



# Employment Outlook Survey Report

July 2023



**AGRICULTURAL  
APPOINTMENTS**

Finding the right people since 1979

## Agribusiness Held Back by Skills Shortages

The skills shortage in Australia is understood to be impacting many agribusinesses, leading to challenges in attracting, selecting, and retaining employees. To gain insight into the current state of the candidate market in the Australian agricultural sector, as well as the implications of skills shortages on businesses, we conducted an online survey.

This survey sought the participation of managers and owners of agribusinesses throughout Australia. The results of the survey were derived from a total of 110 responses collected over a period of two weeks. A majority of the participants were of executive-level (59.09%), while 30% hold mid to senior-level positions. A significant portion of the participants was based in regional or rural areas (68.18%) and come from sectors such as Agribusiness and Agritech (18.18%), Horticulture (17.27%), Livestock Farming (16.36%) and Ag Services (10.91%). Among these participants, 68.18% were decision makers in small to medium-sized companies, while 18.18% represent larger enterprises.

Half of the respondents are finding the current candidate market challenging with limited supply of quality candidates. Quite a large number (30%) of the respondents perceive the candidate market as extremely challenging, characterized by a severe shortage of talented individuals. Nearly half of the respondents (49.09%) reported a noticeable impact on their business operations, while a significant number (40.91%) acknowledged that the skills shortage has some effect on their enterprises but can be overcome.

It should be a major concern that half of the agribusiness sector is being held back from achieving desired business outcomes, and seriously questions whether Australian agriculture can reach targeted growth levels as set out by the National Farmers Federation.

The survey found that the average staff turnover stands at approximately 5–10%, aligning with the recent job mobility rate of 9.5% reported by the ABS. Most respondents face difficulties in finding suitable staff across all levels and positions, with technical or specialised roles being particularly affected. Conversely, managerial or leadership positions appear to be less impacted.

A substantial portion (50%) of the survey participants do not anticipate any improvement in the candidate market throughout the current financial year. However, 30% express a more optimistic outlook, indicating slight improvements on the horizon. While over half of the respondents actively address the challenges they face, a significant proportion (34.55%) report increasing difficulties in attracting and retaining skilled employees.

Job boards and online platforms are the preferred tools for sourcing candidates, with many organisations also investing in training and development programs to enhance the skills of their existing staff. However, respondents acknowledge that there is room for improvement in this area. The remaining 20% stated that they have no plans in place or perceive a need for such initiatives.

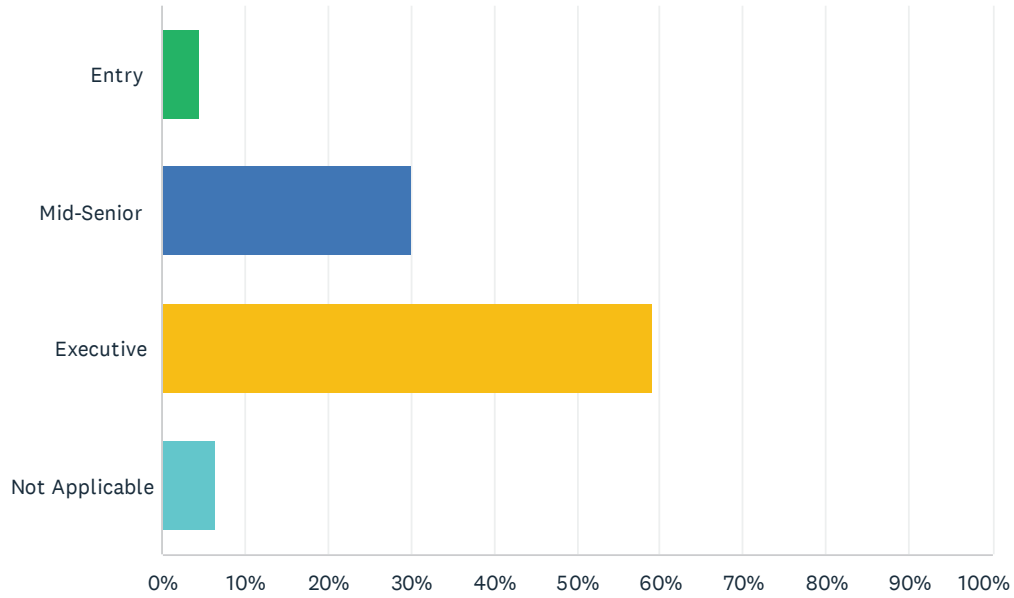
Employers are making every effort to enhance their brand and attract top talent. Strategies such as promoting a positive company culture and values, along with offering competitive salary packages, are widely employed to achieve this goal.

