



## Tourism Workforce Survey

By AttractionsOntario.ca

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**Dates: February 9—March 7, 2022**

**Total Surveyed: 75**

*(approximately 20% representation of Attractions Ontario Membership)*

### Summary:

A research study was presented to the Attractions Ontario membership of approximately 400 attraction members. Conducted over 4 weeks, the purpose is to understand the landscape of these attractions and learn of any opportunities within these businesses. Thirteen different regions are represented in addition to ten-plus attraction classifications. Most of the attractions represented are small, with full-time and part-time employees ranging between 0-50. Most attractions reveal they do not know the number of francophone visitors to their attractions. These numbers are at or below 25% of those who know.

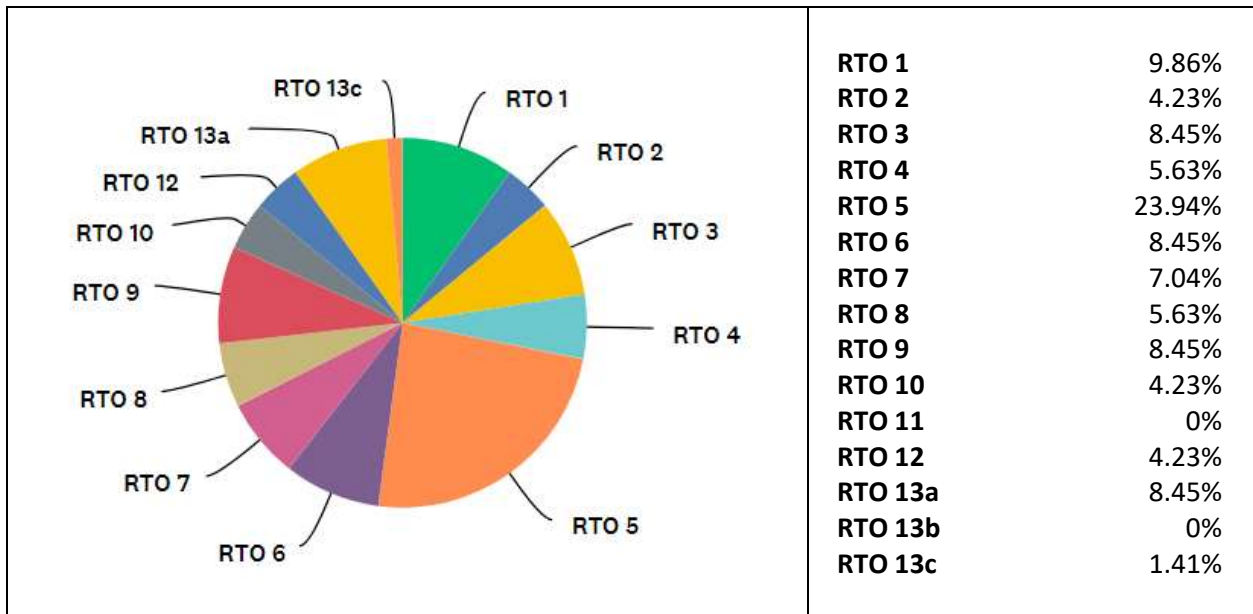
Regarding local guests, responses show that the percentage of local visitors depends on the location and/or type of attraction. Francophone visitors remain under the 25% mark for 87% of the answers. Only RTO 13a and RTO 9 saw francophone visits above the 25% mark. Most tourists come from within Ontario, with only 25% or less making up guests outside the province.

When asked about recruitment processes, most responders used online resources. Using digital platforms to manage staff is not common. If attractions are using one, it is through a custom in-house program. Most attractions have bilingual staff; however, 18% respond that it is not something they have thought about. Of the reasons some attractions do not hire bilingual staff, one answer indicates a lack of finding bilingual staff.

Through this survey, it is apparent that there is an opportunity to educate Ontario attractions about the importance of catering to francophone visitors, how to tap into this market and why this will benefit attraction businesses. 41% of responders agree to share their contact information with SÉO and are willing to learn more.

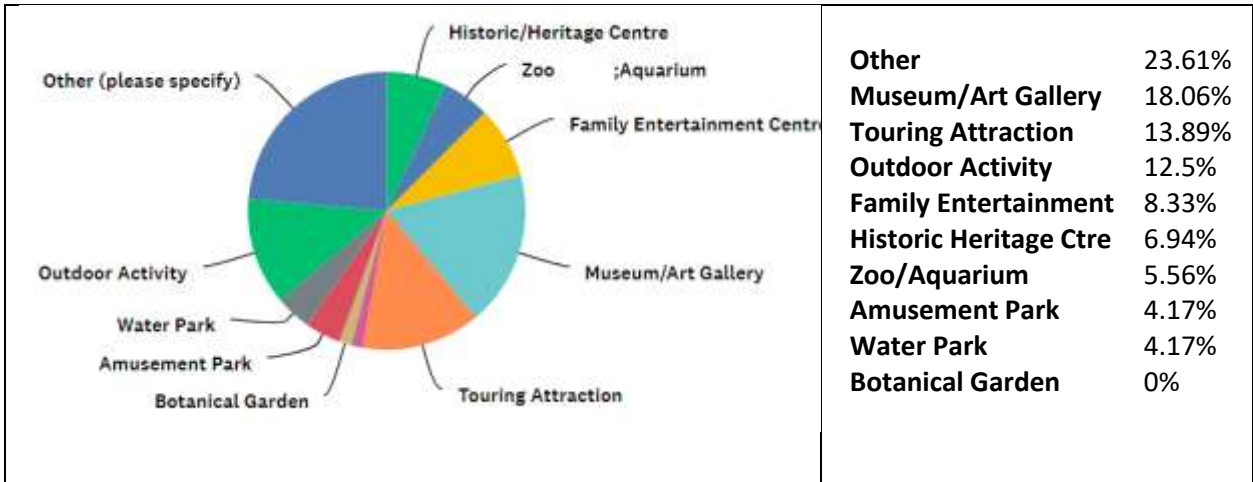
**Question Analysis:**

**1. Please identify which RTO your attraction is in.**



The survey represents 87% of the fifteen Regional Tourism Organizations in Ontario. An interview took place with an RTO 11 member, which was one of the two RTOs missing. This survey gives a fair interpretation of the needs of the attractions within this province.

