HOUSING (subsidized, accessible)
- 21 PROVIDES ME WITH PAY INCREASES BASED ON SENIORITY
- 22 PROMOTES ME TO A POSITION WITH HIGHER AUTHORITY OR RESPONSIBILITIES
- 23 PROVIDES ME WITH A PROFIT SHARING PLAN (shares or bonuses)
- 24 RECOGNIZES ADDITIONAL TRAINING AND CERTIFICATIONS WITH REWARD (pay or recognition)
- 25 PROVIDES TRAINING AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES
- 26 COLLABORATE WITH OTHER BUSINESSES TO HIRE STAFF DURING THE OFF SEASON
- 27 RETENTION BONUSSES (PAID OUT AT END OF SEASON)
- 28 RELOCATION ASSISTANCE
- 29 MENTORSHIP PROGRAM
- 30 SUCCESSORSHIP PROGRAM
- 31 SERVICE RECOGNITION PROGRAM
- 32 PROVIDES A PLEASANT FRIENDLY WORKING ENVIRONMENT
- 33 Other (Please specify): _____

Q. Which of the above statements is the **most important motivator** for you to remain working with an employer? (Please specify)

_____ MOST IMPORTANT MOTIVATOR

About you...

Q. What city or town do you currently **live** in? (If not Whistler we will code as a commuter)

Q. Approximately **how long** have you lived in this city or town?

_____ YEARS

- Q. Did you have to **relocate your home** when you started your current job?
- 1 YES
 - 2 NO
- Q. If yes, where did you previously live?
- Q. Which **age** category do you belong to? (Please circle the best response)
- 1 UNDER 19 YEARS
 - 2 20 – 24 YEARS
 - 3 25 - 29 YEARS
 - 4 30 – 34 YEARS
 - 5 35 - 39 YEARS
 - 6 40 – 44 YEARS
 - 7 45 - 49 YEARS
 - 8 50 – 54 YEARS
 - 9 55 - 59 YEARS
 - 10 60 – 64 YEARS
 - 11 65 YEARS OR OLDER
- Q. What is the highest **level of education** that you have obtained? (Circle the best response)
- 1 SOME HIGH SCHOOL
 - 2 HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA
 - 3 POST-SECONDARY CERTIFICATE
 - 4 POST-SECONDARY DIPLOMA
 - 5 POST-SECONDARY DEGREE (i.e. Bachelor's degree)
 - 6 GRADUATE DEGREE (i.e. Masters or Ph.D.)
- Q. What is your **gender**? (Circle response)
- 1 MALE
 - 2 FEMALE
- Q. What is your present working status in Canada:
- Canadian citizen
Permanent resident / landed immigrant
Temporary Foreign Worker
Working Holiday
Other (state):
- Q.30 What is your **current income level (hourly or annualized)**, including gratuity, tips and commissions?
(Circle the best response)
- 1 Hourly wage: _____
Or
 - 2 Annual salary: _____

Any other comments you would like to share...

Graduate and Student Survey:

Input from students and graduates who had worked in any of the 14 resort communities within the past 10 years were thought to be an important component of the research because of their direct contribution within the tourism and hospitality sectors and their commitment to a career in these industries. Initially they were invited to participate in an online survey through an introductory e-mail. Chairs from BC's colleges and universities were asked to send out the e-mail invitation. LinkBC also assisted in advertising the research in their newsletter by asking tourism educators to have their graduates who worked in the 14 identified resort communities to participate in the survey. The survey was completed by 35 respondents.

The survey was administered via an online system, Survey Monkey, and was open for four weeks: mid-April to mid-May, 2013. A second method used to triangulate these responses was to target educators who attended the Tourism Educators Conference (TEC) in Victoria in early May. These educators were targeted to provide input on their program's engagement with the resort communities and potential strategies to create stronger linkages between communities and educators.

The overarching question asked was: "How does your program interact within the identified 14 resort communities?"

Limitations of the methodology plan:

The methodology used to gather data for the analysis is limited in the following ways:

1. The time frame of data collection was primarily from March to the end of May 2013 with March spent on literature review, April on the baseline survey and case studies, and May with surveys and analysis. This rather compressed time frame may not have coincided well for the resort communities to allow everyone equal opportunity for participation. For example, many seasonal employees in Fernie and Whistler depart from the season in mid-April, and the opportunity to participate in the survey was not provided until the end of April. This limitation decreased the sample size substantially for both Fernie and Tofino employees, and likely for Whistler employees as well. ***Caution should therefore be used in generalizing the survey results from employees to all employees in the resort communities.*** Similarly, many employers vacate the community for holidays immediately post-season. This prevented the research team from being able to communicate with a number of employers, mostly in Whistler, which reduced the overall sample size. ***Caution should therefore be used in generalizing all responses from employers in the case locations, most importantly in Whistler (as Fernie and Tofino were done earlier and had strong response rates from employers).***

2. Scope. The format for the analysis included two short case studies and a comprehensive case study on Whistler. While all communities were analyzed in the baseline survey, the emphasis in the baseline was on what the communities' perspectives (represented by talking to Administrators, economic development, Chamber and Employment offices) were on labour market conditions. The results of the baseline may not fully represent, therefore, the realities of the labour market as experienced by employers who would have a more intimate knowledge of the practices and challenges associated to the study. ***Caution should be exercised then not to generalize that the practices and conditions found in the analysis are all inclusive or universal to the resort communities.***

Appendix B: Additional Analysis for the Tofino Case Study

Tofino Employer Survey - Additional Figures

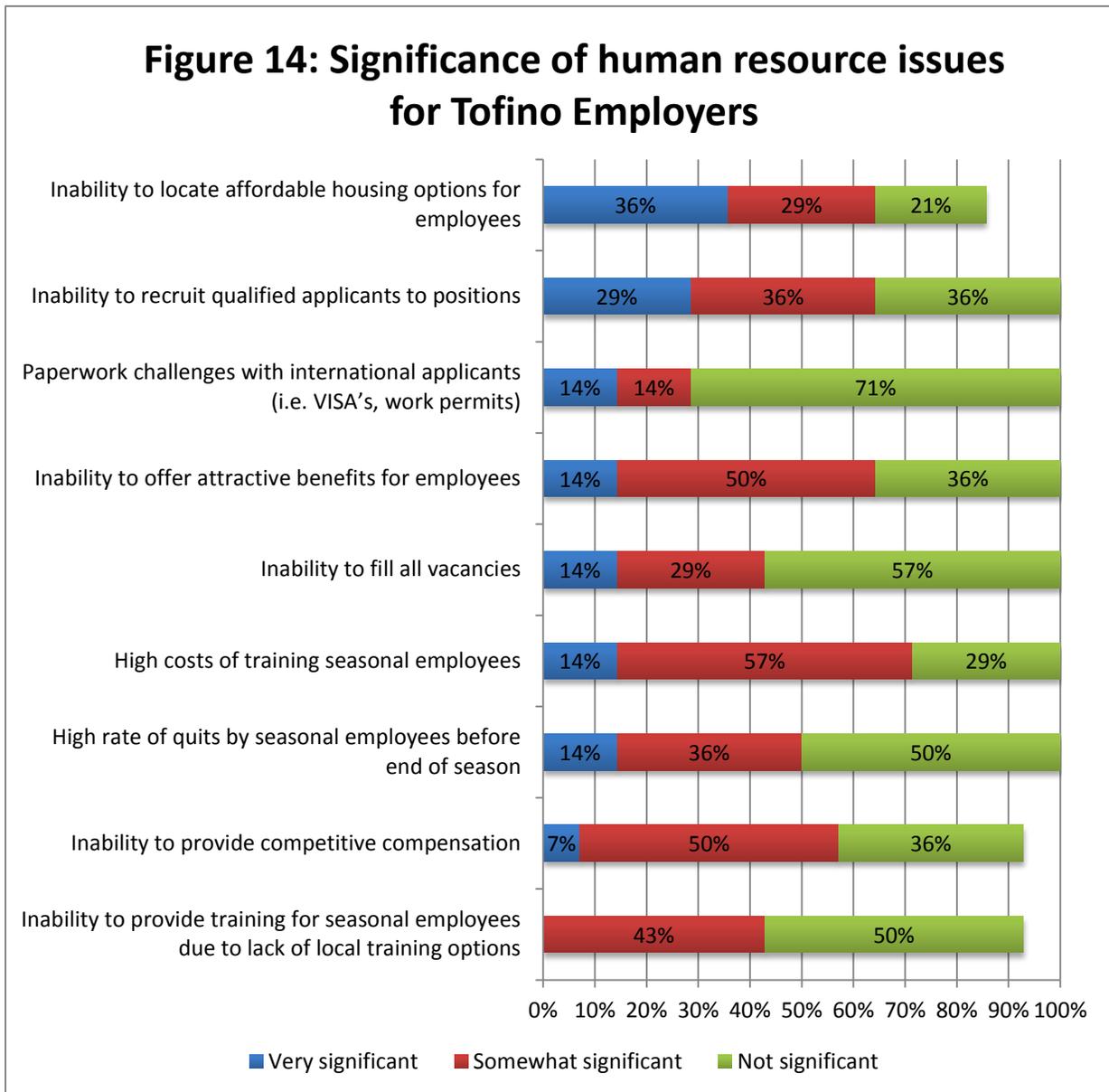


Figure 15: Most effective and most used recruitment strategies by Tofino Employers