This survey highlights the dire straits facing the Australian agribusiness sector.

Financial Year 2024 Survey

Q1 Please state the seniority of your role.

Answered: 110 Skipped: 0

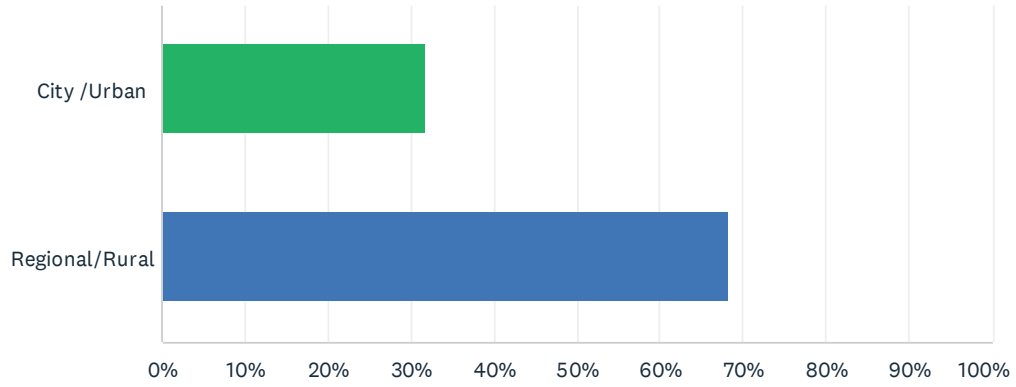


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Entry	4.55% 5
Mid-Senior	30.00% 33
Executive	59.09% 65
Not Applicable	6.36% 7
TOTAL	110

Financial Year 2024 Survey

## Q2 Where is your company based?

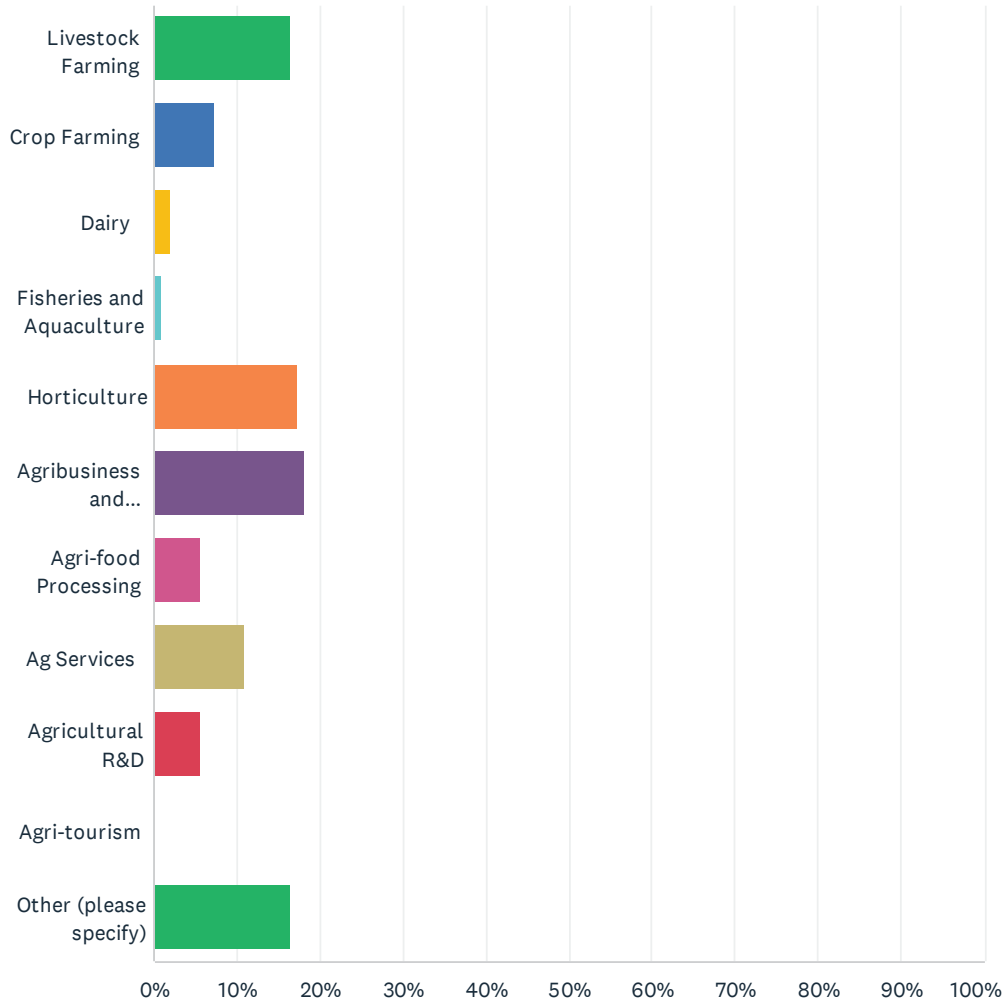
Answered: 110 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
City /Urban	31.82%	35
Regional/Rural	68.18%	75
TOTAL		110

