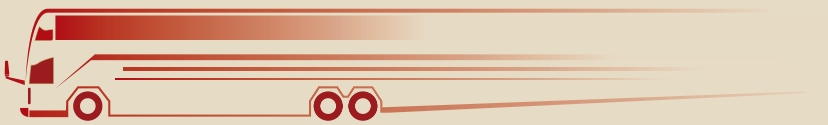
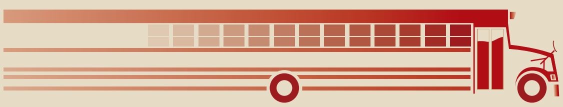
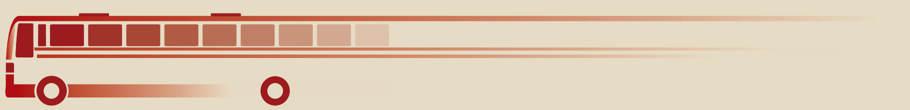


Part 5



Human Resources Development, Training, Recruitment and Retention



5. 0 Human Resources Development, Training, Recruitment and Retention

5. 1 Overview

5. 1. 1 Objectives

This Part seeks to identify a range of appropriate human resource development, training, recruitment and retention strategies and practices that will address the evolving needs of workers and the industry. It will examine current levels and types of training and attempt to assess future training needs of workers and the industry.

5. 1. 2 Methodology

To identify the broad range of human resources practices that the industry is currently utilizing in the recruitment, training, development and retention of its human resources, this Part makes use of the information gathered throughout this Study via the following: focus groups, interviews, case studies and comprehensive surveys.

5. 2 Human Resources Development Programs

5. 2. 1 Programs Offered

Tables 5-1 and 5-2 detail the types of training programs offered by the respondents.

Table 5-1: Types of Training Programs Offered (short survey responses)

Type of Training	Percent of Respondents Offering Training to the Following Employment Categories		
	Driver	Mechanic	Support Staff
Interpersonal skills	29%	6%	12%
Customer service skills	71%	6%	29%
Driving techniques	76%	6%	6%
Driver refresher training	76%	6%	0%
New technology	6%	59%	53%
Personal safety/security	41%	6%	18%
Occupational/work place health/safety	65%	59%	47%
Stress management	24%	6%	18%
Conflict management	29%	18%	18%
Other	6%	12%	6%

Question: S21

Table 5-2: Types of Training Programs Offered (long survey responses)

Type of Training	Percent of Respondents Offering Training to the Following Employment Categories					
	Driver / Mechanic	Garage Staff	Admin.	Driver Trainer	Safety Officer	Dispatch
Interpersonal skills	41%	12%	18%	18%	6%	35%
Customer service skills	82%	18%	53%	24%	6%	47%
Driving techniques	82%	24%	12%	29%	0%	24%
Driver refresher training	94%	18%	12%	18%	6%	18%
New technologies	24%	24%	47%	12%	0%	35%
Personal security	35%	12%	12%	24%	6%	18%
Workplace health and safety	76%	71%	59%	35%	18%	59%
Stress management	35%	12%	24%	24%	6%	29%
Conflict management	53%	24%	24%	24%	0%	35%

Question: L65, L66

Tables 5-1 and 5-2 illustrate the results of separate surveys (short and long), for which responses could not easily be consolidated. As such, the responses each independently illustrate the distribution of training programs offered to their respective respondents' employees.

The training received by industry managers (table 5-3) highlights the emphasis, over and above technical competence, of strong interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills and conflict management ranked second and third, respectively, behind workplace health and safety as the programs most widely offered to managers.

Table 5-3: Types of Training Offered to Managers

Manager Training	Percent of Respondents
Interpersonal skills	59%
Customer service skills	29%
Driving techniques	12%
Driver refresher training	9%
New technologies	41%
Personal security	15%
Workplace health and safety	68%
Stress management	26%
Conflict management	47%

Questions: S2, L65 & L66

5. 2. 1. 1 Appropriateness of Offered Programs

The surveys reinforced the findings made during the focus groups and other discussions with operators. The priorities facing the operators are very much oriented toward customer relations, and at the same time, workplace health and safety remains an important factor. The technical skills required of employees are well served by the training offered. As illustrated, a large majority of employers surveyed provide training on the functional requirements of the position: driving and customer service skills for operators; technical skills for mechanics; and conflict management and interpersonal skills for managers. As noted previously, stress is becoming a major factor in the industry, and the types of training offered reflect the desire by the organizations to address this issue: conflict management and interpersonal skills ranked highly on the types of training being offered.

5. 2. 2 Training and Career Progression

Comparing the training offered to first-year employees and that offered on an on-going basis reveals that drivers' training is largely consistent, irrespective of the stage of career. The same cannot be said for other positions particularly that of manager, where very few organizations offer any significant training specifically targeted at new hires. Similarly, stress and conflict management training programs figure more prominently in the training offered to existing employees than that offered to new hires. However, with the growing concern over violence in the workplace many employers are looking to augment their programs with "violence in the workplace" training. For example, Edmonton Transit with the assistance of Rutgers University has developed a comprehensive violence in the workplace training program which has been given to all current staff and is given to all new employees during their orientation and training program. As well CUTA has developed a program with OC Transpo on this issue.

Table 5-4: Training Offered to New Hires

Type of Training	Percent of Respondents Offering Training to the Following Employment Categories						
	Manager	Driver / Mechanic	Garage Staff	Admin	Driver Trainer	Safety Officer	Dispatch
Personal security	6%	41%	0%	0%	12%	0%	6%
Work place health and safety	24%	71%	35%	24%	29%	12%	18%
Stress management	0%	29%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Conflict management	6%	41%	0%	0%	12%	0%	0%
Interpersonal skills	6%	53%	6%	6%	18%	0%	0%
Customer service skills	0%	76%	0%	18%	18%	6%	6%
Driving techniques	0%	88%	24%	6%	24%	6%	0%
Driver refresher training	0%	35%	6%	0%	12%	6%	0%
New technology	18%	41%	12%	24%	12%	12%	24%

Question: L66

Table 5-5: Training Offered to Existing Staff

Type of Training	Percent of Respondents Offering Training to the Following Employment Categories						
	Manager	Driver / Mechanic	Garage Staff	Admin	Driver Trainer	Safety Officer	Dispatch
Personal security	18%	35%	12%	12%	24%	76%	18%
Work place health and safety	71%	76%	71%	59%	35%	6%	59%
Stress management	29%	35%	12%	24%	24%	0%	29%
Conflict management	59%	53%	24%	24%	24%	6%	35%
Interpersonal skills	53%	41%	12%	18%	18%	6%	35%
Customer Service skills	41%	82%	18%	53%	24%	0%	47%
Driving techniques	6%	82%	24%	12%	29%	6%	24%
Driver refresher training	12%	94%	18%	12%	18%	0%	18%
New technology	53%	24%	24%	47%	12%	0%	35%

Question: L65

5. 2. 3 Extent of Training

The amount of entry-level training provided in the first year of employment is far more significant for drivers/operators and mechanics than other positions, as would be expected given the industry's practice and preference for hiring employees from within the organization for positions such as manager, driver trainer, safety officer, dispatch and inspector. The results reveal that at least a quarter of respondents are offering new employees training over a substantial period of time, five weeks or more, for positions other than those of garage staff, administration and sales and service. By comparison, the percentage of respondents offering initial training for a similar length of time for drivers and mechanics exceeds 40%.