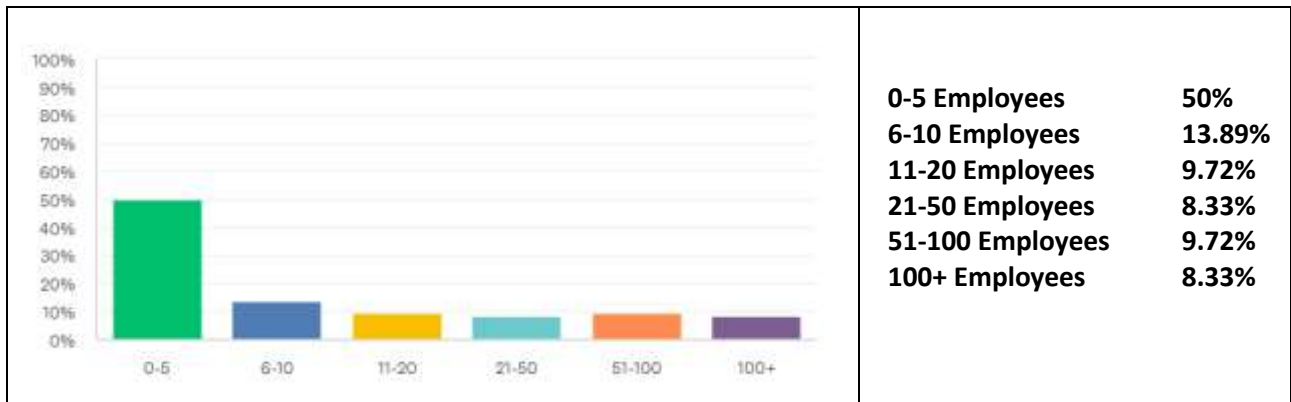
**2. Please identify the type of attraction you are.**



**\*\*\*Other includes** Theatre, Agrotourism, Government recreation and culture programs and services and events, DMO, DMP, Resort, Winery/Vineyard, Farm

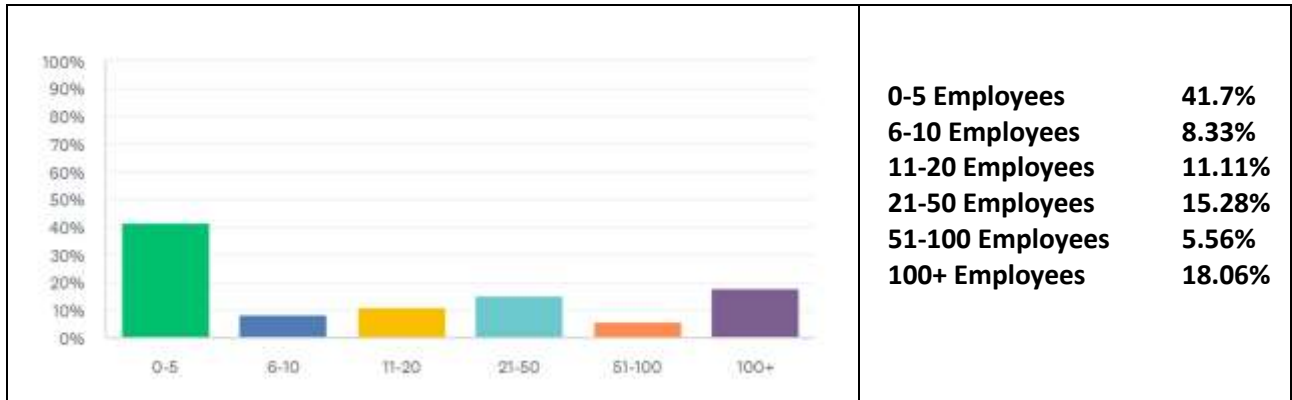
Over ten different types of Attractions and Tourism Destinations are represented in the survey responses. This is an adequate account of the various needs within the province.

**3. How many FULL-TIME employees does your business have?**



The survey represents different attraction sizes; however, the majority who answered (50%) were from smaller attractions, having five FULL-TIME employees or less. 64% of respondents have less than ten FULL-TIME employees.

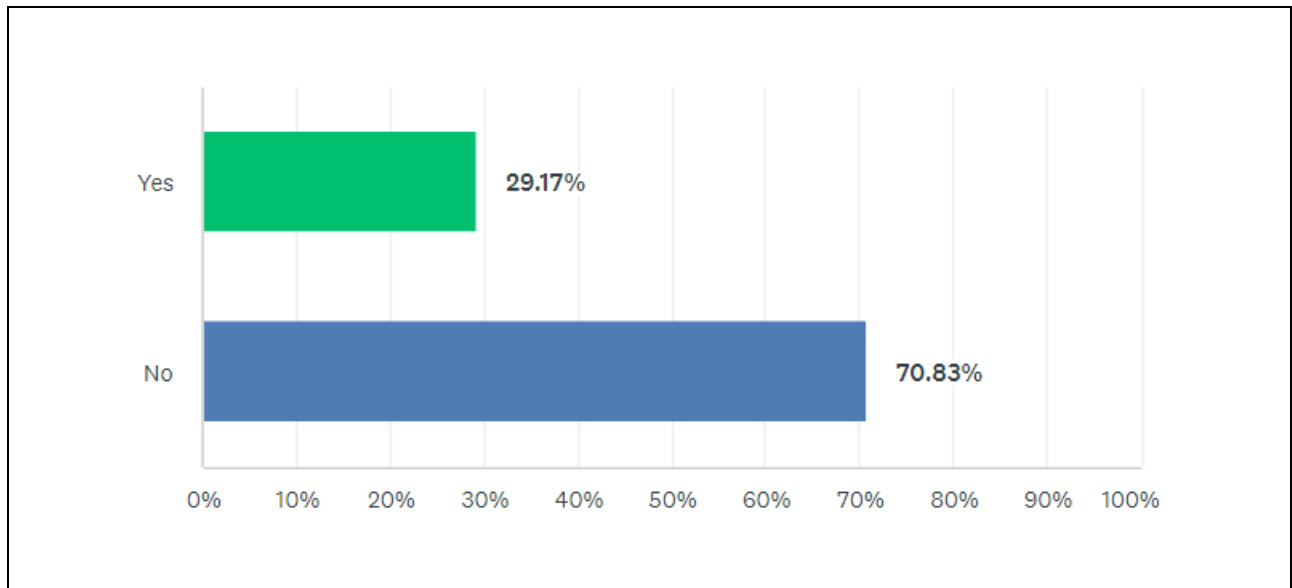
**4. How many PART-TIME employees does your business have?**



Most responders come from smaller attractions with only 0-5 part-time employees; 76% of responders have less than 50 part-time employees. Almost 25% of responders have over 50 part-time employees, with 18% answering they had 100+.

Those interviewed had a total workforce (part-time and full-time) between 32 and 646 employees.

**5. Do you know the percentage of francophone visitors to your attraction?**



Most responders did not know the percentage of francophone visitors attending their attraction. When delving further into who replied yes, this response is true for attractions *across* the province and not just in certain areas. This reveals that a general unfamiliarity

with francophone visitors is common throughout most Ontario attractions.

6. If you answered *yes* to the above question, please give the number (percentage of francophone visitors) below.

Percentage	Tally of Responses	Percentage of Surveyors
Less than 5%	###	23%
5%	III	13%
10%	I	4.3%
15%	IIII	17%
20%	II	8.6%
25%	II	8.6%
30%	III	13%
40%	II	8.6%
50%	I	4.3%

\*Three surveyors who answered *yes* did not provide an answer.

The replies show that for most attractions, only 5% of visitors are francophones. 74.5% of respondents answered francophone visitors make up less than 25% of their overall traffic.