### Q3 What sector do you currently work in?

Answered: 110 Skipped: 0

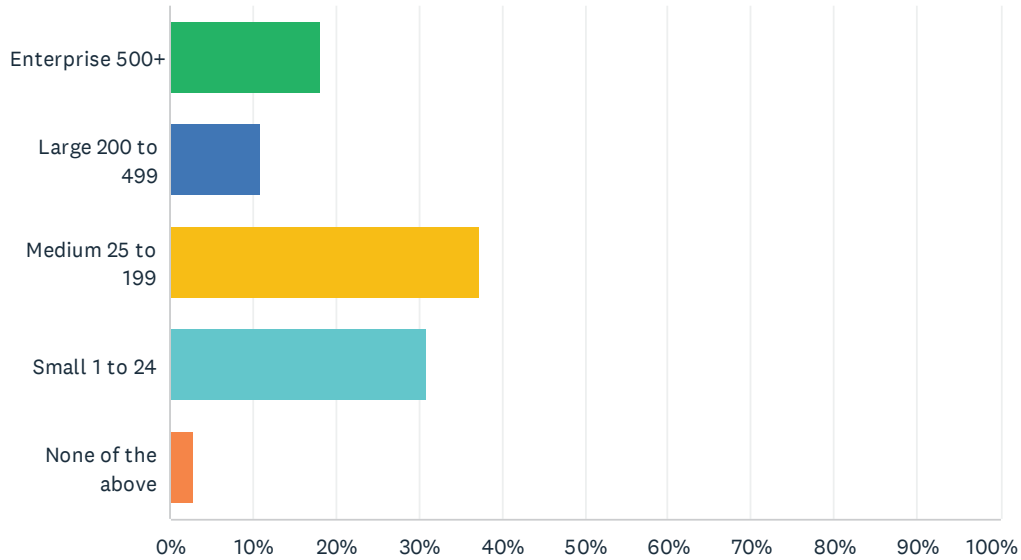


## Financial Year 2024 Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Livestock Farming	16.36%	18
Crop Farming	7.27%	8
Dairy	1.82%	2
Fisheries and Aquaculture	0.91%	1
Horticulture	17.27%	19
Agribusiness and Agri-technology	18.18%	20
Agri-food Processing	5.45%	6
Ag Services	10.91%	12
Agricultural R&D	5.45%	6
Agri-tourism	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	16.36%	18
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>110</b>