Table 5-6: Duration of Training for New Hires

Position	Percent of Respondents Offering Training of the Following Duration			
	0-4 weeks	5 to 8 weeks	9 to 12 weeks	13 or more weeks
Management	72%	14%	10%	3%
Driver	59%	41%	0%	0%
Mechanic	53%	37%	0%	10%
Garage Staff	88%	12%	0%	0%
Administrative	83%	10%	3%	3%
Driver Trainer	64%	18%	5%	14%
Safety Officer	75%	19%	0%	6%
Dispatch	75%	25%	0%	0%
Inspector	71%	14%	14%	0%
Sales & Service	80%	20%	0%	0%

Questions: S22, L68

On-going training is largely limited to eight days or less per year. Trainers, Inspectors and Safety Officers appear more likely to receive training of a more significant duration than other categories.

Table 5-7: Duration of On-going Training

Position	Percent of Respondents Offering Training of the Following Duration			
	0 to 4 days	5 to 8 days	9 to 12 days	13 or more days
Management	44%	48%	4%	4%
Drivers	43%	40%	14%	3%
Mechanics	41%	45%	14%	0%
Garage Staff	55%	40%	0%	5%
Administrative	54%	46%	0%	0%
Driver Trainer	33%	46%	17%	4%
Safety Officer	27%	47%	27%	0%
Dispatch	60%	40%	0%	0%
Inspector	0%	80%	20%	0%
Sales and Service	20%	80%	0%	0%

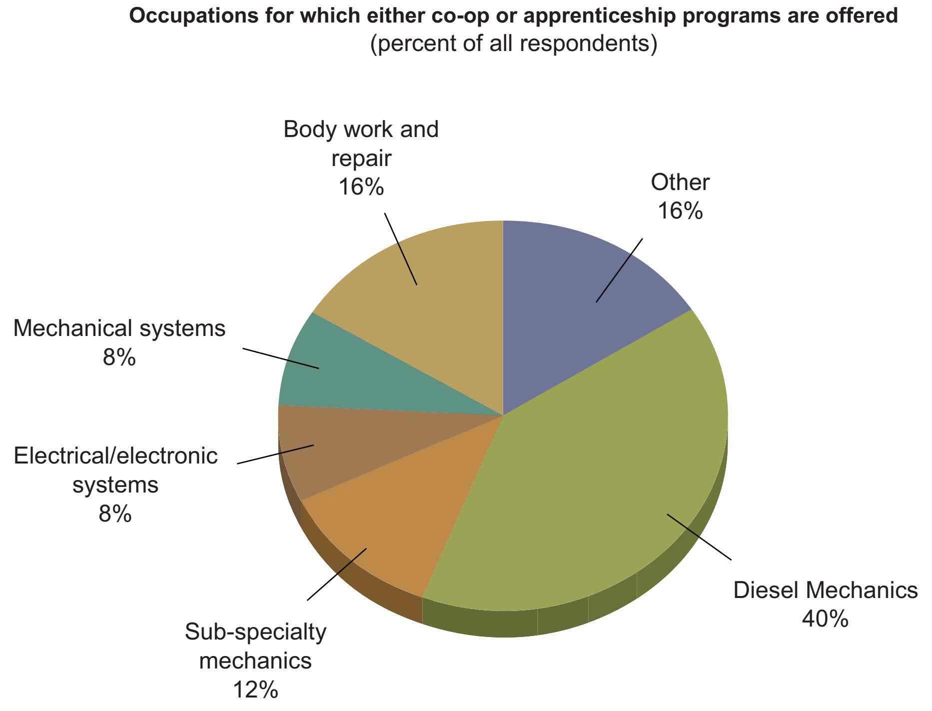
Questions: S23, L69

5. 2. 4 Apprenticeships and Co-op Programs

The industry indicates that it offers either apprenticeship or co-op programs. Positions for which such programs are offered are chiefly maintenance related, with the most common being that of *diesel mechanic* (figure 5-1). The "Other" category includes the following:

- information technology/computer services
- welder
- commercial mechanic
- business analyst
- high school level co-op programs
- environmental or engineering technician

Figure 5-1: Apprenticeship and co-op programs



Questions: S18, L57 & l58

The Canadian apprenticeship trend has turned positive since the mid-90s, subsequently reflecting steady increases in the number of new registrants each year.

There were 249,837 registered apprentices in Canada in 2003, an increase of +80,854 (+47.8%) since 1993. As of 2003, registrants in the Motor Vehicle and Heavy Equipment trades group which includes several bus industry trades totalled 49,657, up +14,747 (+42.2%) for the same decade.

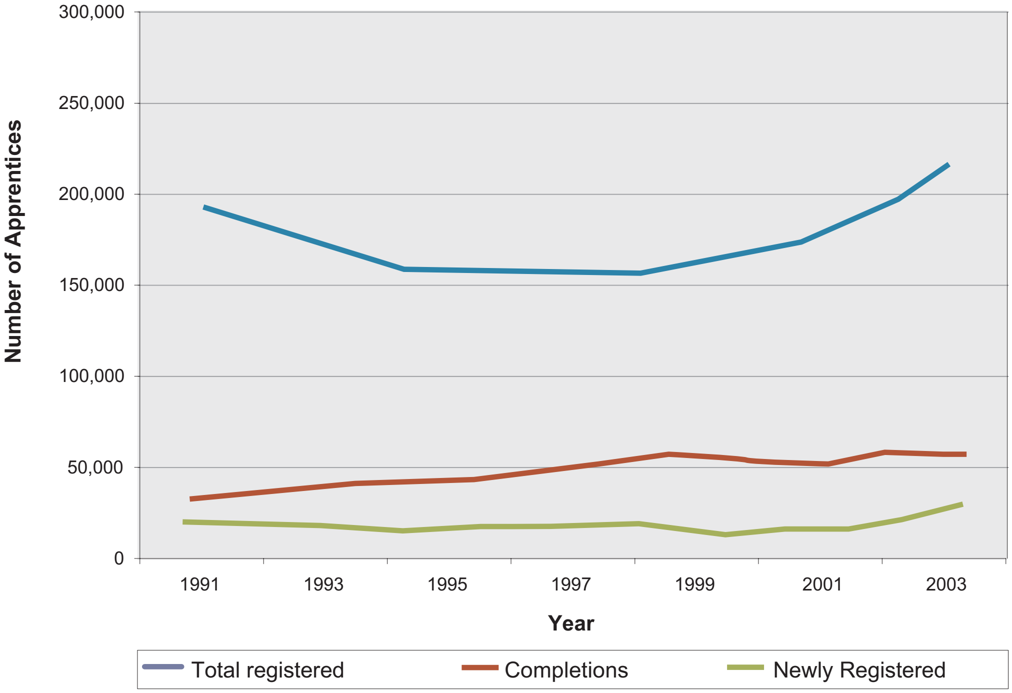
Despite the significant MV&HE trade group increase in registrants, there has been only nominal change in the annual number of apprenticeship completions, which averaged 4,050 per year for the decade, but also represented better performance than certain other trade groups.