7. Please answer this question using your 2019 numbers. What percentage of your visitors are:

*Local (53 responses):*

Percentage	Tally of Responses	Percentage of Surveyors	
100	I	1.88%	76-100% Range 18.81%
90	IIII	7.5%	
85	III	5.66%	
80	II	3.77%	
75	### II	13.2%	51-75% Range 30.13%
70	IIII	7.5%	
65	II	3.77%	
60	III	5.66%	
50	### I	11.3%	26-50% Range 20.72%
46	I	1.88%	
40	III	5.66%	
30	I	1.88%	

20	II	3.77%	0-25% Range 30.16%
15	III	5.66%	
10	III	9.43%	
9	I	1.88%	
5	III	5.66%	
1	I	1.88%	
0	I	1.88%	

The responses to this question vary, with a very close ranking for all ranges. This reveals that the *type* of attraction and its location determine *who* is visiting.

**Francophone (43 responses):**

Percentage	Tally of Responses	Percentage of Surveyors	
50	II	5%	26-50% Range 14%
40	I	2%	
30	III	7%	0-25% Range 87%
25	III	7%	
20	II	5%	
15	III	12%	
10	III I	14%	
5	III I	14%	
Less than 5	I	2%	
3	II	5%	
2	II	5%	
1	II	5%	
0	III	7%	
0.0025%	I	2%	
unknown	IIII	9%	

The response to this question is narrower; most attractions report low percentages of francophone visitors, with 87% answering a range within the 0-25% mark. Most responses range within the 5, 10 and 15% mark.

*Further investigation into this question:*

**Responses from RTO 1**

Percentage	Tally of Responses	Percentage of Surveyors	
5	II	67%	<b>5% or less</b> <b>100%</b>
2	I	33%	

**Responses from RTO 2**

Percentage	Tally of Responses	Percentage of Surveyors	
15	I	100%	<b>15%</b> <b>100%</b>

**Responses from RTO 3**

Percentage	Tally of Responses	Percentage of Surveyors	
10	I	33%	<b>10% or less</b> <b>100%</b>
0.0025	I	33%	
0	I	33%	

**Responses from RTO 4**

Percentage	Tally of Responses	Percentage of Surveyors	
5	I	100%	<b>5% or less</b> <b>100%</b>

**Responses from RTO 5**

Percentage	Tally of Responses	Percentage of Surveyors	
10	II	25%	<b>10% or less</b> <b>100%</b>
5	II	25%	
2	I	12.5%	
1	I	12.5%	
Unknown	II	25%	

**Responses from RTO 6**

Percentage	Tally of Responses	Percentage of Surveyors	
15	I	50%	<b>15% or less 100%</b>
Less than 5	I	50%	

**Responses from RTO 7**

Percentage	Tally of Responses	Percentage of Surveyors	
25	I	20%	<b>25% or less 100%</b>
5	II	40%	
1	I	20%	
Unknown	I	20%	

**Responses from RTO 8**

Percentage	Tally of Responses	Percentage of Surveyors	
10	I	33%	<b>10% or less 100%</b>
5	I	33%	
0	I	33%	

**Responses from RTO 9**

Percentage	Tally of Responses	Percentage of Surveyors	
30	I	12.5%	<b>30%</b>
25	I	12.5%	<b>25% or less</b>
20	III	37.5%	
10	II	25%	
15	I	12.5%	

**Responses from RTO 10**

Percentage	Tally of Responses	Percentage of Surveyors	
10	I	33%	<b>10% or less</b>
5	I	33%	
0	I	33%	



**Responses from RTO 12**

Percentage	Tally of Responses	Percentage of Surveyors	
15	I	33%	<b>15% or less</b>
3	I	33%	
Unknown	I	33%	

**Responses from RTO 13a**

Percentage	Tally of Responses	Percentage of Surveyors	
50	I	17%	<b>26-50% Range 67%</b>
40	I	17%	
30	II	33%	
20	I	17%	<b>0-25% Range 34%</b>
15	I	17%	

**Responses from RTO 13c**

Percentage	Tally of Responses	Percentage of Surveyors	
3	I	100%	<b>3% or less</b>

Upon looking closer at the answers and where they come from, francophone visitors make up *over 25%* of the visitors in two regions: RTO 9 & RTO 13a (Northeastern Ontario). In the other eleven RTOs represented, the francophone visitor makes up *less than 25%* of overall attendees.

**Within Ontario (55 responses):**

Percentage	Tally of Responses	Percentage of Surveyors	
100	II	4%	<b>75-100% Range 55%</b>
99	II	4%	
98	II	4%	
97	I	2%	
95	III	12%	
90	III	12%	

85	II	4%	<b>50-74% Range 19%</b>
80	III I	11%	
79	I	2%	
75	II	4%	
72	I	2%	
70	I	2%	
60	I	2%	
55	II	4%	
50	III	5%	
49	II	4%	
40	IIII	7%	
38	I	2%	
35	I	2%	
30	I	2%	
20	I	2%	<b>0-25% Range 21%</b>
18	II	4%	
15	I	2%	
11	I	2%	
10	III	5%	
9	I	2%	
5	I	2%	
0	I	2%	

The responses for this question reveal that most attractions see visitors coming from *within* the province, with **55%** answering Ontario residents making up 75-100% of their visitors and **74%** reporting that Ontario residents make up between 50-100% of all visitors.