## Q4 What is the size of your company?

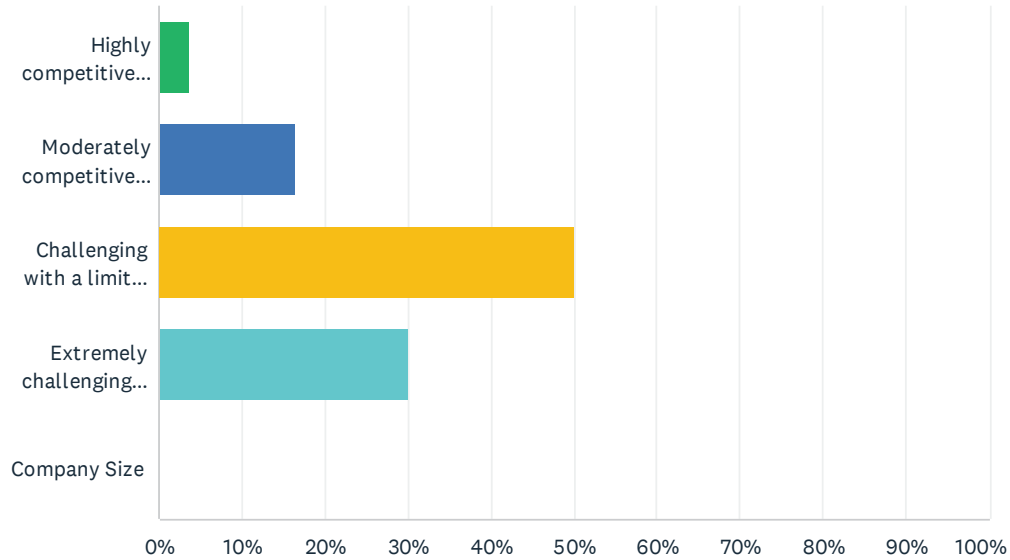
Answered: 110 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Enterprise 500+	18.18%	20
Large 200 to 499	10.91%	12
Medium 25 to 199	37.27%	41
Small 1 to 24	30.91%	34
None of the above	2.73%	3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>110</b>

### Q5 How would you describe the current candidate market?

Answered: 110 Skipped: 0

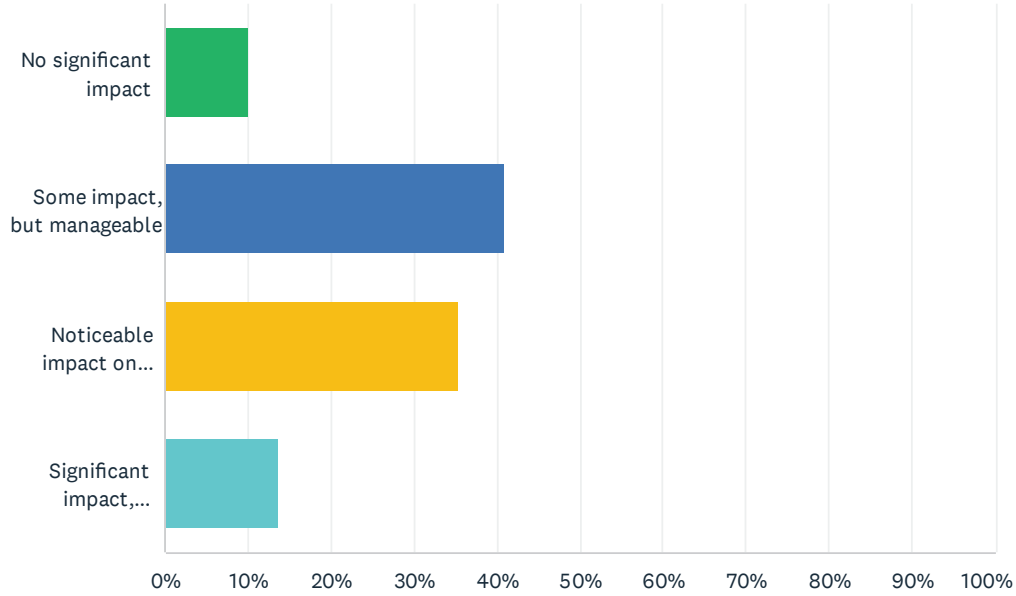


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Highly competitive with an abundance of qualified candidates	3.64%	4
Moderately competitive with a reasonable pool of candidates	16.36%	18
Challenging with a limited number of qualified candidates	50.00%	55
Extremely challenging with a severe shortage of qualified candidates	30.00%	33
Company Size	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>110</b>