The number of registrants over age 40 shows the greatest increase (+167.2%) for the 1993-2003 period, producing a 2003 total of 41,721, and contributing to the average 2003 age for all registrants of 30. 1 years, and for new registrants of 27. 6 years.

Another important trend has been the +83.16% increase in younger registrants aged 16 – 24, producing a 2003 total of 82,687 registrants for this age group. *(all preceding data - Statistics Canada sources)*.This growth has been in part attributed to increased student recognition of their economic limitations without post-secondary education plus an increase in provincially-sponsored programs designed to encourage high-school students to consider apprenticeship-related careers.

For many years the trades had been considered a secondary career choice, the option for students who could not go on to university or college. Such a perception of trade qualification as a 'second rung' education has done little to encourage participation. Such perceptions have been addressed to some degree through public education and awareness initiatives that stress the high level of skill required by skilled labourers in today's workforce. By way of example, studies show that a motor vehicle repair technician spends 70% of his or her time in diagnosis, a far cry from the stereotypical image of the 'grease monkey' changing spark plugs or replacing fan belts.

Figure 5-2: Trends in Registered Apprenticeship Training, Canada, 1991 to 2003



Source: Statistics Canada, Registered Apprenticeship Information System

The very structure of the apprenticeship program may be working at cross-purposes to industry needs. The qualification process itself is a barrier. In a report from the Conference Board of Canada (Performance and Potential 2002-03), the nation's apprenticeship programs were described as "a complex system that requires a great deal of initiative by the participants." There is no natural progression from high school to an apprenticeship as there is to college or university.

The industry working conditions for these workers are generally positive, with low levels of exposure to such undesirable external elements as heat, noise and cold. However, many Study participants believe that present shift schedules are negatively impacting their ability to recruit skilled trades workers when compared to related industries where regular working hours complemented by high compensation are available.

The support for apprenticeships among the surveyed members was varied. During the Study several stakeholders relayed concerns over the high cost to the employer in setting up and running the program only to lose apprentices to higher paying organizations when the apprenticeship is completed. It was noted in a joint CUTA/MCPCC Study that respondents to a survey regarding apprenticeships did not have a policy in place relative to reimbursement for leaving employment following the completion of the apprenticeship.

This Study also concludes that there is a lack of any rigorous evaluation of the program benefits by the respondents. None of the surveyed systems/companies use an evaluative process to gauge the return on investment (ROI) for introducing such programs.

Further, a lack of utilization of e-learning technologies to address technical training was noted. None of the respondents had an e-learning strategy. E-learning has been demonstrated to reduce both time and costs over traditional training methods. Research has concluded that time savings associated with computer-based training can range from 20-80%, with 40-60%being the most common without a decrease in training effectiveness.

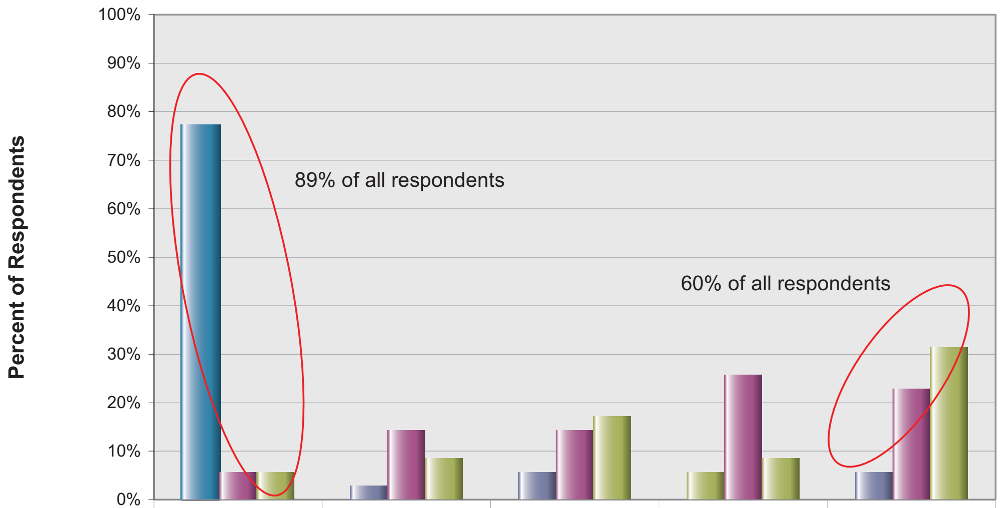
In addition, employers are often unaware of the federal and other government tax credits and/or incentives available to support delivery of apprenticeship training.

In 2006, the Canadian Council of Learning in a report on Apprenticeship Training in Canada observed that the market for apprenticeships is primarily constrained by employer reluctance to participate, rather than by a shortage of potential apprentices. To capitalize on this underutilized resource, the bus industry must strategize to ensure that this observation does not apply.