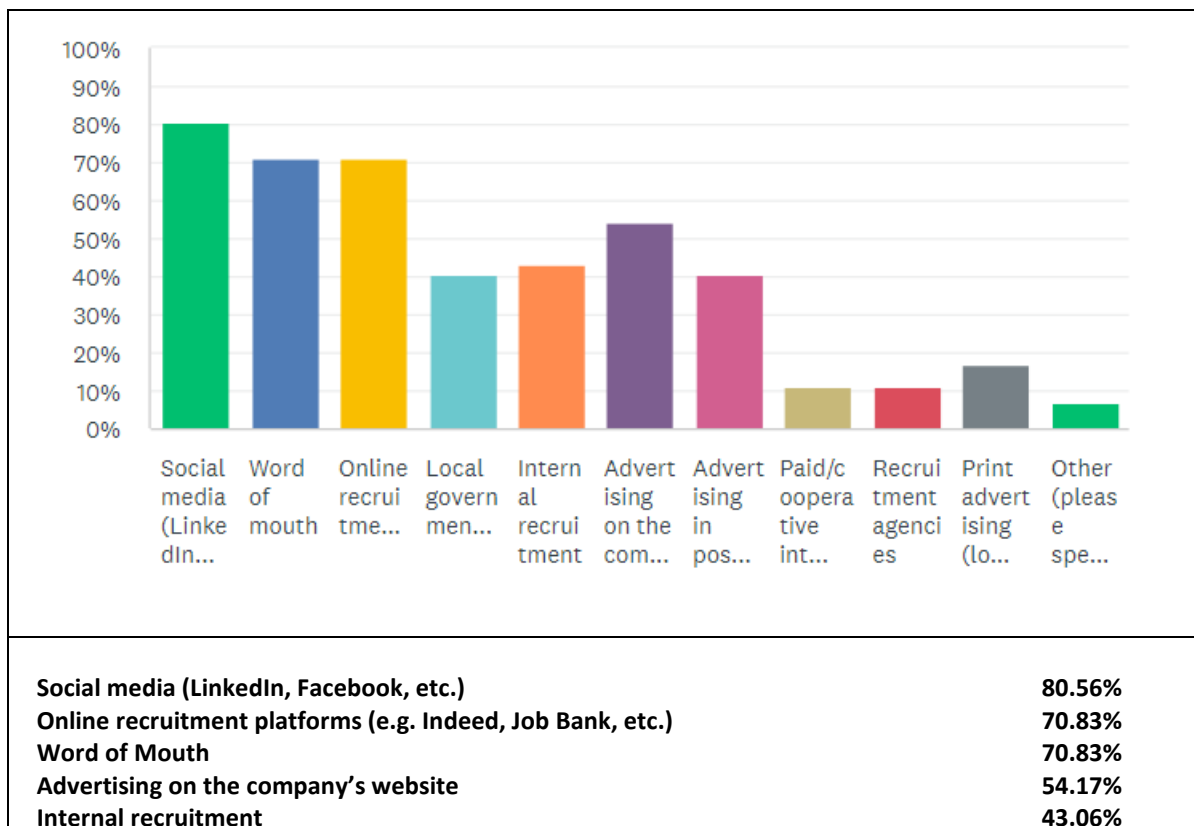
**Outside Ontario (54 responses):**

Percentage	Tally of Responses	Percentage of Surveyors	
100	I	2%	<b>75-100% Range 6%</b>
85	I	2%	
75	I	2%	
51	I	2%	<b>50-74% Range 4%</b>
50	I	2%	
42	I	2%	<b>26-50% Range</b>
40	I	2%	

35	I	2%	10%
30	II	4%	
25	II	4%	0-25% Range 85%
20	II	4%	
20	III	9%	
15	III	6%	
10	III III III	26%	
5	III III I	20%	
3	II	4%	
2	III	6%	
1	III	6%	

The responses to this question align with the above question, showing that visitors from outside Ontario make up a small portion of overall attendees. **85%** of surveyors responded that non-Ontarians make up 0-25% of the overall visitors.

### 8. What digital tools and platforms do you utilize to recruit employees?

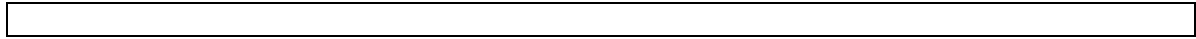


Advertising in post-secondary schools	40.28%
Local government and NGO employment agencies (Employment Ontario, Chamber of Commerce, etc.)	40.28%
Print advertising (local/regional newspapers)	16.67%
Paid/cooperative internships	11.11%
Recruitment Agencies	11.11%
Other	6.94%
<i>***Include partnering with university &amp; local job fairs. The rest replied they do not recruit.</i>	

The most used platform to recruit employees is social media, with **80.56%** of respondents answering this way. Online recruitment is the next most used platform, tied with word of mouth at **70.83%** of surveyors responding. Through the answers above, recruitment resources most heavily take place online.

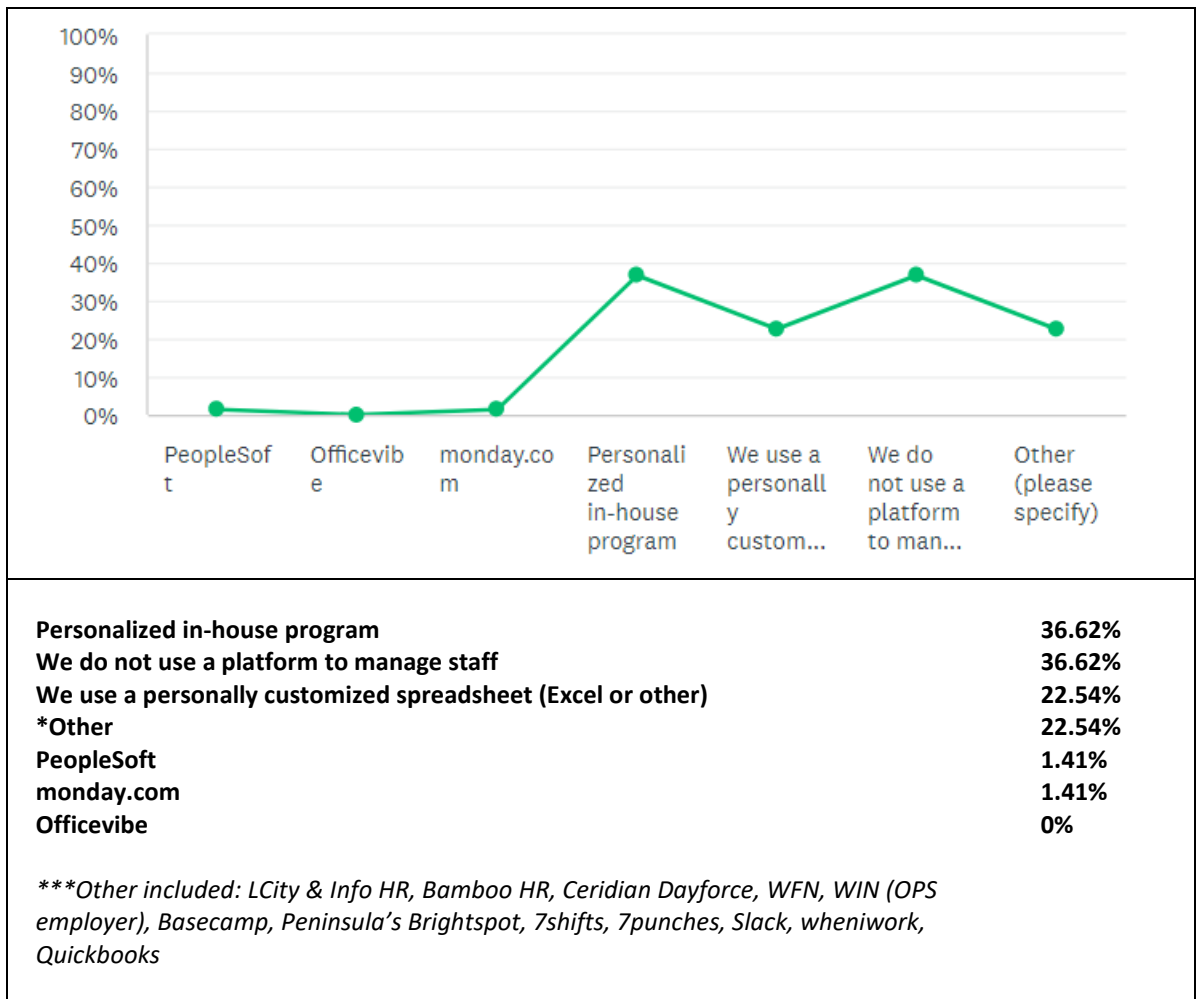
### 9. What digital tools and platforms do you utilize to train employees?