## Q6 What impact is the skills shortage having on your business?

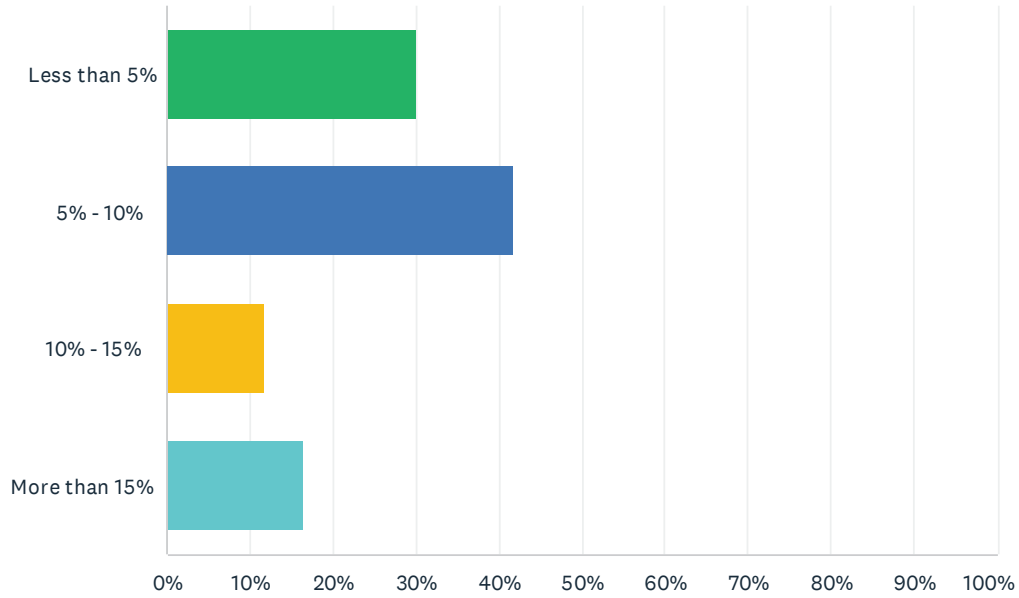
Answered: 110 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No significant impact	10.00%	11
Some impact, but manageable	40.91%	45
Noticeable impact on productivity and growth	35.45%	39
Significant impact, hindering business operations	13.64%	15
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>110</b>

### Q7 Approximately what is your staff turnover rate?

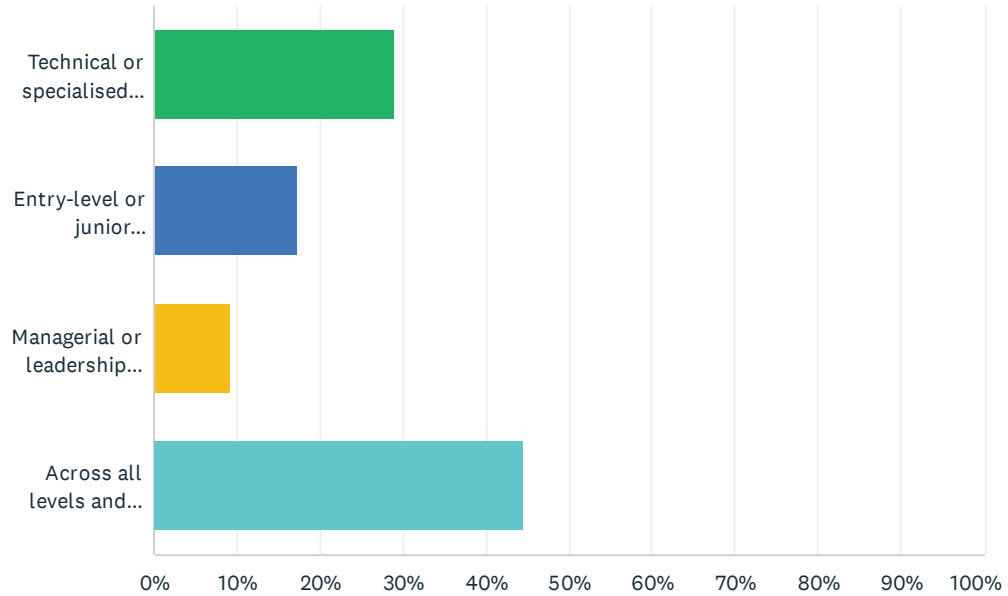
Answered: 110 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Less than 5%	30.00% 33
5% - 10%	41.82% 46
10% - 15%	11.82% 13
More than 15%	16.36% 18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>110</b>