5. 2. 5 Top Training Development and Delivery Programs

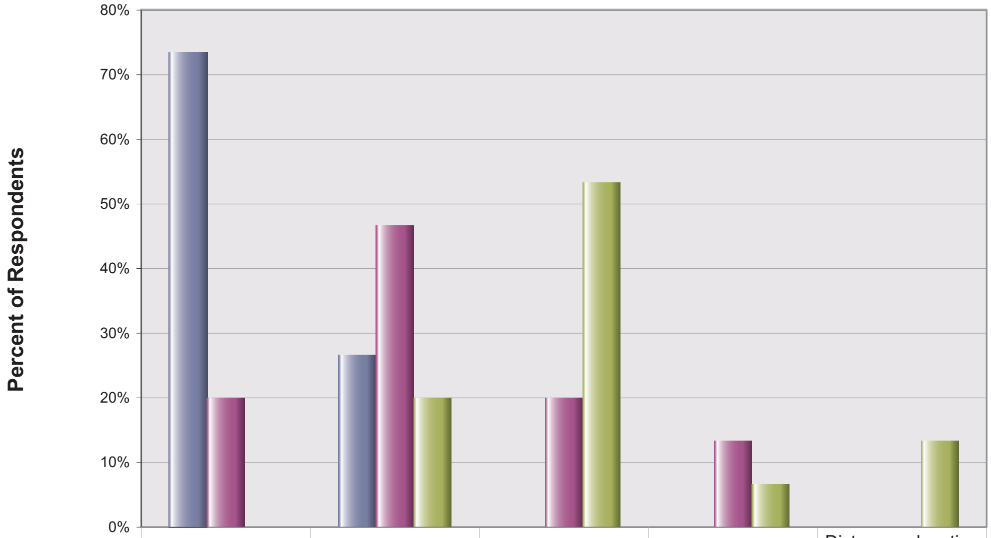
In identifying the preferred methods of developing and delivering training programs, the industry has indicated that it clearly favours the use of training programs developed internally by their own employees—by far the preferred option (figure 5-3). Industry associations surfaced as the leading external source of training programs. The survey responses also indicate that other training development options outside the organization, such as courses developed by manufacturers or educational institutions, do play an important role in industry training. When asked to identify the most effective way to deliver these programs, respondents indicated a clear preference for on-the-job and classroom training (figure 5-4).

Figure 5-3: Most used training development and mechanisms



	Internal training unit	Retained training firm	Education instituion courses	Manufacturer courses	Industry association courses
Ranked #1	77%	3%	6%	6%	6%
Ranked #2	6%	14%	14%	26%	23%
Ranked #3	6%	9%	17%	9%	31%

Figure 5-4: Most effective ways of conducting training



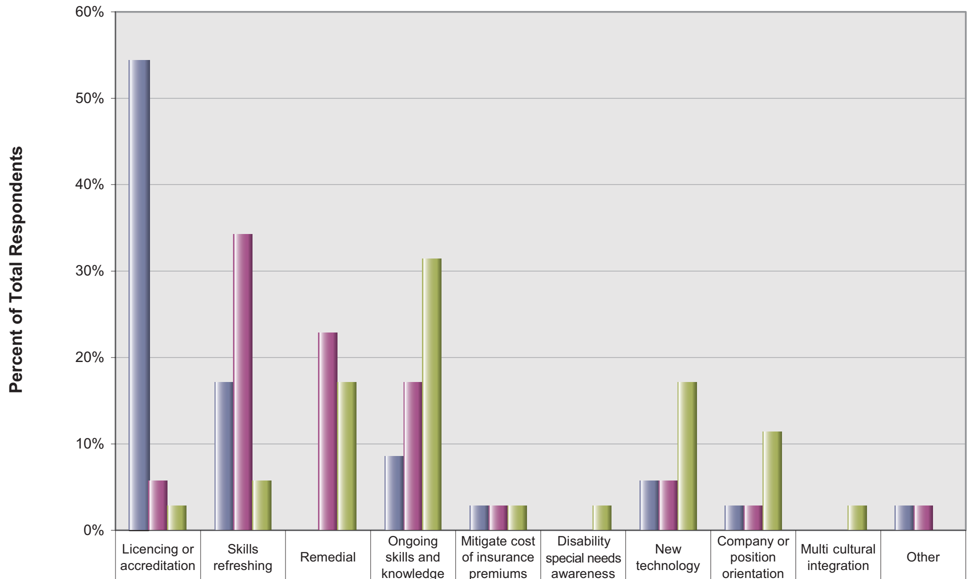
	On the job training	On-site classroom	Off-site classroom	Self-directed study	Distance education / e-learning
Ranked #1	73%	27%	0%	0%	0%
Ranked #2	20%	47%	20%	13%	0%
Ranked #3	0%	20%	53%	7%	13%

Questions: S19 & L60

5. 2. 6 Reasons for Conducting Training

Conducting training to meet mandatory licencing or accreditation requirements ranked highest (figure 5-5). More interesting is that survey respondents' second and third reasons for training are refresher training and training that is delivered as part of an on-going skills and knowledge development program, giving credence to the notion that investment in employee training is important to employers.

Figure 5-5: Top reasons for conducting training



	Licencing or accreditation	Skills refreshing	Remedial	Ongoing skills and knowledge	Mitigate cost of insurance premiums	Disability special needs awareness	New technology	Company or position orientation	Multi cultural integration	Other
Ranked #1	54%	17%	0%	9%	3%	0%	6%	3%	0%	3%
Ranked #2	6%	34%	23%	17%	3%	0%	6%	3%	0%	3%
Ranked #3	3%	6%	17%	31%	3%	3%	17%	11%	3%	0%

Questions: S20 & L64

5. 3 The Changing Skill Requirements of the Industry

The changing skill requirements include the development of coping skills to effectively address the stress and personal security concerns expressed by stakeholder participants in the Study. Continuing to be dominant are customer service, communications and technical competence. Increasing in importance for management are leadership, strategic planning, marketing and communications skills. Table 5-8 highlights participants' response to surveys herein expressed in alphabetical order, regarding the key competencies and skills which will be required over the next 5–10 years, by occupation.

Table 5-8: Key competencies/skills demand emerging during the Next 5 to 10 Years

Driver/Operator	Dispatcher	Administrative
Communications	Collective Agreement acumen	Analytical ability
Conflict Resolution	Communications	Communications
Customer Service	Customer Service	Customer Service
Dealing with Stress	Dealing with Stress	Innovation
Driving ability	Interpersonal skills	Interpersonal skills
Interpersonal skills	Labour Relations	Multitasking
Numeracy	Multitasking	Problem solving
Respecting Diversity	Regulatory knowledge	Technical skills
Technology/Computer Skills	Service area familiarity	Technology/Computer Skills
	Technology/Computer Skills	
	Time Management	

Mechanic	Garage Staff	Driver Trainer
Computer skills	Communications	Communications
New Technology	Customer Service	Information Management
People skills	Dealing with Stress	Interpersonal skills
Problem solving	Interpersonal skills	Organization
Technical skills	Problem solving	People skills
Time Management	Technical skills	Presentation skills
Troubleshooting	Technology/ Computer Skills	Professional driving skills
Computer skills	Time Management	Skills assessment
New Technology		Technology/computer skills
		Training Methods

Safety Officer	Management
Collective Agreement acumen	Business/Systems Management
Communications	Communications
Coping skills	Customer Focus
Information Management	Ethics and values
Interpersonal skills	Fiscal responsibility
Organization	Innovation
Regulatory knowledge	Interpersonal skills
Safety practices	Labour Relations
Technology/ Computer Skills	Leadership
	Marketing
	People, negotiating and coaching skills
	Safety practices
	Technology/Computer Skills

Question: L22

Industry-driven Education

Camo-route, the province of Québec's transportation sector council, has made significant progress in improving the relationship between the transportation industry's requirements and educational institutions' capability and capacity to deliver appropriate educational programs

In association with the Québec Ministers of Education and Transport, the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec and two school commissions, Camo-route has helped develop a model of co-managing educational delivery at the Centre de formation en transport de Charlesbourg and the Centre de formation du transport routier Saint-Jérôme to ensure that it is aligned with the requirements of industry

5. 3. 1 Training Development and Delivery Options

The preference for in-house training development and delivery suggests that there is a significant knowledge base resident in industry organizations. Several organizations are simultaneously developing comparable training programs without the benefit of access to the vast knowledge contained within the industry. The potential exists to learn from the experience of other industry stakeholders who share the same concerns, potentially even to consolidate program development and delivery. The NOS, Accreditation and Certification Programs developed by the MCPCC have the objective of standardizing training and professional recognition across all industry sub-sectors.