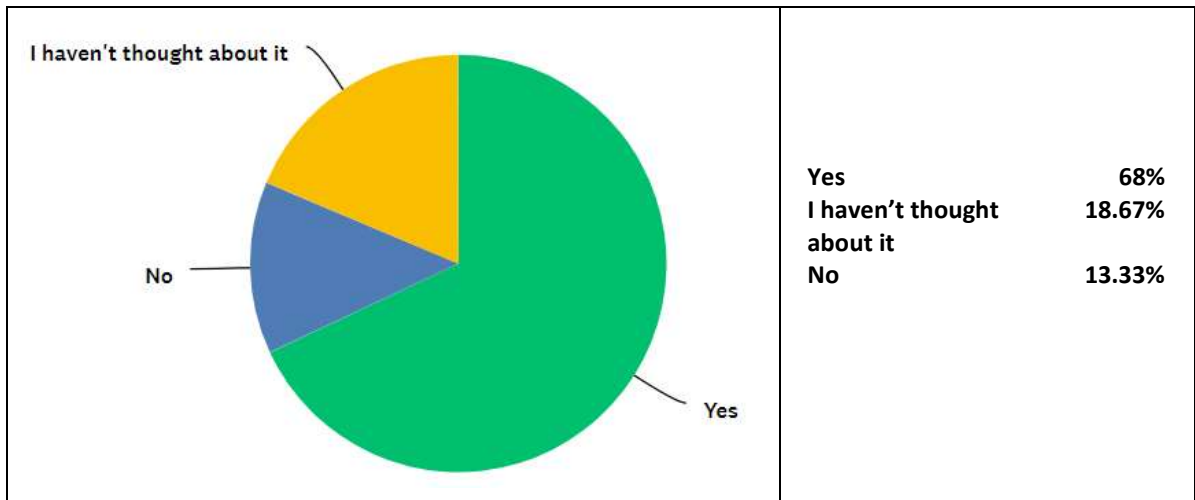
Attraction business operators are trained in-house, with **89%** of surveyors checking this box. Individual attractions vary on the *other* resources they use to recruit.

**10. What digital tools and platforms do you utilize to manage employees?**



The answers to this question vary among attractions. **73.24%** of surveyors reveal using in-house programs or no program at all. This shows that there may be an opportunity to educate and convince these businesses of the value of using a digital platform to manage employees.

**11. Do you currently/or have you ever wanted to hire bilingual staff?**



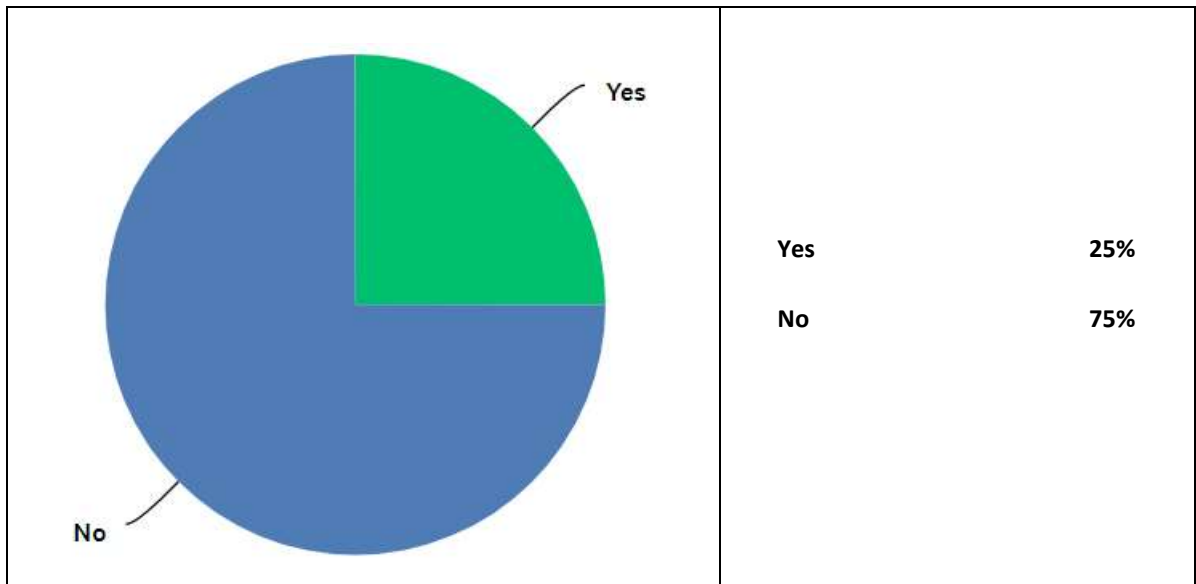
This question reveals that 68% of the attraction businesses currently have bilingual staff and/or want to hire multiple languages staff. 18.67% responded they had not yet thought about it. This shows an opportunity to educate on the importance of having staff that speak multiple languages.

**12. If you answered NO to the above, why do you not hire bilingual?**

- Extremely small staff, not a necessary requirement
- Our app is in English only at the present
- Have not required French-speaking guides. Have hired Russian in the past.
- While it's nice to have the option of providing bilingual services, there is not enough demand to warrant a dedicated position
- No request or need for bilingual staff
- **Can't find them**
- Market demand does not justify
- Not the need from our customer base
- Not enough demand

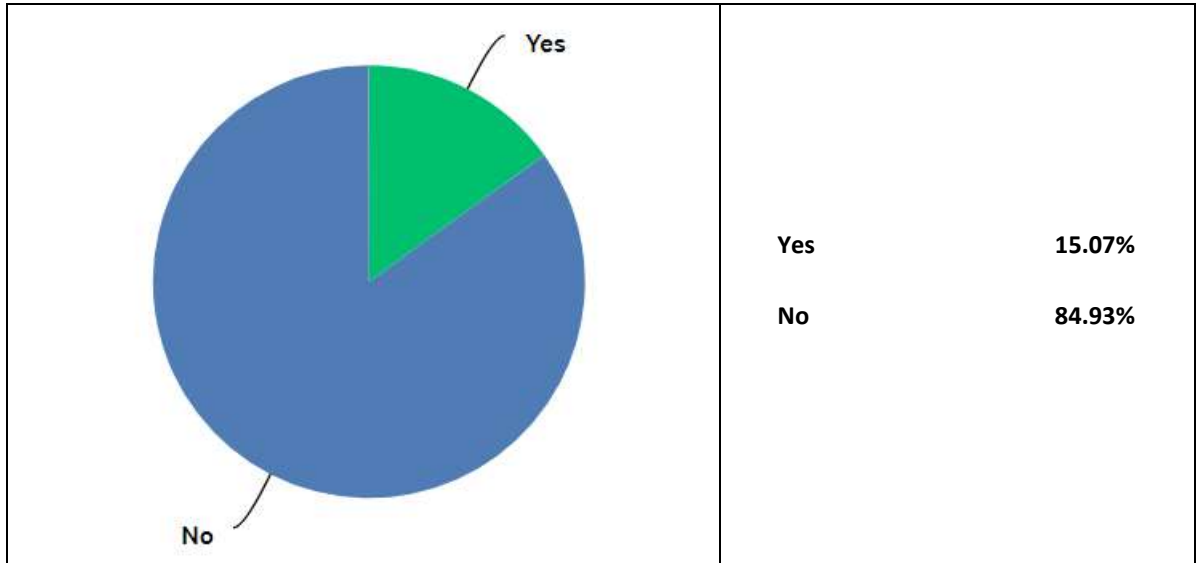
Though most responses to this question show a lack of *need* for bilingual staff, one stood out: **can't find them**. This is an opportunity to teach and exhibit to these businesses how to find bilingual staff and the benefit of hiring staff with multi-languages.