### Q8 Where do you encounter the greatest staffing problems?

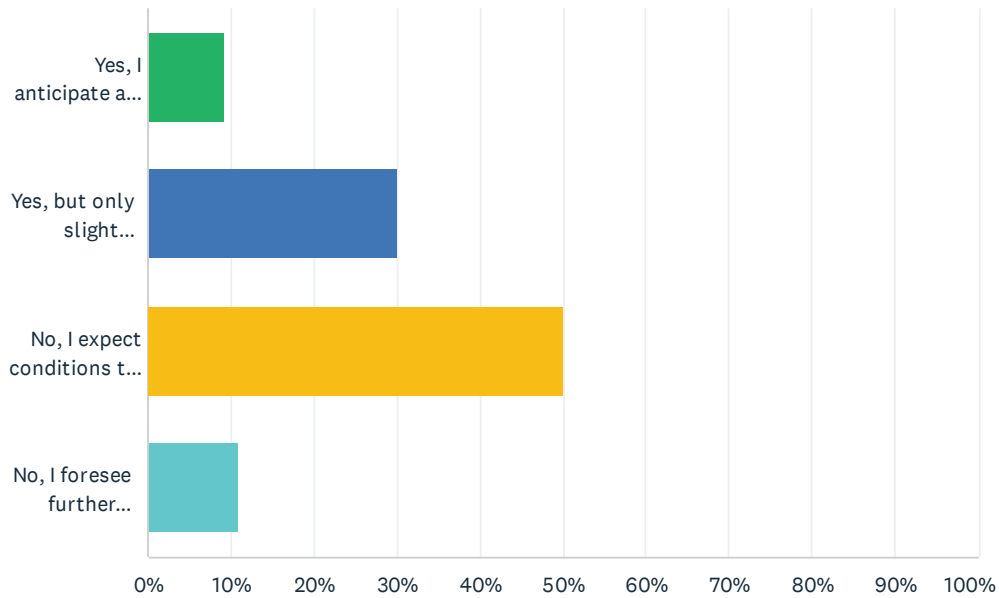
Answered: 110 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Technical or specialised roles	29.09%	32
Entry-level or junior positions	17.27%	19
Managerial or leadership positions	9.09%	10
Across all levels and positions	44.55%	49
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>110</b>

### Q9 Do you expect significant improvements in the candidate market in the upcoming financial year?

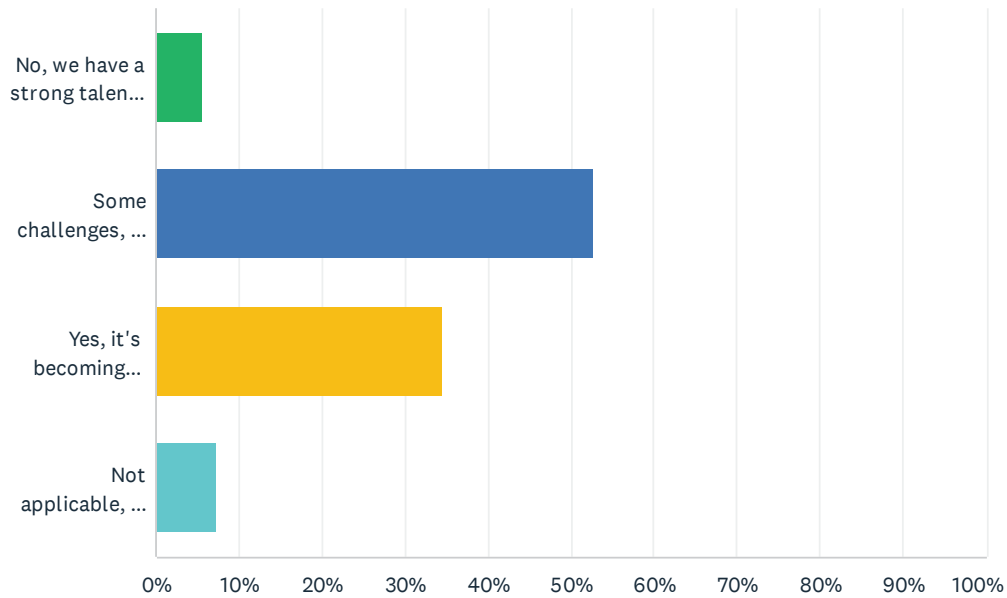
Answered: 110 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, I anticipate a substantial improvement	9.09%	10
Yes, but only slight improvements	30.00%	33
No, I expect conditions to remain the same	50.00%	55
No, I foresee further challenges and limitations	10.91%	12
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>110</b>