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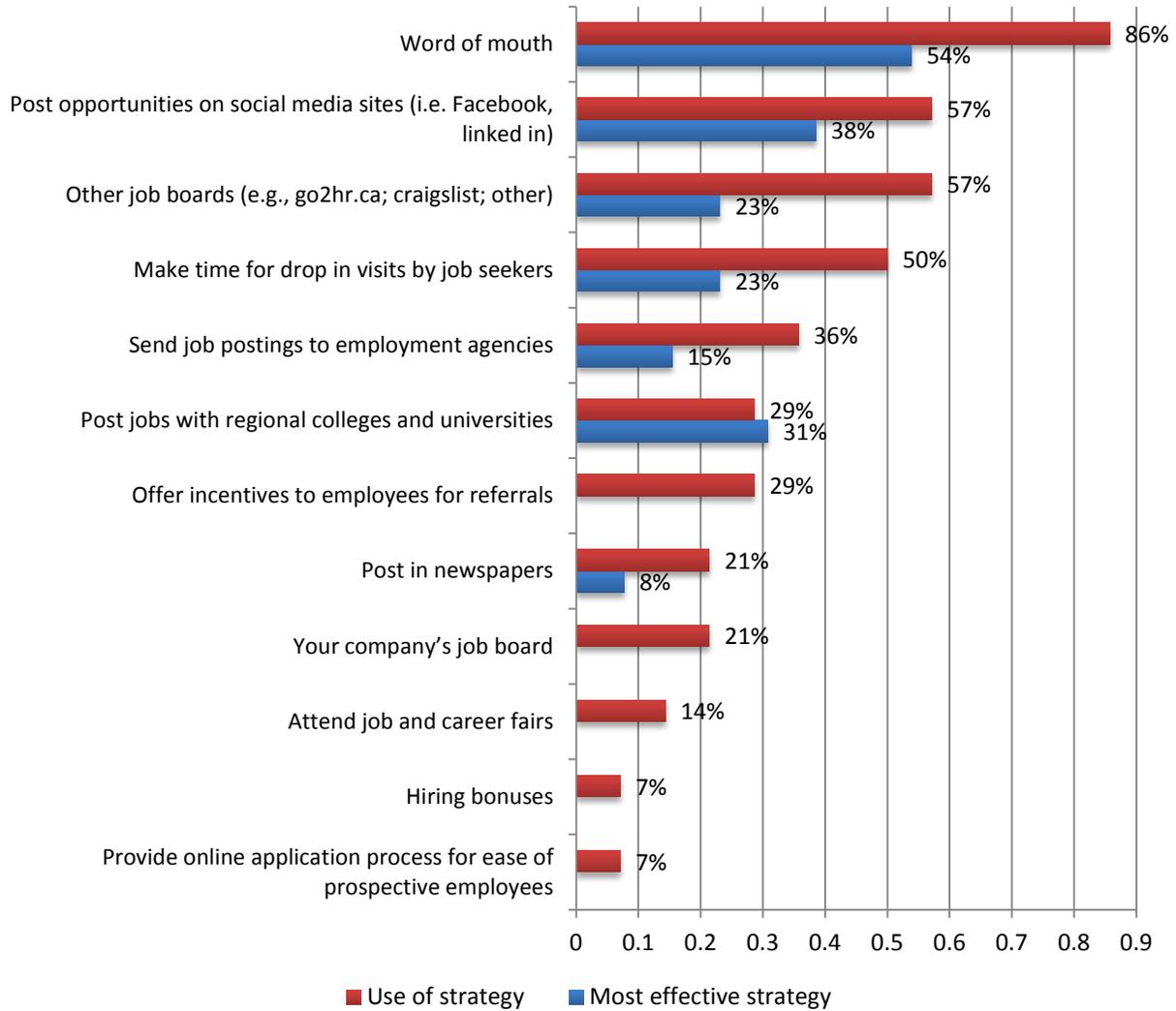