5. 3. 2 The Role of Third Party Institutions

Many industry stakeholders are more closely examining the role of private and public educational institutions in training delivery and development. In many instances training of mechanics and technicians already involves a partnership with an education institution. For example, in June 2006, the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) and The Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority (TransLink) along with Coast Mountain Bus Company and members of the Canadian Auto Workers Union signed a memorandum of understanding to develop, build and operate a joint heavy maintenance and training facility. "The concept is a new, efficient, state-of-the-art heavy equipment maintenance and training centre where skilled automotive trades-people and students can work and learn side-by-side. A shared facility will help TransLink and BCIT reduce costs and at the same time take a major step toward making British Columbia more self-sufficient in trades that are greatly in demand across the province," says TransLink chair Malcolm Brodie (News Release, June 13, 2006).

5. 3. 3 Costs of Training

Because training, operating practices and technologies currently vary across the industry, employers often put newly hired operators, even those with years of experience, through the same training given to novice operators. The application of non-standard practices and technologies in the industry has had the effect of increasing the industry's overall cost of human resource development. Costs are essentially duplicated to re-train an experienced individual.

In response to this concern, the MCPCC working with the industry has developed a National Accreditation Program which recognizes employer training that meets or exceeds National Occupational Standards.

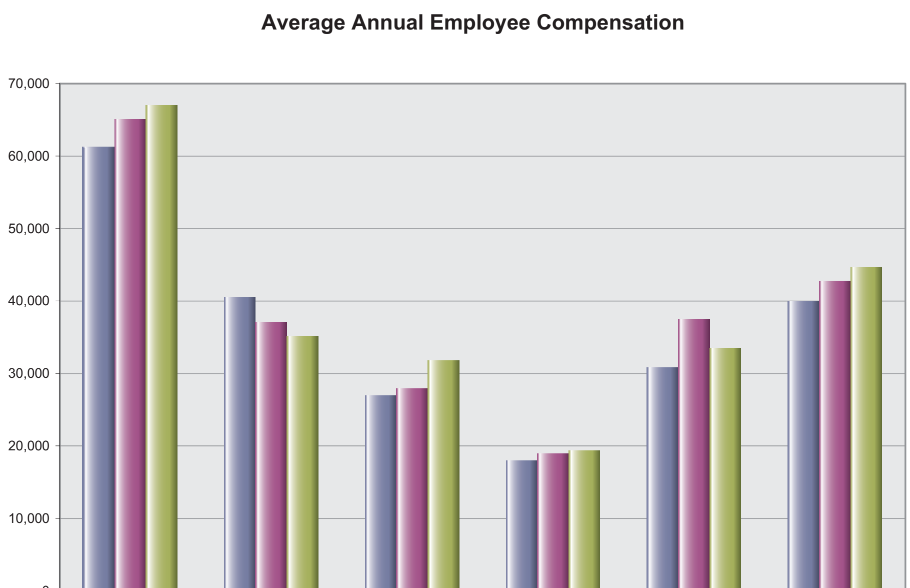
The current practices of representative urban systems illustrate the varied approaches to tackling the cost issue in training new candidate operators. Where some systems continue to provide training in-house, others have opted to download the expense to the candidates themselves by charging for the service and outsourcing its delivery to educational institutions. Similarly, the decision of whether or not to pay candidates for their time while on training or to guarantee a position or a minimum number of hours per week upon completion differs from one system to another. It is obvious that each system has chosen an approach which they believe best maintains their market competitiveness.

5. 4 Compensation and Benefits

5. 4. 1 Compensation

The latest figures from Statistics Canada show a growth in average compensation in the urban, school bus and charter sub-sectors and a drop in the interurban and rural sub-sector. However, due to year-to-year variances in the composition of sub-sectors as reported by *Statistics Canada*, trends in figure 5-6 should be considered as estimates. The figures also clearly illustrate the disparity in annual compensation (inclusive of wages, salaries and benefits and other expenses such as subcontracting, training, uniforms and meals) between the sub-sectors. Responses to the Study surveys illustrated that pay ranges also vary widely between positions and organizations in the sub-sectors and show that there is considerable overlap in pay scales, such that those of the urban sub-sector are not always highest, nor are those of the school bus sub-sector always lowest.

Figure 5-6: Average Annual Employee Compensation



	Urban Transit	Interurban & Rural	Charter Bus	School & Employee	Other Transit Shuttle	Bus Industry
2002	61,155	40,456	26,913	17,997	30,792	39,950
2003	65,065	37,073	27,931	18,942	37,518	42,736
2004	66,981	35,155	31,778	19,297	33,511	44,619

Source: Statistics Canada, Preliminary Surface and Marine Transport Service Bulletin data, 2006

5. 4. 2 Benefits

The vast majority of survey respondents offer employees a wide range of benefits. In addition to typical benefits such as health and dental care, pensions, disability benefits or employee assistance programs, respondents identified many others including:

- on-site fitness facilities
- complimentary transit passes
- critical incident diffusing
- clothing or tool allowances
- education allowances
- computer purchase plans

When asked to identify benefits that would likely be added to their company's existing benefit plan within three years, survey respondents indicated the following:

- family sick days
- salary continuance when on worker's compensation
- recognition & reward programs
- increased cost sharing of benefit programs
- long term sick benefits
- programs promoting healthy life styles
- professional driver certification
- family driver improvement courses

Respondents have recognized the necessity and value of structuring attractive benefits programs to maintain recruitment competitiveness and retention effectiveness.

It should be noted, however, that the above benefits tend to be offered mostly to those working in a unionized environment. The school bus and charter sub-sectors are segments of the industry where benefits are likely more limited in number and scope.