## Q10 Are you experiencing headwinds in terms of attracting and retaining skilled employees?

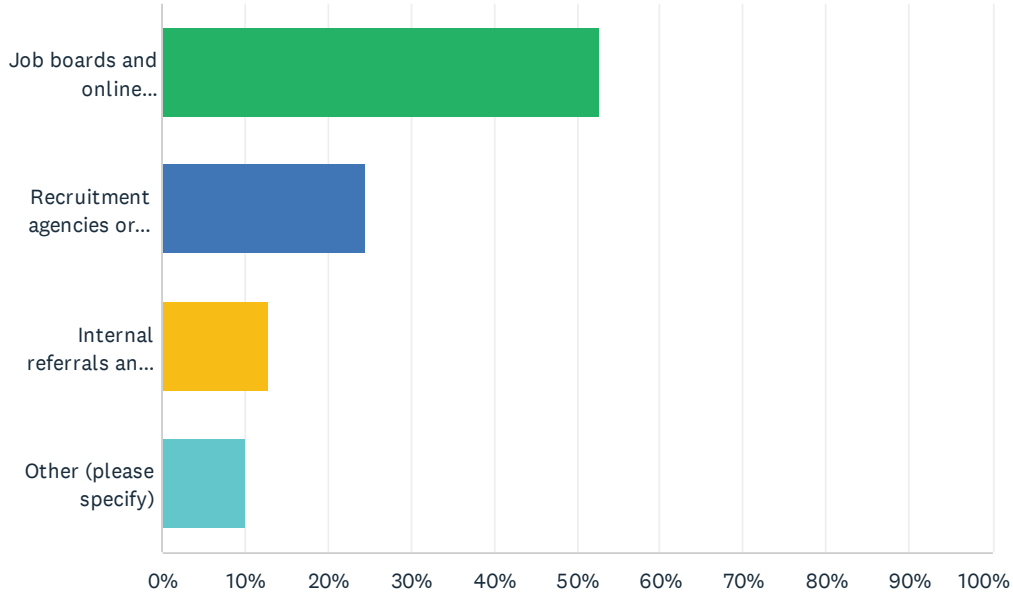
Answered: 110 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No, we have a strong talent attraction and retention strategy	5.45%	6
Some challenges, but we're actively addressing them	52.73%	58
Yes, it's becoming increasingly difficult to attract and retain skilled employees	34.55%	38
Not applicable, we haven't faced any issues in this regard	7.27%	8
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>110</b>