Figure 16: Most effective and most used retention strategies by Tofino Employers

N=12

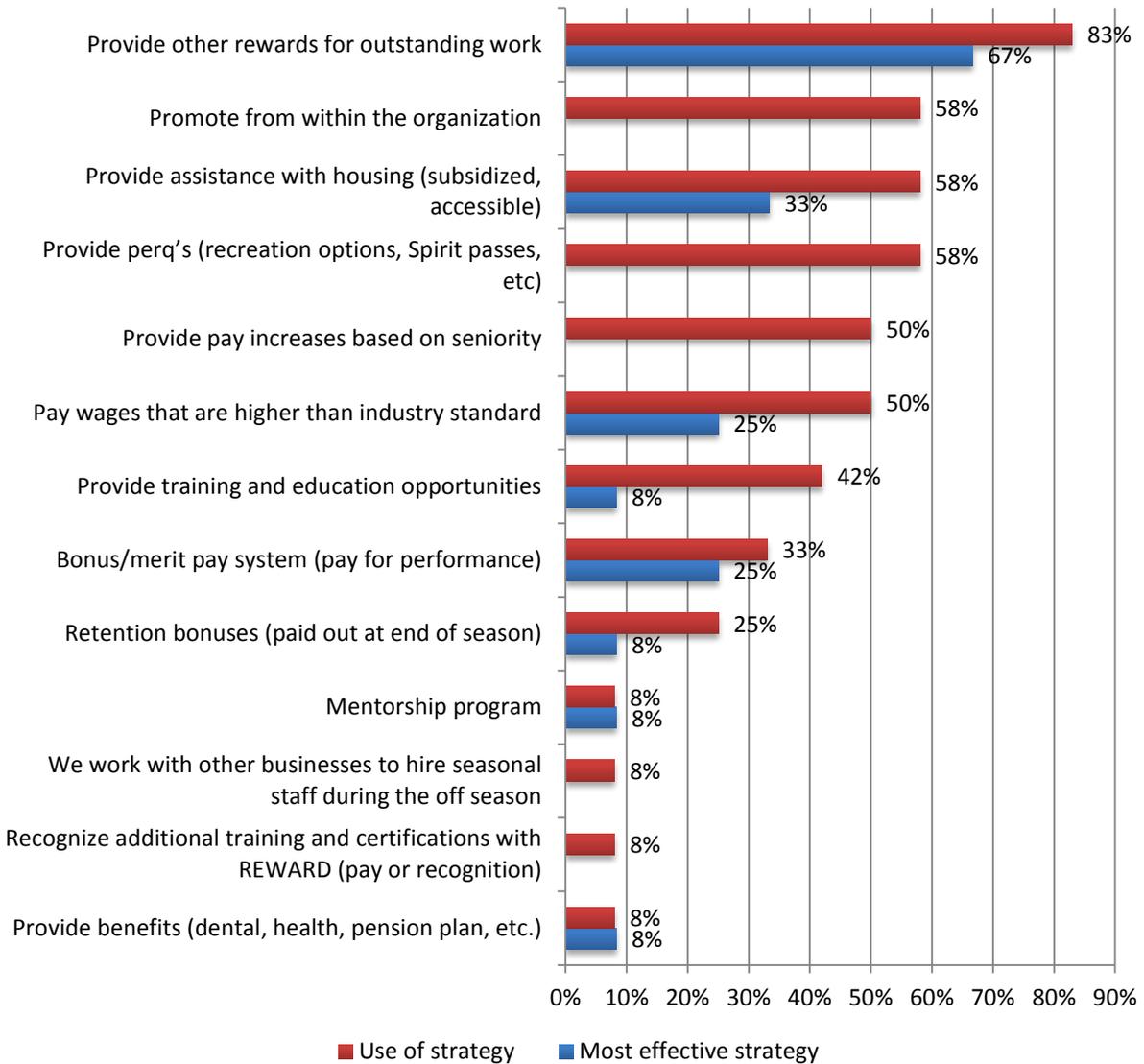


Table 20: Local Level Current and Desired Policy Supports – Tofino

Current Policy or Program	Desired Policy or Program	Description	Sector & Size
Agreement with TFN		Business agreements with the TFN to hire, train, and develop TFN members. Enabling	Accommodation, Large
Blade Runners		Training program through the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, enabling	Accommodation, Large
Tofino Ucluelet Culinary Guild (TUCG)		Enables the coordination of local/regional food for restaurants	Food and Beverage, Medium
Pacific Rim Association of Tour Operators (PRATO)		Enables consistency in the delivery of tours; allows for staff and idea sharing	Service, Medium
Ambassador Program		Customer service and employee orientation, discounts enables training and retention	Beverage, Medium; Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Medium; Retail, Small; Service, Medium
Tourism Tofino		Branding of Tofino to tourists is also branding to potential employees. Enables recruitment	Food and Beverage, Medium; Service, Medium
Community events and festivals		Enabling the extension of the tourism seasons therefore enabling more work opportunities	Service, Medium; Retail, Small
Staff housing	Staff housing	Constraining, too expensive for employer; Enables staff recruitment and retention	Service, Medium; Restaurant, Medium; Service, Medium; Mixed service provider, Small; Accommodation, Small
	Affordable and attainable housing	Would enable greater retention of employees both seasonal and year-round	Accommodation, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage, Medium; Accommodation, Large; Service, Medium; Food and Beverage, Medium; Service, Medium
	Enforcement of tenancy act	Would enable fairer rental agreements	Accommodation, Large
	Year-round and enhanced transportation	Would enable easier access to employment opportunities	Food and Beverage, Medium; Accommodation, Large

	Indoor recreation opportunities	Would enable greater community involvement contributing to retention of staff	Retail, Small; Accommodation, Large
	Community training programs	Would enable businesses to offer greater training opportunities more affordably	Food and Beverage, Medium

Table 21: Provincial Level Current and Desired Policy Supports – Tofino

Current Policy or Program	Desired Policy or Program	Description	Sector & Size
Alberni Valley Employment Centre		Enables recruitment	Accommodation, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium
Serving it Right		Enables training	Accommodation, Large; Restaurant, Medium
Food Safe		Enables training	Accommodation, Large; Restaurant, Medium
Tourism Vancouver Island Professional Development		Enables training	Service, Medium
Work BC Job Postings		Enables recruitment	Service, Medium
	Post-secondary education and training centre in Tofino	Would enable training and increased visitation	Accommodation, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium
	Better alignment of the post-secondary school schedule with the tourism seasons	Would enable greater recruitment and retention	Mixed service provider, Small; Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Large
	Sharing of open/closing dates with mountain resorts to share employees. A more streamlined process for sharing staff	Would enable greater recruitment and retention	Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and beverage, Medium; Accommodation, Large
	Small business grants, loans, wage subsidies etc.	Would enable greater training and retention	Food and Beverage, Medium
	BC Hydro incentive program for small businesses	Would enable cost savings for businesses that could be applied to retention and training	Food and Beverage, Medium

Table 22: Federal Level Current and Desired Policy Supports – Tofino

Current Policy or Program	Desired Policy or Program	Description	Sector & Size
Temporary Foreign Worker Program		Enables recruitment and retention	Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage, Medium; Service Medium
WHIMIS		Enables workplace hazardous safety training	Accommodation, Large
Aspect Targeted Skills Shortage		Enables training through funding	Service, Medium

Table 23: Recruitment Practices in Tofino

Theme	Practice	Description	Sector & Size
Business Philosophy	Hire Locally	Helps eliminate accommodation issues	Accommodation, Large; Retail, Small; Service, Medium; Service, Small; Restaurant, Medium
	Hire girls interested in fashion	Work more like fun than a job	Retail, Small
Online Recruiting	Free online postings	Post to Craigslist, WorkBC, AVEC, HRDC etc	Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Large; Restaurant, Medium; Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Large; Service, Small; Restaurant, Medium
	Facebook	Job postings	Retail, Small; Service, Medium
	Business website	Employment page	Accommodation, Large; Service, Medium; Service, Small
	H Careers	Online posting	Accommodation, Large
In-person Recruiting	Word of mouth	Staff and others recommendations; people “fall on your doorstep”; “most find us”	Accommodation, Large; Retail, Small; Service, Medium; Restaurant, Medium; Restaurant, Medium; Retail, Small; Accommodation, Small; Accommodation, Large; Service, Medium; Service, Medium; Service, Small; Service, Small
Print Recruiting	Tofino Box, the Trading Post	Community message board	Retail, Small; Restaurant, Medium; Accommodation, Large; Retail, Small; Accommodation, Small; Service, Medium; Restaurant, Medium
	Newspaper	Paid advertisements	Accommodation, Large; Restaurant, Medium
Other	Hiring fairs	e.g. Target institutions with industry programs; in Port Alberni, Halifax	Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Large

	Recruitment firms	e.g. SWAP Canada	Accommodation, Large
Other	Agreement with Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation	Business agreement to hire, train, and develop TFN members. Use newsletter	Accommodation, Large
	Relationship with post-secondary institution	Hire trained staff from accredited institution; co-ops	Service, Medium; Accommodation, Large; Service, Small
	Look to the universities	Recruit from programs e.g. cooking, tourism; co-op programs	Restaurant, Medium; Service, Medium; Service, Small
	Temporary Foreign Workers	Government programs to fill skilled and low-skilled positions	Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Large
	Draw of the community	People know about Tofino and the opportunities	Service, Medium; Retail, Small; Restaurant, Medium; Retail, Small; Service, Small

Table 24: Retention Practices in Tofino

Theme	Practice	Description	Sector & Size
Business Philosophy & Practices	High quality employer	Appreciation and respect for employer. "My boss is amazing!"	Retail, Small; Accommodation, Large; Retail, Small; Restaurant, Medium
	High quality staff	Appreciation and respect for coworkers	Retail, Small; Retail, Small
	Creation of a community	All staff are like family, close friends; a safe non-threatening environment; fun; relationship building	Retail, Small; Restaurant, Medium; Restaurant, Medium; Accommodation, Large; Retail, Small; Accommodation, Small; Accommodation, Large; Service, Small; Restaurant, Medium
	Extending the season	Creating longer work terms	Service, Medium; Restaurant, Medium
	Look for long-term commitment	Try to hire people who want to be in Tofino year-round and permanently; people who are dedicated to the industry	Accommodation, Large
Employer, Employee Communication	Staff meetings	Builds sense of being on a team	Service, Medium; Accommodation, Large
	Open information sharing	Open two-way communication and idea sharing between employee and management	Accommodation, Large

	Goal Setting Program	Employees set personal, professional, and financial goals with manager	Restaurant, Medium
Flexibility & Scheduling	Favourable hours	Flexibility in scheduling	Accommodation, Large; Retail, Small; Restaurant, Large; Retail, Small; Retail, Small; Service, Small
	Share employees	Help employees fill in hours at other businesses to achieve full time hours for the employee	Restaurant, Medium; Accommodation, Small; Accommodation, Large; Service, Medium; Service, Small
Recognition	Staff recognition on website	Staff spotlight bios	Accommodation, Large
	Recognition Program	e.g. Employees of the month	Accommodation, Large; Restaurant
Wages & Benefits	Benefits Package	After 5 years, employer pays 100% of benefits	Accommodation, Large
	Benefits Package	Standard Health and Dental	Retail, Small; Restaurant, Medium; Service, Medium
	Higher Pay; Competitive wages	Higher starting wage and wage increases	Accommodation, Large; Restaurant, Medium; Accommodation, Large; Restaurant, Medium; Retail, Small; Accommodation, Small; Accommodation, Large; Restaurant, Medium; Service, Small
	Incentives, bonuses, and tips	Performance and sales based	Accommodation, Large; Retail, Small; Accommodation, Large
	Annual Bonus	Financial bonus e.g. Christmas Bonus or retention bonus	Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Small
Perquisites	Modern staff accommodations	Above average standard and quality	Accommodation, Large
	Staff accommodations	Owned by business owner	Retail, Small; Service, Medium; Restaurant, Medium; Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Large; Service, Small
	Rent return program	\$200 a month returned to employee upon completion of contract or after 6 months to a year	Accommodation, Large
	Rent subsidy	Employee pays \$5 a day	Accommodation, Large
	Meal account	Free and discounted meals while working or off shift	Accommodation, Large; Service, Medium