5. 5 Key Recruitment and Retention Issues

5. 5. 1 Recruitment

Study research reveals that the industry is a conscientious recruiter. Urban systems have become skilled at identifying the ideal candidate from among the many applications they have typically received. The school bus sub-sector has proven itself adept at successfully recruiting on a continuous basis for driver positions that are comparatively far more challenging to fill. Individual service providers across all sub-sectors have demonstrated that with initiative and ingenuity, they meet their specific requirements.

There are indications of challenges ahead, however. Many in the urban sub-sector are finding that what was once a competitive advantage—stability, good pay and good benefits—is no longer attracting as many applicants. The school bus sub-sector is finding it equally difficult to staff their positions. Across the industry, a severe shortage of mechanics is already being felt. Other technical positions such as planners and schedulers are also in short supply. Survey respondents' assessment of their current ability to meet their needs identified emerging difficulties including:

- attracting mechanics, particularly specialized trades
- recruiting for supervisory and management positions
- recruiting suitably qualified drivers
- hiring qualified dispatchers, schedulers and planners

Survey respondents from the urban sub-sector identified the number of vacancies for positions within their organizations (figure 5-7). Mechanics showed the greatest proportion of unfilled positions (5. 8%), a figure that echoes the concern that industry focus group and interview participants have with respect to the availability of skilled mechanics. A Study on where job vacancies are most likely to occur also concludes that organizations with fairly high skill requirements (i. e. , skilled mechanics) and those in high turnover, low-paid and non-unionized sectors are most likely to suffer (Morissette and Zhang, 2001).

The Draw of Employment in the School Bus Sub-sector

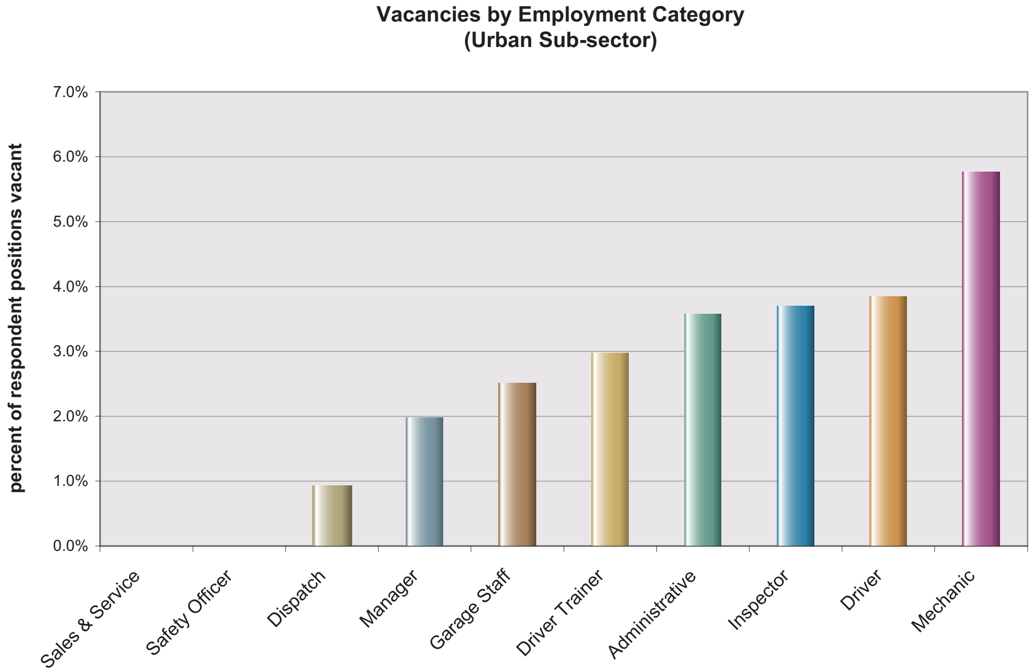
- *Work hours that closely mirror school hours and calendars (seasonality, holidays), facilitating working and caring for school-aged children*

Deterrents to Employment in the Urban Sub-sector

- *Split and irregular or unpredictable shifts that conflict with family schedules*
- *Personal risks associated with schedules and routes typically assigned to new drivers—late nights and/or high-crime neighbourhoods*

Source: focus groups conducted with industry stakeholders

Figure 5-7: Vacancies in respondent organizations



Questions: S16, L14 & L41

5. 5. 2 Absenteeism

5. 5. 2. 1 Factors that Lead to Absenteeism

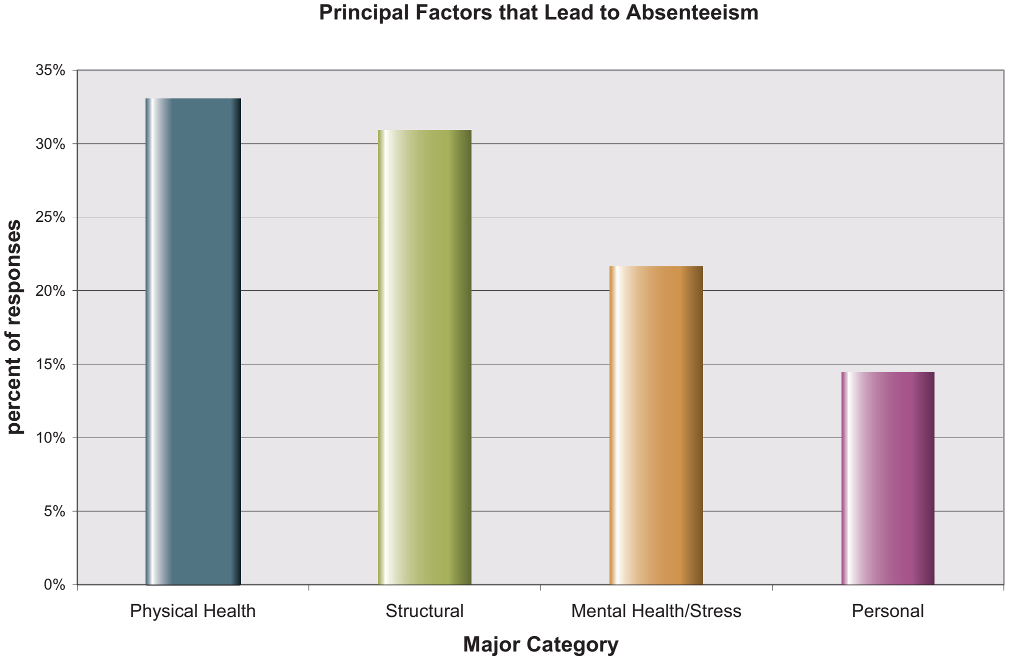
When asked to identify the top factors that lead to absenteeism, survey respondents from across the sub-sectors provided a wide array of answers that are easily categorized into four basic employee absenteeism factors: physical health problems, structural reasons (culpable absenteeism either encouraged or reinforced by organizational policies or practices), mental health (i. e. , stress) and personal/family issues. Some examples of the structural causes of absenteeism provided by respondents include:

- the inability of employees to get time off when requested or required (typically tied to the hours of work)
- poor employee job satisfaction and weak sense of belonging or being valued
- inadequate absentee management programs
- generous sick leave plans that are open to abuses of benefits
- the inability to discipline those who miss work unnecessarily

5. 5. 2. 2 Strategies to Reduce Absenteeism

Absenteeism can add significant costs to any industry and is often cited as an issue within the bus industry. In some cases, absenteeism has reached rates of over 10%. In general though, the survey data analysis was not conclusive and could not explain the nature of the absenteeism issue, and it certainly cannot alleviate the concerns that some have about the trend in absenteeism.