### Q11 How do you primarily source candidates for your open positions?

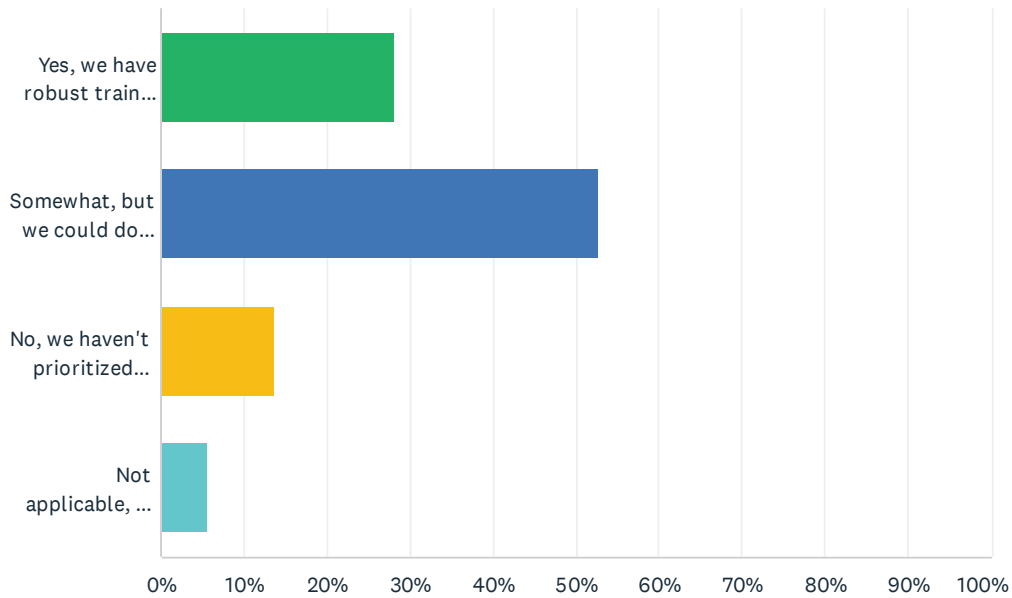
Answered: 110 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Job boards and online platforms	52.73%	58
Recruitment agencies or headhunters	24.55%	27
Internal referrals and networking	12.73%	14
Other (please specify)	10.00%	11
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>110</b>

## Q12 Are you investing in training and development programs to address skills shortages internally?

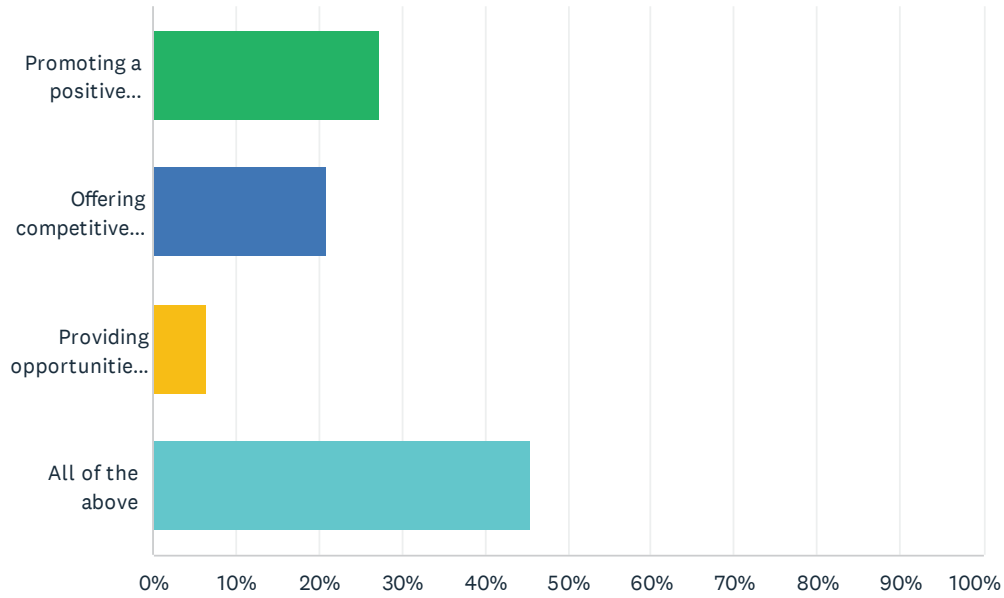
Answered: 110 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, we have robust training programs in place	28.18%	31
Somewhat, but we could do more	52.73%	58
No, we haven't prioritized training and development for skills shortages	13.64%	15
Not applicable, our organization does not require specific training for skills shortages	5.45%	6
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>110</b>

### Q13 What measures are you taking to enhance your employer brand and attract top talent?

Answered: 110 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Promoting a positive company culture and values	27.27%	30
Offering competitive compensation and benefits packages	20.91%	23
Providing opportunities for career growth and advancement	6.36%	7
All of the above	45.45%	50
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>110</b>