	Weekly meals	Staff appreciation	Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Small
Perquisites	Living in Tofino	High quality of life in Tofino, abundant outdoor recreation opportunities	Retail, Small
	Discounts for friends and family	Discounted accommodation	Service, Medium
	Use of company vehicles/equipment	Use of pickup truck, bikes when needed; surf boards	Service, Medium; Service, Medium
	Staff parties and activities	BBQs and cookouts Social engagements e.g. Houseboat on Sprout Lake, paddle boarding	Service, Medium; Restaurant, Medium; Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Large; Retail, Small; Accommodation, Large; Retail, Small; Restaurant, Medium; Service, Small
	Gifts for staff	From travels, for birthdays, holidays etc	Restaurant, Medium
	Pay for flights for vacation	Use credit card air miles to send deserving employees on holiday in off seasons	Restaurant, Medium; Service, Large; Restaurant, Medium
	The little things	Pay for staff lunches; gift certificates	Accommodation, Large; Restaurant, Medium
	Discounts	e.g. 30% discount on products; activities, gym; sponsor discounts (surfing)	Retail, Small; Accommodation, Large; Service, Medium; Retail, Small
	Staff calendar of events	Frequent free activities for staff to sign up for e.g. ski events, camping trips	Accommodation, Large
	Tickets to local events	Buy or acquire tickets for staff	Accommodation, Large
Development	Opportunities for advancement	Within property and other brand properties	Accommodation, Large
	Promote and transfer from within	Opportunities for advancement	Accommodation, Large; Restaurant, Medium; Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Large

Table 25: Training Practices in Tofino

Theme	Practice	Description	Sector & Size
Training Strategies	Standard online training	All employees start with same orientation training	Accommodation, Large
	On the job training	Duration depends on position, previous experience etc.	Accommodation, Large; Restaurant, Medium; Retail, Small; Service, Medium; Retail, Small; Service, Small
	Department Specific	Each department responsible for its own training	Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Large
	Additional online training	Available as people advance	Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Large
	One-on-one training	Hands on, on the job, as you go; "By the seat of our pants"; job shadowing	Retail, Small; Service, Medium; Restaurant, Medium; Retail, Small; Service, Small
	Certifications	Financially (or otherwise) help interested employees gain certifications	Restaurant, Medium; Restaurant, Medium; Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Large; Service, Medium; Restaurant, Medium
	Crossover training	Train across all departments	Restaurant, Medium; Restaurant, Medium
	First Aid	For all staff	Accommodation, Large
	Customer Service Manual	Consistent training for all staff in all departments	Accommodation, Large
	Testing	On manual, menu, and orientation	Restaurant, Medium
	Orientation	Employee handbook, training manual	Accommodation, Large
	Word press Site	Employer-created site with up-to-date information on products	Retail, Small
	Training manual		Service, Small
	Rely on university training	Kayak guides trained by university	Service, Small
Specific Programs	Blade Runners	Training program through the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council	Accommodation, Large
	Serving it Right, Food Safe, WHIMIS etc	Government mandated programs	Restaurant, Medium; Accommodation, Large

Specific Programs	Ambassador Program	Community orientation and customer service	Restaurant, Medium; Accommodation, Large; Retail, Small; Accommodation, Large; Service, Medium
	Tourism Vancouver Island Pro-D	Professional development e.g. social media, time management	Service, Medium

Appendix C: Additional analysis for the Fernie Case Study

Fernie Employer Survey - Additional Figures

Figure 17: Significance of human resource issues for Fernie Employers

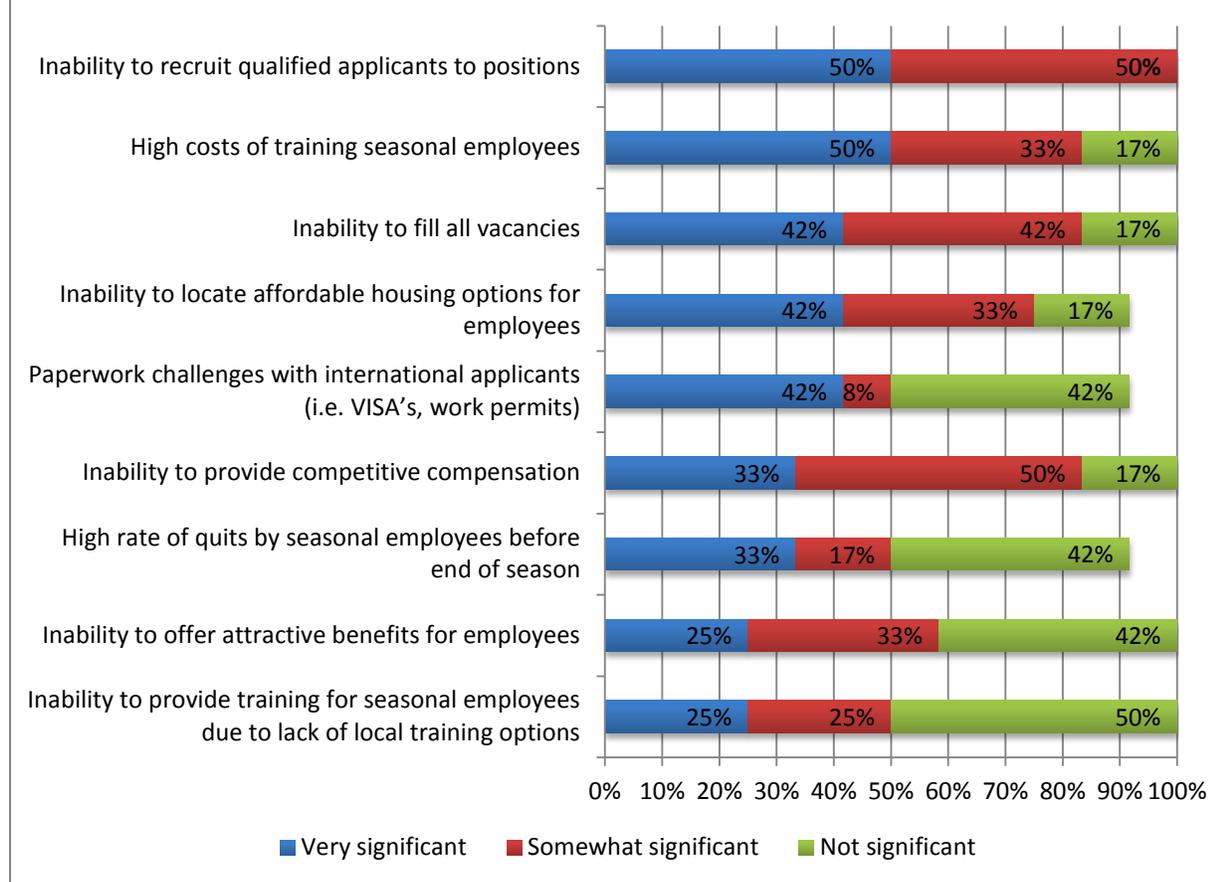


Figure 18: Most effective and most used recruitment strategies by Fernie employers

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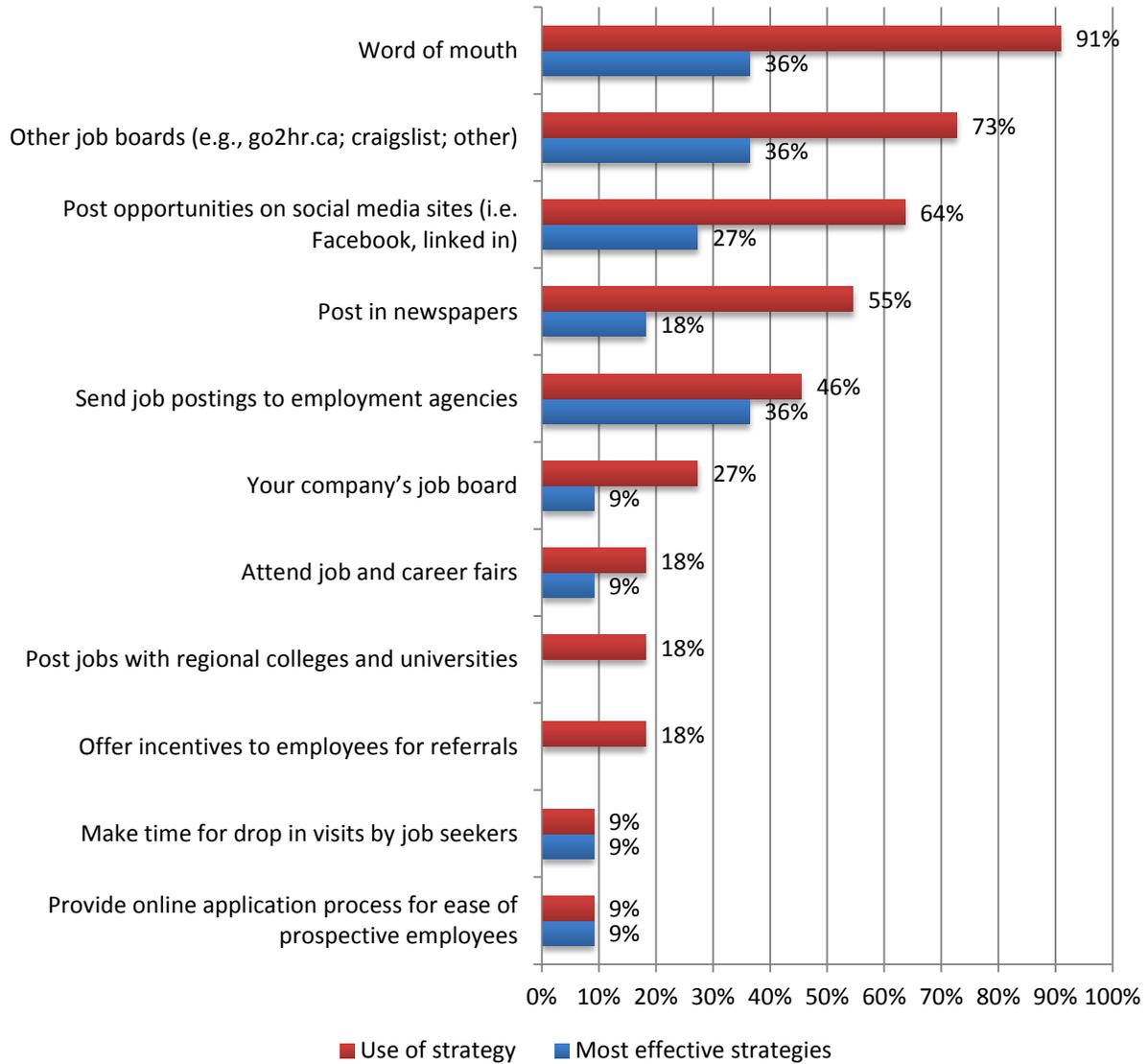