**13. Have you heard of SÉO (Société économique de l'Ontario).**



75% of respondents have not heard of SÉO. Through this survey, 100% of respondents now have.

**14. Did you know that SÉO has numerous free programs to help you with innovative solutions to some of your workforce challenges?**



**15. Would you like us to provide your contact details to SÉO for program follow-up?**

- **41.34%** of respondents are interested in a follow up from SÉO
- 58.67% replied no



## Interview Summary

We conducted Zoom interviews with 8 attractions. Each interview averaged approximately one hour. One respondent sent in written answers to our questions. Two other attractions volunteered to respond via written response but did not provide their answers in time to be included. One other attraction approached did not respond to our inquiry.

We asked the following questions:

1. How many full-time employees do you have?
2. How many part-time employees do you have?
3. How do you recruit employees?
4. Are you finding it difficult to find employees?
5. Who is your biggest competition for employees?
6. How is the current economic outlook affecting your business?
7. What are you doing to engage employees and retain talent?
8. Do you do anything innovative during the hiring process?
9. Do you have skill gaps in your organization?
10. What e-commerce platforms do you use?
11. What is the percentage of your current visitor base is francophone?
12. Is it important for you to employ bilingual staff?
13. Have you had difficulty finding bilingual staff?
14. Would having more bilingual staff be a benefit for your business?
15. Anything else you would like to add about your workforce?

Of the key elements of these questions, the following results emerge:

- Francophone tourism makes up a minimal portion of their business (7 respondents said 15% or less)
  - Proximity to Quebec played a key role in this. One respondent said their business was over 60% francophone, but they draw from the Montreal CMA for visitors.
- Job Board and relationships with area schools (both college and high school) were the two most prominent means of recruitment. Facebook was also an important recruiting tool but less helpful than in past years. LinkedIn, Indeed and other recruitment websites were cited, but even though they used them, their usefulness was lesser than others. Indeed especially was cited as providing high volume but low-quality candidates. These recruitment sites worked better for skilled and senior staff than the unskilled staff most hire.
- The largest competition came from within our industry, with fast food, hospitality, and other attractions cited as the largest competition (especially for low-skilled, seasonal, part-time work). Higher paying jobs in government and other industries were the largest competitors for skilled and full-time positions.

- Most did not see a benefit to hiring bilingual staff. Only two cited that they purposely hired bilingual staff. For one (Calypso), all customer-facing staff were required to be bilingual, but given their location, it was easy to find bilingual employees. The other (CN Tower) was required to hire bilingual staff at reception due to federal government requirements.
  - Almost all said bilingual staff could be an unintended benefit. Other languages other than French (Mandarin, Simplified Chinese, Eastern European) were cited as more in demand.
  - CN Tower has over 20 different languages represented on staff. This is more a location function in Toronto (the world's most multicultural city) than a purposeful hiring approach. Still, any additional languages an employee is fluent in are displayed via a pin the employees wear to aid in the guest experience.

Here are the summaries of responses from each interview.

## African Lion Safari, Cambridge

*African Lion Safari is a drive-through Wildlife Park dedicated to conserving declining wildlife species. It is home to over 1,000 exotic birds and animals that roam freely throughout seven distinct drive-through Game Reserves.*

*The park comprises over 750 acres, 250 of which provide animals with extensive areas of bush, grasslands or forest in which they can interact naturally with other animals. In several Game Reserves, mixed species roam and interact as they would in the wild. We have developed 25 to 30 acres for walk-through areas and exhibits. The balance of the property comprises farm, bush, and other habitats, including 40 areas of provincially significant wetland that we maintain and monitor.*

**Employees:** 45 full-time, 450 seasonal

### **Employee Recruitment and Retention:**

They recruit through a combination of digital billboards, co-ops, Facebook, school posting boards, word of mouth, and returning employees. With animal care, they promote from within. They used LinkedIn and Indeed for more senior/full time. HRDC for seasonal.

African Lion Safari is finding it difficult to attract employees. The calibre of applicants is down. They're basically poaching from other companies. Too early to tell for this year's seasonal crop.

Everyone in their area is considered competition for employees. The one thing against them is their location. They have no public transit options, so employees need to drive. This is a limitation for high school students.



Due to COVID, they don't have a lot of returning staff, so supervisory positions will be a problem. Managers keep in touch with the seasonal employees they want back. They groom people for supervisory roles a year out. With two years basically lost, they find it tough to have experienced people on staff.

They currently are undergoing a skill gap issue because they've had several retirements. What is missing is the middle management experience. They have people with 30 years of experience and 5 years of experience, but none in the middle to replace the older ones.

### **Francophone visitors and bilingual needs:**

The number of francophone visitors to them is unknown. They do not consider this a strong market.

They have bilingual staff, but they don't purposely hire bilingual staff. They have more needs for staff who speak Mandarin, Simplified Chinese, Hindi and German. They would benefit from finding more employees who speak these languages than French. Requests for French-language services are minimal (one request every two years), and they have enough staff with familiarity in French to make do.

### **E-commerce:**

It has become a bigger part of their operation due to COVID for ticket sales, but it was never a big part before, mainly onsite sales. Did not provide a platform.

### **Economic Outlook for their business:**

They feel it is promising. As an outdoor attraction, they think there is pent-up demand. They anticipate full operations and are aiming for 80% capacity.

The minimum wage increase had a significant drag on them. They upped their prices to offset this and the lower capacities last year and do not plan to lower them. Long-term, this price increase could be a boon.

## **Bingemans, Kitchener**

*Bingemans is your ticket to exceptional fun. We are Waterloo Region's leader in hospitality, providing the very best in family entertainment, outdoor recreation and family camping. Book your stay at the Bingemans Camping Resort, have some fun in the sun in the Big Splash Water Park (Seasonal), explore FunworX Indoor Playland, go mini-golfing at one of our two outdoor courses, or bowl at Kingpin Bowlounge featuring 28 lanes of 10 pin fun, or have fun playing ping-pong at Bingemans Boston Pizza -the largest Boston Pizza in Canada!*

**Employees:** 100 full-time (during COVID: 43), 350 seasonal (during COVID: under 100)



### **Employee Recruitment and retention:**

For recruitment, they mainly use local Job Boards, Indeed, co-ops, and Conestoga College career centres. They have difficulty attracting people for skilled jobs but do not have an issue with unskilled positions. Currently seeing about 50% of the resumes they would normally receive, and the quality of candidates is down.

For seasonal positions, they compete mostly with the local municipalities. Places like Amazon are also drawing away from the labour pool, however, the tourism industry cannot compete with those salaries.