Figure 5-8: Causes of absenteeism



Questions: S9, L34

The following potential solutions have proven effective for respondents, particularly as part of a formal attendance management program:

Physical and Mental Health

- provide health and wellness initiatives, stress relief programs
- offer modified duty work to those who are able
- develop protocols and practices, including things like the supply of hand sanitizer to operators and others in contact with the public, in order to reduce transfer of diseases

Structural

- provide management and staff training to improve workplace morale (respondent cited an 80% reduction in morale-related absenteeism)
- offer employee assistance programs
- monitor work hours
- provide more schedule flexibility
- provide recognition or bonuses for good attendance
- absentee counselling

Recently though, some in the industry have linked absenteeism to the issue of work/home-life balance. For some, the issue of reconciling work and family life is closely related to addressing the level of absenteeism in an organization. For others, however, it simply represents the reality of busy lives, especially in urban transit systems where split shifts and weekend shifts are common practice.

Although the industry is still in the early stages of addressing this issue, some organizations have identified remedial measures they have put in place, including:

- memoranda of understanding between management and unions to create a joint committee on the issue of reconciling work and family life
- business orientation training for all employees
- alternative work week options such as variable days and hours

5. 5. 3 Retention

Given the increasing difficulty in recruiting employees in competitive labour markets, enhanced employee retention can be a strategic advantage to any organization, and understanding why employees leave is vital.

5.5.3.1 Reasons Employees Are Leaving

Though there are obviously many reasons why employees and managers leave their positions, by far the most significant identified by survey respondents is retirement (figures 5-9, 5-10, 5-11). Though retirement can be delayed, the implications for the industry are significant, as retirements are ultimately unavoidable.

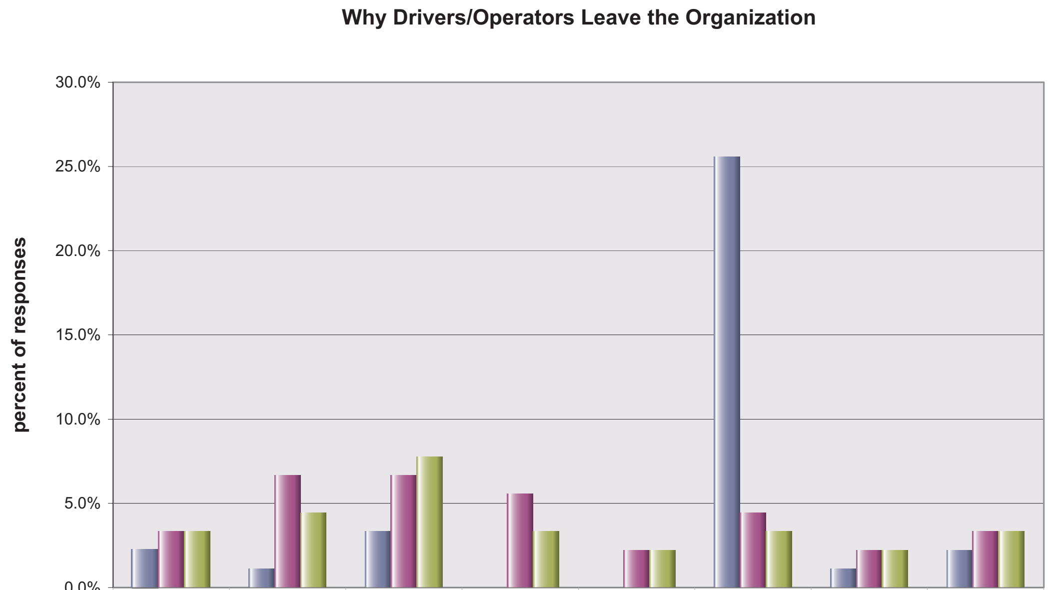
The leading motivations to leave, besides retirement, include advancement opportunities and career changes. Health issues, which may include those brought on by working conditions, are also a contributor to early departures, particularly for mechanics.

Figure 5-9: Manager Departures

	Advancement Opportunities	Working Conditions	Career Change	Health	Family/personal	Retirement	Lack of work	Other
Ranked #1	10.0%	4.3%	4.3%	0.0%	0.0%	21.4%	0.0%	1.4%
Ranked #2	1.4%	4.3%	10.0%	4.3%	5.7%	2.9%	0.0%	1.4%
Ranked #3	4.3%	0.0%	14.3%	4.3%	1.4%	2.9%	0.0%	1.4%

Questions: S15, L51

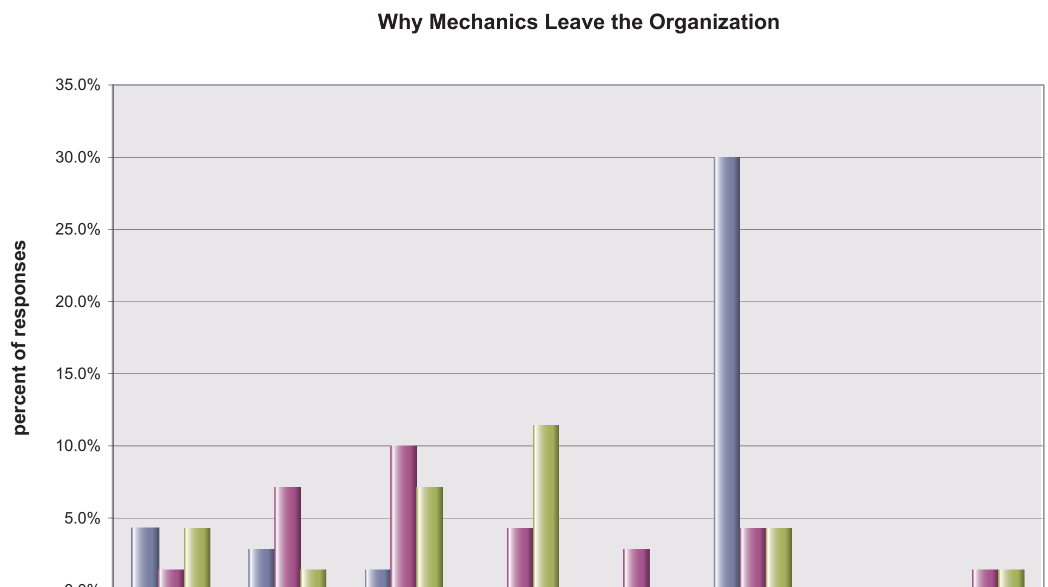
Figure 5-10: Driver/Operators Departures