Figure 19: Most effective and most used retention strategies by Fernie Employers

N=11

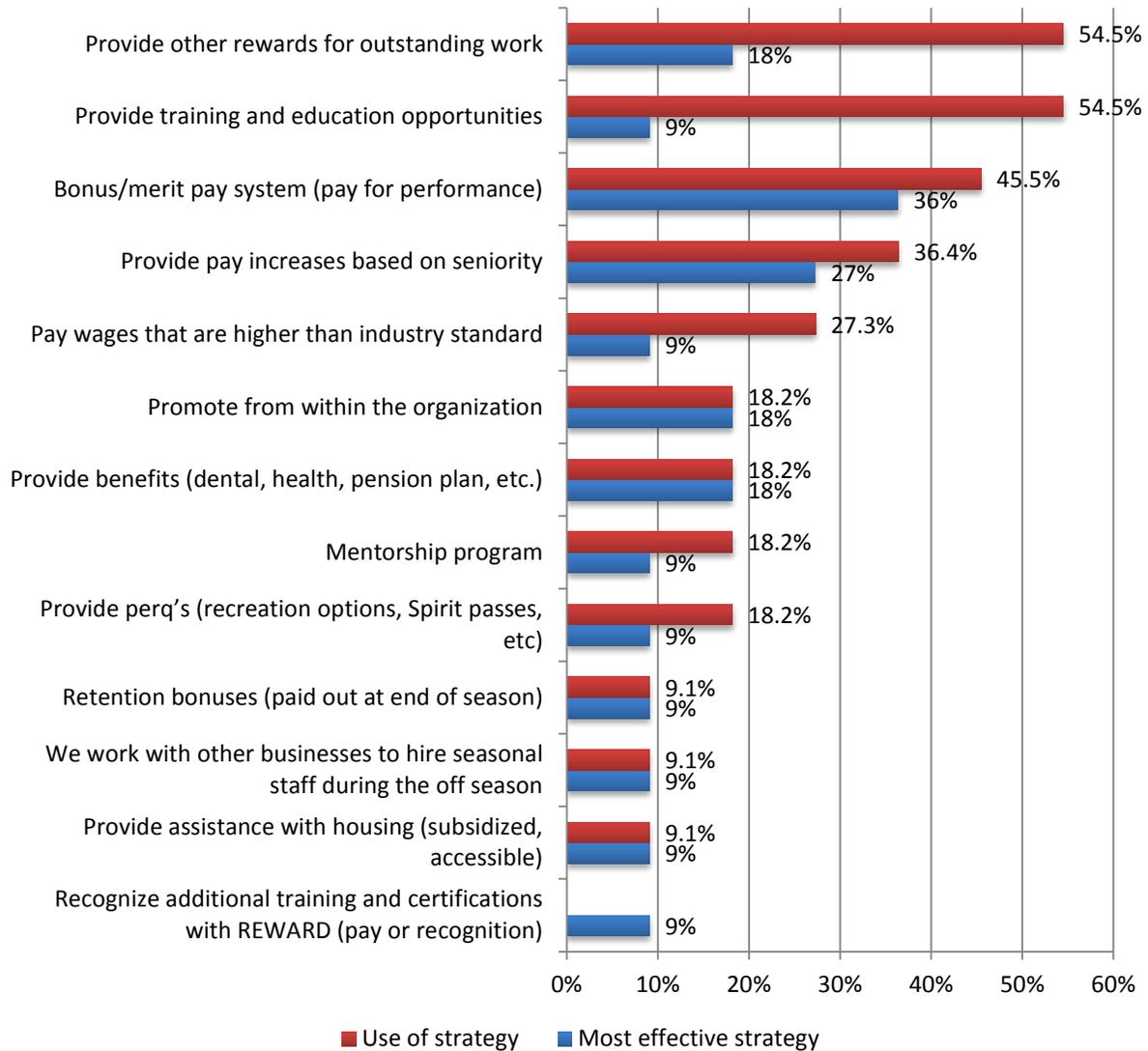


Table 26: Local Level Current and Desired Policy Supports – Fernie

Current Policy or Program	Desired Policy or Program	Description	Sector & Size
Tourism Fernie		Enabling – Branding of Fernie to tourists is also branding to potential employees	Food and beverage, Medium
Community Wide Training Programs	Community Wide Training Programs	Enabling - Community offered training workshops	Food and beverage, Medium; Food and beverage, Medium;
	Community orientation and familiarization	Would enable training	Accommodation/Food and beverage/Retail, Large
	Affordable and attainable housing	Would enable recruitment and retention	Accommodation, Large; Food and Beverage Medium; Food and Beverage Medium; Accommodation/ Food and Beverage Large

Table 27: Provincial Level Current and Desired Policy Supports – Fernie

Current Policy or Program	Desired Policy or Program	Description	Sector & Size
Get Youth Working Program		Enabling – Grant money for young staff	Small, Retail
Super Host Program		Enabling – Customer service and ambassador training	Accommodation/Food and beverage/Retail, Large
Elk Valley Employment Centre		Enabling - Local job fair, employment services.	Food and beverage, Medium; Retail, Small; Service, Medium; Accommodation/ Food and beverage, Large; Accommodation/ Food and Beverage/ Retail Large
Serving It Right		Enables training	Food and beverage, Medium
FOODSAFE		Enables training	Food and beverage, Medium

Table 28: Federal Level Current and Desired Policy Supports – Fernie

Current Policy or Program	Desired Policy or Program	Description	Sector & Size
Temporary Foreign Worker Program		Enables recruitment and retention	Food and beverage, Medium; Food and beverage, Medium; Service, Medium

Working Holiday Visa		Enabling and constraining (main reason why staff leave) to recruitment and retention	Food and beverage, Medium; Retail, Small
Employment Insurance		Enables income during lay-offs	Food and beverage, Medium; Service, Large; Service, Medium
Canadian Job Bank		Enabling – Website for recruiting	Retail, Small; Accommodation/Food and beverage/Retail, Large

Table 29: Recruitment Practices in Fernie

Theme	Practice	Description	Sector & Size
Business Philosophy & Practices	Hire staff right after winter season to ensure that good staff are around for the summer	In shoulder seasons, overstaffed with new staff to ensure that good staff are around, hold on to good staff and train new staff during slow times. The goal is to have staff that will be really useful during the busy season.	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Constantly taking resumes throughout the year	Since at any point they could lose a staff, always have potential employees.	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Trial shifts	When they don't get enough applicants, they will give anyone that walks through the door a trial for 3-4 shifts.	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Hire everyone	It's gotten to the point where we will take what we can get. If they have a pulse and can spell their name they are hired. There is not a lot of the good quality labour out there.	Retail, Small
Online Recruiting	Recruit staff through Facebook	Use company Facebook page.	Food and Beverage / Accommodation, Large
	Recruit through business website	Use business website to promote employment opportunities.	Food and Beverage / Accommodation, Large
	Recruit through government job board website	Use http://www.jobbank.gc.ca to recruit staff.	Food and Beverage / Accommodation, Large
	Recruit through Monster.com	Use Monster.com to recruit staff.	Food and Beverage / Accommodation, Large
	Recruit through Kijiji	Use kijiji.ca to recruit staff.	Food and Beverage / Accommodation, Large
	go2 website	Use go2 website to recruit staff	Food and Beverage / Accommodation/ Service, Large
	Put a sign on the front door	Since the shop is on main street, a sign is seen by a lot of traffic.	Food and Beverage, Medium