For employee retention, communication is key. Under normal operations, managers would remain in contact with students they want to return next year. With COVID, they could not continue this practice, so they are not seeing as many returning staff. They are seasonal. Not a lot of turnover for salaried full-time staff.

They are not finding any significant skill gaps, but stress employees need to be flexible and fill in where needed.

### **Francophone visitors and bilingual needs:**

Their francophone visitation is minimal and have had no demand for services in French. Where they could use help is with Mandarin and Simplified Chinese.

### **E-commerce:**

Tickets (cTickets) 80% of bookings come online. Some off the shelf and some custom platforms for e-commerce needs.

### **Economic Outlook for their business:**

COVID tanked it. They hope for a partial recovery this summer and await a return of corporate business this fall. Corporate business accounts for 40%. If the corporate business doesn't return, they will be in trouble.

More foreign workforce availability is required. Concerned that the focus is on workforce training when they should work on the workforce pool. Eliminate restrictions on how many hours an international student on student visas can work. The skills can be taught; they need access to bodies.



## Calypso Waterpark, Limoges

*Calypso Waterpark is the summertime place for children and thrill-seekers alike! As the biggest theme waterpark in Canada, Calypso Waterpark features a wide variety of attractions for people of all ages: 35 slides, 100 water games and 2 theme rivers! It is also home to the largest wave pool in the country, exciting slides for everyone, play areas for young families, 2 VIP Zones and a great selection of restaurants. With so much to do and see, a day at Calypso Waterpark is simply unforgettable!*

**Employees:** 6 off-season full-time 320 in-season. 320 part-time seasonal

### **Employee Recruitment and retention:**

Posting positions on Facebook pre-pandemic was enough to meet their needs. They recruit via Employment Ontario, Zoom meetings with high schools, job fairs, Veteran's Affairs. Candidates are very young.

Under normal years, they retain 70% of staff year-to-year. They are a fun place to work, provide a competitive wage rate, and offer training and promotions. They offer scholarships as a reward.

Normally the 30% they lose every year is due to students graduating and starting other careers. Being closed in 2020, they lost an extra 30% and have difficulty finding replacements. Lockdowns stopped courses for certifications for things like lifeguards, which has artificially decreased the pool of candidates.

Fast food locations are their biggest competition for staff. As a rural attraction, they have a limited area to draw employees from. Yet, because of their proximity to a highway between two urban centres, there are many fast-food locations. Transportation is an issue, given their rural nature.

To recruit, they take a marketing approach. They created a social media mascot talking about how they are a great place to work. They conduct open Zoom sessions to recruit broadly rather than take half an hour to interview each candidate.

Skill gaps will exist because of attrition and the youth of the people applying for jobs. Training will be offered to fill in these gaps. Kitchen staff will be the area where they have the toughest time filling.

### **Francophone visitors and bilingual needs:**

Given their proximity to Montreal and the francophone nature of Eastern Ontario, 60% of their visitor base is francophone. All of their guest-facing jobs are required to be bilingual. About 50% of their entire workforce is bilingual. They rarely have an issue recruiting bilingual staff but are worried it could be an issue this year. Having even more bilingual staff would be beneficial to them.



### **E-commerce:**

They do not use e-commerce.

### **Economic Outlook for their business:**

They need more support for the hardest-hit sectors. Ontario was the only jurisdiction globally that did not allow water parks to open in 2020, and the 2021 season was shortened. They're struggling from an HR side; seasonality harms their ability to attract staff. There is not enough help for seasonal businesses; none of the government programs account for seasonality.

## **CN Tower, Toronto**

*Defining the Toronto skyline, the CN Tower is Canada's most recognizable and celebrated icon. At a height of 553.33m (1,815 ft., 5 inches), Canada's celebration destination is an award-winning dining and entertainment experience and a must-see for visitors to Toronto. Each year over 1.8 million people visit to take in the breathtaking views from multiple viewing levels, panoramic floor-to-ceiling Window Walls or the Glass Floor, a truly Canadian dining experience in 360 Restaurant, or the thrill of EdgeWalk.*

**Employees:** 260 full-time. 200 part-time.

### **Employee Recruitment and retention:**

Social media, SAP (Success Factors) and other job boards to draw attention to the site depending on the need. Colleges for the specialized roles (George Brown for culinary, Seneca for security). Recruitment agencies for more professional roles. It has been more difficult to recruit for more senior positions than normal.

On the innovative side, the attractions group does group interviews. A fun way to engage people and observe them. It allows applicants to meet the people they might work with before they start.

Their biggest competition for unskilled positions is other attractions (like Canada's Wonderland). Higher-paying jobs outside of the industry attract more senior people. The TTC is the largest competition for security, followed by Canadian Border Services Agency.

There is real magic and a great deal of pride in working at Canada's National Tower. People feel important to be part of the work they do. They developed a Play Book program, which is used for training managers and supervisors to refocus on what the organization is about. Creative objectives that filter down to the staff. Sensitivity training to improve interactions with staff. A new recognition program, asking how employees want to be recognized.

### **Francophone visitors and bilingual needs:**





They fall under the official languages act, so everything guest-facing must be French and English. Certain roles (like reception) are required to be bilingual. Whenever possible, they hire French-speaking employees. Over 20 different language groups are represented in their workforce. If a team member speaks an additional language, they identify it via a pin so visitors who need help in a specific language can find someone to communicate with.

They could use more bilingual employees in their marketing department, and they are low on their French capacity there. Hiring more bilingual staff will always be a benefit to them.

**E-commerce:**

All ticket sales are online (even onsite, via a kiosk). They have a timed ticketing process that manages crowding, eliminating lineups. They use Seven Rooms for reservations. The retail store is online; not sure how it is managed.

**Economic Outlook for their business:**

There are concerns there could be a decline, but their visitation numbers have been strong compared to their re-forecast. Inflation is concerning. Because hospitality has been hard hit, people may have switched industries. This might make it difficult to recruit staff in the future.

## **Glowzone 360, Brampton and Mississauga**

*Welcome to GlowZone 360, the GTA's Active Entertainment Centre. We offer 18-holes of Glow-in-the-Dark Mini Golf, Arena X Laser Tag, a large arcade and party areas at our two incredible locations. The four partners envisioned GlowZone 360 locations as a place where family and friends could connect in a fun, safe, active environment. The result is 15,000 square feet of indoor, blacklight space, which creates an incredible experience.*

*From late-night fun with friends to birthday parties, date nights and corporate parties, the ambiance, activities and attentive staff make for a fantastic experience.*

**Employees:** 2 owner-operators. 30 part-time staff (40 pre-COVID)

**Employee Recruitment and retention:**

Most recruiting is done via their website. They are always recruiting. People will drop off resumes throughout the year. They will approach visitors if they see someone who fits their culture, they might ask them if they are interested in working for them. They also reach out to drama schools. Indeed is junk.



This year was slow for recruiting, but they have not had a problem getting resumes since reopening. Quality is down; only 25% of those received progress to an interview. But, even with the lower numbers and lower quality, there are no staffing concerns at this point. The hours are still not high enough yet to require more staff.