	Advancement Opportunities	Working Conditions	Career Change	Health	Family/personal	Retirement	Lack of work	Other
Ranked #1	2.2%	1.1%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	25.6%	1.1%	2.2%
Ranked #2	3.3%	6.7%	6.7%	5.6%	2.2%	4.4%	2.2%	3.3%
Ranked #3	3.3%	4.4%	7.8%	3.3%	2.2%	3.3%	2.2%	3.3%

Questions: S15, L51

Figure 5-11: Mechanic Departures



	Advancement Opportunities	Working Conditions	Career Change	Health	Family/personal	Retirement	Lack of work	Other
Ranked #1	4.3%	2.9%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	30.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Ranked #2	1.4%	7.1%	10.0%	4.3%	2.9%	4.3%	0.0%	1.4%
Ranked #3	4.3%	1.4%	7.1%	11.4%	0.0%	4.3%	0.0%	1.4%

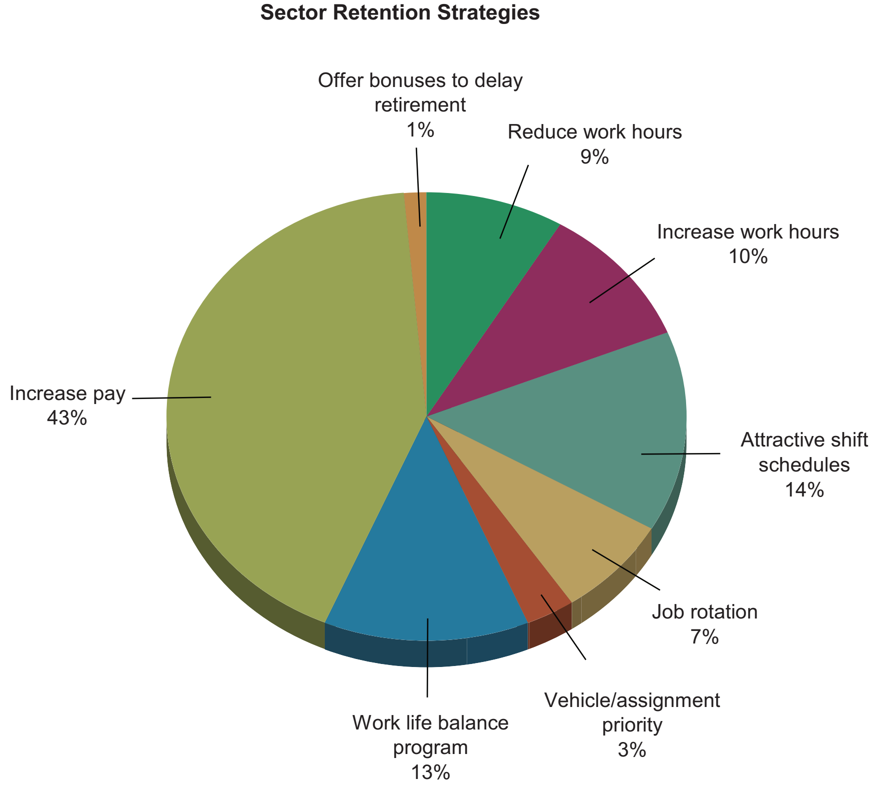
Questions: S15, L51

5. 5. 3. 2 Retention Strategies

Recognizing the significance of retention respondents have implemented a number of retention strategies. By far the most popular across all employment categories is simply to increase pay (figure 5-12). Furthermore, this strategy is employed by survey respondents for all employment categories and is the most popular option within each category.

The risk of relying on pay raises to curb employee departures, particularly in a competitive labour market, is substantial. Though pay raises may be required to remain competitive they do not address the fundamental causes, but contribute to escalating costs.

Figure 5-12: Retention strategies across employment categories



Questions: S15, L51

After pay increases, attractive shift schedules are the most popular retention strategy to survey respondents. Many in the industry are looking toward alternate work patterns (e.g. , a four-day work week) in an effort to make positions more attractive and competitive, often as part of a specific work life balance program. Studies have shown that more flexibility in the workplace is a key component of establishing a work environment that is not only attractive to workers, but also healthy and satisfying (Canadian Council on Social Development, 1999).

Proper succession planning is critical to the future vitality of the transportation sector. Several key components are involved in succession planning and they include the following:

- *Recognizing the need and obtaining top level commitment*
- *Developing a plan, which involves timing of replacements, including sufficient training and overlap, provides for contingencies (e.g., sudden resignations) and contains mentoring responsibilities*
- *Making the necessary investments*
- *Keeping the plan dynamic by periodic updating and periodic assessment of its effectiveness*
- *Documenting the plan and procedures, its on-going activities and accomplishments and the lessons learned*

Source: Transportation Association of Canada©, 2002.

5. 5. 4 Workforce Renewal

As borne out by the significant increase in the age of the industry's workforce, there will be a large-scale renewal of the workforce over the coming years. The need to plan for replacing retiring employees at all ranks within the industry is apparent, but the industry's reaction is less so. Results of the Study's focus groups and interviews suggest that the industry is just beginning to tackle the issue of formal succession planning.

5. 6 Impact of Industry Trends

5. 6. 1 Organizational Structures

Survey results and participant comments suggest that two significant trends have begun shifting the typical organization toward a more inclusive and participatory structure; first, a greater focus on communication and interpersonal relationships, both with customers and colleagues; and second, a shift toward structures that are less bureaucratic.

5. 6. 2 Career Progression

This Study revealed that many organizations are having difficulty staffing management positions. In the case of urban transit, the issue of career progression is made all the more challenging by the recent amalgamation of many transit systems and their respective municipal governments. The risks associated with this organizational restructuring are that career paths have changed opening up more advancement possibilities within the larger organization to transit employees while negatively impacting others as their roles become no longer uniquely transit oriented.

In other sub-sectors such as the school bus sub-sector, the opportunities for progression are limited, as the ratio of management to drivers is extremely low. Furthermore, many employees are not driving a school bus in order to further a career, but as part-time employment or to fill a gap between jobs.

In the intercity sub-sector, scheduled operations offer some career progression options. The Study indicated that, in most cases, it is the long-time employees that often fill the mid-management functions because of tenure and experience. In charter and tour operations, seasonality makes it difficult to sustain a large management structure allowing for career progression.

Many employee Study participants mentioned their lack of interest in joining the ranks of management. They feel the extra pay of a supervisory position does not adequately compensate for the added responsibilities.