In-person Recruiting	Most hiring happens from word of mouth from staff	A current or past staff will recommend a friend for a job. Good staff energize each other.	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Recruit staff through employment centre	Work BC office in Fernie.	Food and Beverage / Accommodation, Large
	Recruit through Elk Valley Employment centre	Use the services of the local Work BC office.	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Word of mouth	Often Foreign Workers speak to other people in the community and have friends that are looking for part-time hours.	Service, Small
	Find new employees by putting a sign on the door	Business is on main street and highly visible	Retail, Small
	Work BC	Local employment services office	Retail, Small
	Word of mouth	Word of mouth from current of past staff. It is nice to have staff say "hey I know somebody who would really fit here"	Retail, Small
	Get new staff from word of mouth from old staff.	When staff leave Fernie and go home they tell friends they should work there.	Food and Beverage, Medium
Other	Newspaper ads	Only used for management positions.	Food and Beverage / Accommodation, Large
	Community does a good job of recruiting	Community helps in getting people to Fernie, getting the information out about Fernie, and making Fernie a great place to live.	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation, Large
	Community has great skiing	Many staff are drawn to Fernie for skiing.	Food and Beverage, Medium
	LMO process to get temporary foreign workers	Recruit through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program.	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Temporary Foreign Worker Program	Recruit through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program to get full time, consistent staff	Service, Small
	Local Job Fair	Recruit staff through the local job fair put on by the employment centre.	Food and Beverage / Accommodation/ Service, Large

Table 30: Retention Practices in Fernie

Theme	Practice	Description	Sector & Size
	Keep staff employed during slow season	All staff are asked to drop one shift per week and/ or take holidays to ensure that everyone gets some hours	Food and beverage, Medium
	Offer extended holidays	Encouraged to take holidays up to one month during slow seasons then return to job	Food and beverage, Medium
	Have a lot of staff	Most are casual staff that are working there as a second or third job, many are very casual working a day here or there or one day a week.	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Offer year round work	Give staff reduced hours and offer vacations in shoulder seasons.	Food and Beverage, Medium
	"Family team, fun place to work."	Even though they work long hours and it can be very busy, staff still enjoy it there because of the team atmosphere. Only pay minimum wage, no benefits from the job but staff like the fun family community that it provides.	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Team building	Try to do fun team building activities such as brewery tours, float construction for parade etc.	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation, Large
	Travel time/ time off for travel	These staff take several months off each year to travel in between seasons.	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Start with a preview shift and orientation before even getting hired.	If they are still interested they would start their training.	Accommodation, Large
	Good place to work	Offer a good working environment.	Service, Medium
	Offer year round work	We drop our hours, in the shoulder seasons of May and June. It's better to cut back on hours than lay people off.	Retail, Small

Business Philosophy & Practices	Hire locals	Staff are all mature staff not seasonal in-migrants. They all have an attachment to the community.	Service, Medium
	Sense of community	Family of workers, makes staff want to work	Service, Medium
	Enjoy work	A job that involves skiing every day and making people's holidays.	Service, Medium
	Hiring by word of mouth	Helps get good staff that will stick around.	Service, Medium
	Using the temporary foreign worker program	The business has become a lot easier to manage because now don't have people who ski party staff.	Service, Small
Flexibility & Scheduling	Provide ski time	Provide ski time by rotating shifts	Food and beverage, Medium
	Tailored schedules	Staff have input on schedules.	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation, Large
	Very flexible with time off	They have never said no to a staff asking for time off. They can do this because they have so many casual staff. They always find a way to make time off requests work.	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Staff will move from one seasonal business to the other	Use businesses together, offer staff extra hours at other locations to give them lots of hours.	Food and Beverage, Large
	Offer flexible schedule for staff.	Some staff like to work day shifts, so they get those. Everyone else is on a rolling schedule so they get an even number of day and night shifts. This allows lots of ski time.	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Flexibility	Learn now to try and work with them, and try to work with their lifestyles.	Retail, Small
Wages & Benefits	Extended medical	Cover the cost of an extended medical plan	Food and beverage, Medium
	Higher than average pay rates	Pay more than the community average which is minimum wage	Food and beverage, Medium
	Success bonus program	Starts after 3 months, based on number of rooms sold. Can make .5 cents to \$3/hr for the whole pay period, based on ADR.	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation, Large

Wages & Benefits	Dental Plan	Starts after 6 months. Full time staff 50% on \$1000 Part time 50% on \$700	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation, Large
	Bonuses	For a set period in time we would pay them a \$1 an hour more into a bonus. If they stayed until the ski hill closes they would get that bonus.	Retail, Small
	Profit sharing	Get 1% of the profit based on the amount of hours they worked.	Retail, Small
	End of season bonus	\$1 extra per hour if they make it to the end of the season	Service, Medium
	Competitive wages	Pay at or above community standard	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation / Service, Large
	Gratuities sharing	Every staff gets some of the tips.	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation / Service, Large
Ski/Leisure Passes	Ski pass	Cover the cost of a season pass at Fernie Alpine	Food and beverage, Medium
	Fitness credit	\$1000/ yr. Starts in second year of employment. Staff buy ski pass or golf pass and are reimbursed up to \$1000.	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation, Large
	Ski Pass	Cover half the cost of a ski pass. Offer to finance the ski pass for staff. They can pay it back throughout the winter.	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Discounts on ski hill passes	Staff get a discount on a seasons pass at Fernie Alpine Resort.	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation, Large
	Health bonus	Staff get \$250 rebate for ski pass or other health services	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation / Service, Large
Perquisites	Staff appreciation	Staff parties	Food and beverage, Medium
	Assistance with transportation costs	Because they can't offer staff accommodation offer gas cards for staff, or cover costs for repairs for staff.	Food and beverage, Medium
	Food plan	Staff get free meals while at work	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation, Large
	Discounts on hotel services	Staff get discounts for friends and family	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation, Large
	Free meals	Free meal when they are working	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Free food	Wine testing, seminars and product testing	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation, Large
	Partnerships with business in town	If staff refer clients they can earn free trips. Ie. Refer 10 people for cat skiing; get a free day of cat skiing.	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation, Large

Perquisites	Staff think that training is a perk.	There are staff that seek more training. Staff are empowered and gain confidence through training.	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation, Large
	Playing benefits	Offer staff perks for free golfing.	Service, Medium
	Staff appreciation activities	Try to have staff events every other month. For example, staff Olympics. Cat skiing at a reduced rate for staff party, summer wakeboarding party	Food and beverage, Medium
	Have staff housing	Offer a place for staff to live at a reasonable rate.	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation / Service, Large
	Discounts on gear	Helps with the high cost of ski gear.	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation / Service, Large
	Free product	Staff enjoy free ski gear.	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation / Service, Large
	Ongoing training	Ongoing training in customer service	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation / Service, Large
	Employee recognition programs	Attempt to show staff appreciation for their hard work	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation, Large
	Cat skiing	Staff get four days per year of free cat skiing.	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation / Service, Large

Table 31: Training Practices in Fernie

Theme	Practice	Description	Sector & Size
Training Strategies	Send staff to any community wide training programs	Jeff Mowatt Customer Service training session (http://www.jeffmowatt.com/).	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Seasonal training	two day training for one day being customer service, one day department specific training	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation, Large
	Ongoing training	Front desk agents will get sales and computer training	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation, Large
	Mentorship	Training is mentorship style that is done on the fly. Staff are scheduled for a shift and count as one of the staff.	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Training is very short	They start training on Dec. 15 th and their busiest time is Dec. 27 th . However, slowest days of the year are from Dec. 15-24. They haven't seen a busy day then all of a sudden it's the busiest day.	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Pay for courses	Pay for FOODSAFE training.	Food and Beverage, Medium

Training Strategies	Learn as they go	A little pre-work training. Mostly learn by doing job. New staff are scheduled with experienced staff to shadow and learn.	Service, Medium
	Orientation	There is a 3 day orientation program to familiarize staff with working environment.	Service, Small
	Workshops	Staff go through different workshops to learn required skills	Service, Small
	On the job training	Staff learn by doing	Service, Small
	Manual	Most of the training is done by job shadowing and a manual.	Retail , Small
	Mentorship	Staff come for a season to learn from experienced staff.	Service, Medium
	Paid training	Staff are paid for all training they complete.	Service, Medium
	Ongoing training	Ongoing training throughout the season.	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation / Service, Large
	Pre-work training	Seasonal staff have training days before work starts	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation / Service, Large
	Ongoing training	Learning for staff creates staff engagement.	Food and Beverage/ Accommodation / Service, Large

Appendix D: Additional summary tables for Whistler

Table 32: Local Level Current and Desired Policy Supports – Whistler			
Current Policy or Program	Desired Policy or Program	Description	Sector & Size
Community Wide Training Programs		Enabling – Community offered training workshops	Food and beverage, Medium; Food and beverage, Medium; Accommodation/ Food and Beverage/ Retail, Large; Food and beverage, Medium; Food and beverage, Medium
Community Orientation and Familiarization (Welcome Week)		Enabling - familiarization of the community increases investment into the community as a whole	Accommodation/ Food and Beverage/ Retail Large Accommodation, Medium Accommodation, Large
Village Host		Enables consistent customer service throughout the village	Food and Beverage, Large
Serve Us Challenge		Enables customer service training	Service, Large
Tourism Whistler Programs		Enables various training opportunities	Service, Large
Chamber of Commerce		Enables information sharing; extended health and dental plan program; customer service oriented	Food and Beverage, Large Service, Large
	Online Training	Would enable greater training options	Food and beverage, Large
Spirit Pass Program		Enables purchase of ski pass for employees and customer service training	Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Accommodation, Medium; Service, Large; Accommodation, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium
Community Events	More community events needed	Enables increased visitation therefore reducing slow seasons	Food and Beverage, Large; Accommodation, Large
	Community-wide recruitment and retention efforts to lobby for policy changes to make it more appealing for Canadians to work in resort towns	Would enable a proactive instead of reactive approach to recruitment and retention	Service, Large

	Community retention program for workers with skills in other sectors	Would enable good people with good skills to remain in Whistler and provide their services	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Post-secondary education centre in Whistler with residences	Would enable a labour pool; increase visitation by friends and family in slow seasons	Food and Beverage, Large
Chamber of Commerce Health and Dental Program	Allow individual employees of Chamber members to join	Current system constrains due to minimum number of employees needed (buy-in) from individual businesses	Food and Beverage, Large
	Coordinated job fairs	Would enable greater planning for recruitment	Food and beverage, Large
	Increased communication between businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, and Tourism Whistler	Would enable greater idea sharing	Accommodation, Medium
Tourism Whistler Marketing		Enabling - Branding of Whistler to tourists is also branding to potential employees	Food and Beverage, Medium; Service, Large; Service, Small
	Affordable and attainable housing	Would enable recruitment and retention	Service, Small; Food and Beverage/ Service, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage, Medium; Accommodation, Medium
Whistler Community Services		Enabling – food bank provides food for staff; reuse it centre provides thrift items for staff; counseling and pregnancy support	Food and Beverage/ Service Large Service, Large
Whistler Housing Authority		Enabling – Allows upper management to stay in community	Food and beverage/Service, Large

Table 33: Provincial Level Current and Desired Policy Supports – Whistler

Current Policy or Program	Desired Policy or Program	Description	Sector & Size
Serving It Right		Enables training	Food and beverage, Medium
go2		Enables policy and supports for companies	Service, Large
	Internships with colleges	Would enable recruitment	Service, Small; Retail, Small
	Increased communication between resort communities	Would enable idea sharing	Accommodation; Medium
	Better coordination of post-secondary school system (industry related) to better follow tourism seasons	Would enable students to gain work experience in the peaks and focus on coursework in the slow seasons. Have program integrated with resorts would assist with recruitment, retention, and training challenges	Food and beverage, Large

Table 34: Federal Level Current and Desired Policy Supports – Whistler

Current Policy or Program	Desired Policy or Program	Description	Sector & Size
Temporary Foreign Worker Program		Enables recruitment and retention	Accommodation, Large; Accommodation/Food and beverage/Retail, Large
Working Holiday Visa		Enabling and constraining (main reason why staff leave) to recruitment and retention	Food and beverage/Retail, Large
Canadian Experience Class Worker Program		Enables Temporary Foreign Workers to stay	Food and beverage/Retail, Large
Immigration policies for skilled workers	Improved strategies to enable reapplication	Difficult process constrains hiring of skilled workers e.g. sushi Chefs	Food and beverage, Medium
Two- year Visas for Australians Pilot Project	Would like pilot project to continue and to include all commonwealth countries	Enables employees to make a longer commitment; easy to hire foreign workers	Food and Beverage, Large
Employment Insurance		Enables income during lay-offs	Food and beverage, Medium; Service, Large; Service, Medium
Canadian Job Bank		Enabling – Website for recruiting	Retail, Small;

Table 35: Recruitment Practices in Whistler

Theme	Practice	Description	Sector & Size
Business philosophy, practices, and strategies	Community does a good job of recruiting	Image of Whistler draws staff to community	Service, Large
	Positive reputation	Desirable place to work, holds clout with landlords	Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Service, Large
	Large employers recruit staff	Whistler Blackcomb and Hotels hire staff, offer the staff casual hours to supplement	Food and Beverage, Large
	Favourable hours	e.g. closed during the day allows for more time on the mountain	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Seek long-term and industry oriented people	Recruit people who want to be employed in the industry for the long term	Accommodation, Medium; Food and Beverage, Large; Accommodation, Large
	Community involvement	Builds reputation; Many applicants ask what they are doing for the community	Food and Beverage, Large; Accommodation, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium
	Volunteer Program	Work in exchange for golf season's pass; recruit staff from volunteer pool	Service, Large
	Planning ahead	Always thinking/planning six months ahead	Accommodation, Large
	Training opportunities	Employees ask about and are interested in training	Accommodation, Large
	Hire 10% more staff than needed for winter	Allows for uncontrollable factors e.g. broken bones, sick family member	Food and Beverage, Medium
Job Fairs	National Job Fairs	Set up job fairs at post-secondary institutions in Ontario	Food and Beverage / Service, Large
	Job fair	Business-based hiring fair; usually for the winter season	Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium; Service, Large; Food and Beverage, Large
Recruitment Trips	Domestic recruitment trips	e.g. travel to ON, PQ, BC	Service, Large
	Hire overseas recruiting company	For example: 'Overseas Working Holiday' recruits staff in Australia and UK	Food and Beverage / Service, Large; Accommodation, Large
	Overseas recruitment trips	e.g. to Japan, Australia, New Zealand, UK	Food and Beverage, Medium; Service, Large
Foreign Workers	Recruit from Australia	Two-year work Visa allows workers to stay longer	Food and Beverage / Service, Large
	Temporary Foreign Worker Program/LMO process	Recruit through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program to get full time, consistent staff	Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Large

	Assist with documentation	e.g. immigration papers, leases	Food and Beverage, Medium
Online Recruiting	Canada Job Bank	Post help wanted ads on national job bank	Accommodation/ Food and Beverage, Large; Service, Small
	Craigslist	Free online postings, mostly for front end positions	Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Large
	HCareers and/or LinkedIn	Use for management positions	Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Large
	Online ads	Various sources e.g. Facebook, go2 job board, Craigslist	Service, Large; Service, Small; Food and Beverage, Medium; Accommodation, Large
	Brand/company webpage		Accommodation, Medium; Service, Large; Accommodation, Large
In-person Recruiting	Word of mouth	A current or past staff will recommend a friend for a job.	Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Accommodation, Medium; Food and Beverage, Large; Accommodation, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage, Large
	Staff referrals	Have staff recommend friends and/or hire their own replacement	Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Service, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium
	Talent Seeker program	Staff recommendations with cash incentives	Accommodation, Large
	Walk-ins		Accommodation, Large
Print Recruiting	Question Newspaper	Post help wanted ads in local newspaper	Accommodation/Food and Beverage/Service; Large; Service, Small; Accommodation, Medium
	The Pique Magazine	The first port of call for jobs and accommodations in Whistler	Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium; Accommodation, Medium; Service, Large; Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium; Accommodation/Food and Beverage/Service, Large; Service, Small; Service, Large

	Japanese Newsletter	“Underground” information network	Food and Beverage, Medium
Partnerships	Tamwood International College	Hire ESL students for support roles	Food and Beverage, Large
	Partnerships with schools	e.g. Tourism and Hospitality schools in region and UK; local high schools	Accommodation, Large; Service, Large
	Partnership with community groups	e.g. working with the Department of Defense to hire veterans	Service, Large
	Partnership with local First Nations		Service, Large

Table 36: Retention Practices in Whistler

Theme	Practice	Description	Sector & Size
Business philosophy, practices, and strategies	Sense of Family/Community	Sense of community at work. Staff start off with no friends outside of work, so company creates events to allow staff to meet and greet. A family feel; Fun Factor; Camaraderie; A great working environment	Food and Beverage/Service, Large; Service, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium; Service, Large; Accommodation, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium
	Weekly family dinners	Free meal	Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage, Medium
	Social media	Use to track employees, to keep in touch to encourage return staff	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Staff community board	Post events and activities for staff	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Develop and attract local clientele	Minimizes fluctuation in seasonality resulting in consistent work	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Foster autonomy	Allow employees to make decisions without being micro managed	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Promote/hire from within	Move into higher paying position or greater responsibilities	Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Accommodation, Medium; Service, Large; Accommodation, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Accommodation, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium; Service, Large
Employer, Employee Communication	Open communication	Share ideas, feedback, transparency	Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium; Service, Large; Service, Large
	Employee Opinion Surveys	Twice a year check in with staff to learn about the work environment	Accommodation/Food and Beverage/Service, Large

	Staff surveys	Identify problems and address the issues	Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Service, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Accommodation, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium
	Exit Interviews	Informs if staff intend to return; provides reasons for leaving	Service, Large; Accommodation, Large
	Performance reviews		Service, Large
	One-on-one feedback sessions	With employee and manager	Food and Beverage, Medium
Flexibility and Scheduling	Flexible Hours	Allow schedules that provide ride time	Food and Beverage/Service, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage, Large
	Flexible Hours	All staff are casual and sign up when they want to work.	Food and Beverage/Service, Large
	Employee Controlled Scheduling Software	'When to Work' program allows staff to trade shifts on their own time	Food and Beverage/Service, Large
	Temporary Layoffs	In the slow seasons temporally lay off staff with a return to work date.	Accommodation/Food and Beverage/Service, Large
	Unionized positions	Some positions e.g. housekeeping and front desk are unionized	Accommodation, Large
	Encourage staff to travel in slow season	e.g. in May, after Ski Fest or fall	Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium
	Year-round employment	Valued in Whistler, highly sought after	Food and Beverage, Medium; Accommodation, Large
	Share employees	Create full time employment between two or more employers or to cover shifts	Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Service, Large; Accommodation, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium
	Utilize employees' trades	Many employees have a trade from another country (e.g. plumbing). Pay staff to do the work	Food and Beverage, Medium
Recognition	Employee recognition programs	Attempt to show staff appreciation for their hard work e.g. Star Cards; employee of the month	Food and Beverage/Service, Large; Service, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Service, Large
	Celebrate length of service	e.g. every 5 years	Service, Large
	Service Promise for Staff	Promise a standard of training and feedback for staff. Offer financial rewards if employer does not meet the standard.	Accommodation/Food and Beverage/Service, Large
Wages & Benefits	High Pay	Offer competitive pay e.g. pay the highest wage in town OR servers make \$300-\$400 a day in tips	Accommodation/Food and Beverage/Service, Large; Food and Beverage/Service, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage Service, Large; Accommodation, Large

	Wage increases		Accommodation, Medium; Accommodation, Large
	Sales incentives and contests	Prizes and awards for sales	Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium; Accommodation, Medium
	End-of-season bonus	\$1 extra per hour if they make it to the end of the season	Service, Large
	Benefits Packages	e.g. health, dental, RSP matching (mostly for salaried, year-round employees)	Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage, Large; Accommodation, Medium; Service, Large; Accommodation, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Accommodation, Large; Accommodation/Food and Beverage/Service, Large; Service, Large
Ski/Leisure Pass Programs	Family Ski Passes	Passes for spouses and children	Service, Large
	Mountain Bike Pass	Full time staff receive a Whistler Blackcomb mountain bike pass	Service, Large
	Spirit Pass Program	Financed ski pass; customer service training	Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium; Accommodation, Medium; Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium
	Pass buy back	Financed ski pass	Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage, Large
	Leisure Fund/Leisure wellness package	Option for ski pass or an alternative (e.g. gym membership)	Accommodation, Medium; Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Large
Perquisites	Staff housing	Subsidized staff housing is available to staff.	Food and Beverage/Service, Large; Service, Large; Accommodation/Food and Beverage/Service, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium; Accommodation, Large
	Health Club Pass	Full time staff receive a pass to health club on site	Accommodation/Food and Beverage/Service, Large
	Hotel privileges	Use of hotel amenities	Accommodation; Medium
	Mini celebrations	e.g. cakes and cards for birthday, when someone leaves	Restaurant, Medium
	Staff Parties and Events	e.g. summer and Christmas parties	Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium; Service, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium; Service, Large
	Staff gifts		Food and Beverage, Large
	Free Parking	There is almost no free parking in Whistler. Offer staff free parking.	Accommodation/Food and Beverage/Service, Large; Accommodation, Large
	Discounts	e.g. half price food and beverage at all times for staff and friends; room rates	Restaurant, Large; Restaurant, Large; Accommodation, Medium; Service, Large; Accommodation, Large; Accommodation, Large; Restaurant, Medium
	Hotel Discounts	Staff get discounted rates at other chain hotels.	Accommodation/Food and Beverage/Service, Large

	Locals rates	Discounts at other businesses for locals (includes seasonal workers)	Accommodation, Medium; Accommodation/Food and Beverage/Service, Large
	Fam Trips	Familiarization trips to services etc in Whistler	Accommodation, Medium
	Free Meal	Staff get free meals while at work	Food and Beverage/Service, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Accommodation/Food and Beverage/Service, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium; Accommodation, Large
	Dry cleaning services	e.g. for salaried employees' clothes and hourly employees' uniforms	Accommodation, Large; Accommodation/Food and Beverage/Service, Large
Training and Development for Retention	Skill development	Hard skills (e.g. serving) and life skills (e.g. confidence)	Food and Beverage, Large
	Create opportunities for staff	e.g. to learn a new skill, try something new	Food and Beverage, Medium; Service, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Accommodation, Large
	Training and educational opportunities		Accommodation, Medium; Food and Beverage, Large
	Provincial nomination program	Sponsor employees for temporary residence	Accommodation, Medium; Accommodation, Large; Restaurant, Large

Table 37: Training Practices in Whistler

Theme	Practice	Description	Sector & Size
Business Philosophy	Hire trained workers	Employees bring best practices from previous employment	Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage, Large
	Case by case	Based on employee interest and needs; job specific	Accommodation, Medium; Accommodation, Large
Training Strategies	Pre-work training	1-2 weeks of training before starting work	Service, Large
	Training during slow season	On the job training with low volume of customers to help staff get comfortable	Food and Beverage/Service, Large
	All staff orientation	Training and meet and greet for all employees	Service, Large; Service, Large
	Company Wide training	All staff take lecture style generic training	Food and Beverage/Service, Large
	Job shadow		Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Accommodation, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage/Service, Large
	On the job	Training shifts; task specific	Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Service, Large; Accommodation, Large; Food and Beverage, Large; Accommodation, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium; Service, Small; Service, Large

	Employee handbook		Food and Beverage, Large
	Manual	Most of the training is done by job shadowing and a manual.	Retail, Small
	Training checklists	Skill and position dependent	Food and Beverage, Large; Accommodation, Medium; Accommodation, Large
	Webinars & Online training	e.g. customer service; eCornell University	Food and Beverage, Large; Accommodation, Medium; Food and Beverage, Medium
	Classroom training	For servers e.g. menus, product knowledge, guest interactions Company has set in class training templates that all departments follow	Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage/Accommodation/Service, Large
	Cross training	Increases skills and reduces boredom; maximizes hours in slow times	Food and Beverage, Medium; Accommodation, Medium; Accommodation, Large
	Workshops	e.g. with brand, Tourism Whistler	Accommodation, Medium; Accommodation, Large
	Ongoing training	18 modules to be complete throughout season with employee and direct supervisor	Food and Beverage/Service, Large
	Ongoing new product knowledge	Keep employees informed and knowledgeable	Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage, Medium; Food and Beverage, Medium
	Social Media training		Food and Beverage, Medium
	Testing	e.g. on menu, products	Food and Beverage, Large; Food and Beverage, Medium
Specific Programs	"Sessions"	Sessions with managers for tips and pointers on how to do their job for snow school instructors	Service, Large
	The Learning Curve	35-40 hour leadership training	Service, Large
	Serving It Right	Industry specific training	Food and Beverage, Medium
	Tourism Whistler programs	Free programs e.g. public speaking, social media	Service, Large
	Branded training	Consistent and mandated	Accommodation, Large
	Welcome Week	Encourage staff to attend to learn about community	Accommodation, Medium
	Mentorship program		Service, Large
	Secret Shopper Program	Host and then review results with servers	Food and Beverage, Large
	Apprenticeship programs	e.g. Red Seal (chefs); PGA golf pros; other trades	Food and Beverage, Large; Service, Large; Service, Large
	Education fund	e.g. tuition reimbursement or allotted funds	Service, Large; Accommodation, Large; Service, Large
	Leadership development	Send potential leaders for further training	Food and Beverage, Large