Their biggest competition for staff is anyone in the hospitality/entertainment business (Playdium, movie theatres, etc.)

During the hiring process, we ask applicants to perform for managers. Like pick a prop on their course and explain what it is and why it is here. This is to see the candidate perform under pressure. Employees are selling fun. They hire people who can entertain and host events. From there, staff can take on additional responsibilities.

They recently expanded food options with new menu items, and staff need to become experienced with creating the new food.

For retention, most employees stay 3 to 4 years. They hire mainly high school students, and they remain for as long as possible. Staff can earn extra money based on the company's performance at birthday parties. They receive tips from parties. The company matches any tips earned (up to \$500) to help pay on the biweekly paycheques to staff that aren't on the birthday party. Staff receive a year-end bonus based on hours worked and performance.

#### **Francophone visitors and bilingual needs:**

Less than 5% of their business is francophone. They do not employ bilingual staff and have no intention to specifically seek bilingual employees.

#### **E-commerce:**

None of the major ones. They have online deposit and booking for birthday parties and gift guards linked to point of sale.

#### **Economic Outlook for their business:**

There is much optimism for the coming year. With restrictions coming down, things are looking good. Family Day was 80% of pre-COVID, which was busier than expected.

There is a need to hire a full-time assistant manager for the two locations.

## **Kingston 1000 Island Cruises, Kingston**

*At Kingston 1000 Island Cruises, we are committed to fine food services, live entertainment and first-rate service aboard our vessels. From April to October, cruises sail from downtown Kingston*





*into the world-famous 1000 islands, including sightseeing cruises, dining cruises, and special event cruises. Kingston 1000 Islands Cruises is the premier cruise line in the 1000 Islands region and consistently ranked as one of the top things to do in the 1000 Islands and as a top attraction in Kingston, Ontario.*

**Employees:** 25 full-time staff pre-COVID (12 currently). 125 part-time seasonal staff pre-COVID (85 in 2021)

**Employee Recruitment and retention:**

They recruit from placement agencies, job boards, invitations to previous employees, social media, LinkedIn. They've started using a new portal (Humi) that tracks applications for each position. They also work with their RTO. Platforms like Indeed provide too many people, often ill-suited for the role.

Currently, they are only receiving about 20% of the applications they normally would. They cannot put out all their boats on the water or operate at full capacity this year. They will not offer the lunch cruise on one boat. Marine crews require certification. There is a backlog to write the exams they need to be certified due to COVID. Pre-COVID on the marine side has always been a challenge.

The Ministry of Transportation is their biggest competition for marine certified staff to work on government ferries with all the extra things that come with working for the government and their benefits. They lose one certified crew member every two years to them. In years past, they could recruit retired MTO staff, but that hasn't happened in 10 years, and they are unsure why that is. They used to attract retirees from the fire department, but that pool has disappeared, and they don't know why. There is tough competition for mechanics and engineers elsewhere. Seasonal employees are largely students, and they have a good pipeline to the three educational institutions in Kingston to find students. Culinary students want to work on lunch and dinner cruises.

Retention is a challenge due to the seasonality of their business (July and August are their busy months). They compete against places offering full-time work. They used to attract retired people who would come in and work for 10-15 years, but that doesn't happen anymore. They've lost people due to COVID (pensioners) who decided not to stay.

As for current skill gaps, the key element is the marine operators because of their special requirements. They've had difficulty finding a food and beverage manager and difficulty finding more senior management positions.

**Francophone visitors and bilingual needs:**

Francophone tourists account for 10-15% of their visitation, mainly during the Quebec summer break.



Bilingualism is a help, but it is far down on their list of criteria. It is one of the screening things they use in selecting candidates. They've moved from recorded narratives to live hosting, so they've lost language capabilities (previously offered recorded tours in five languages). That said, they will host a recruiting session that actively attracts bilingual applicants. Given their location in the province, they should not have a problem recruiting more.

#### **E-commerce:**

They use special software for cruise and passenger vessels, but it is antiquated. It is being sunsetted, so this is the last season of using it. The new one for next year will be 10 times the cost. They use Shopify for gift certificates and online retail purchases.

#### **Economic Outlook for their business:**

Cost factors such as the minimum wage increase and the elimination of the differentiation between servers and non-servers will hurt. They can no longer advertise they pay higher than minimum wage. Kingston housing costs have increased the highest in the country. Hence, salaries must rise to attract new employees to the area. Diesel price increases are hurting their bottom line. They are more focused on rebuilding their human capacity. They had an innovative organization dedicated to building the destination. With the lockdowns last year and limited notice to open, there were issues hiring people, affecting the product.

## **Owl Rafting, Forrester's Falls**

*We are family-owned and operated, beginning with our founders Hermann and Christa Kerckhoff in 1981. The Kerckhoffs immigrated to Canada in the late 50s and fell in love with the river. In 1972, they started the world's first whitewater kayak and canoe school known as Madawaska Kanu Centre. Hermann and their daughter Claudia were the first kayakers to descend the Ottawa River, discovering a prime location for rafting. Thanks to their current owners, Claudia and Dirk Van Wijk, both companies are thriving. The third generation is quickly becoming more involved, with Stefani Van Wijk as Director of MKC and Katrina heading up marketing and design.*

*We are proud to share our magical home of the river with you!*

**Employees:** 3 full-time staff. 55 part-time seasonal staff.

#### **Employee Recruitment and retention:**

Recommendations from existing staff work best to recruit staff, followed by Social Media posts posted on a designated page, Employment – on their website, advertising locally on [www.ovjobs.ca](http://www.ovjobs.ca) (Ottawa Valley) and to colleges/universities with outdoor programs.



They find it difficult to attract staff, especially in non-skilled food service and office reception areas. But, also in skilled raft guides, as there just aren't enough in Canada, and the foreign work permits are so prohibitive, they can't navigate the system. It's extremely expensive to go the LMIA (Labour Market Impact Assessment) route.

When asked about competition, they responded, "That's a good question! Where have all the young people gone, those who used to flock to a seasonal summer job where you live by the water, with accommodation provided?" They've increased wages substantially, provided accommodations and a meal plan that is healthy and delicious. They host staff events to create a staff community. And learning the sport of whitewater paddling has always been a big draw. It takes 2-4 years of paddling as your full-time hobby to reach the status to work at it. Access to foreign workers is key. They get inquiries from across the globe, as the Ottawa River is a World-renowned playground for paddlers. Since the Harper government cancelled the foreign work permit application, it has been tougher to get the experienced river guides they need.

They ask scenario questions during the hiring process to see how applicants react to situations. When you live on the job, it's important to work well on and off the job with your fellow staff. But also be customer friendly and engaging.

#### **Francophone visitors and bilingual needs:**

Between 10% and 20% of their visitors are francophones. They have never had an issue finding access to bilingual staff due to their proximity to Quebec. They have a good balance between the river and their office, but they could always use more.

#### **E-commerce:**

Online reservations with Fare Harbour Reservation system, Square, and First Data.

#### **Economic Outlook for their business:**

It has elevated the importance of being outdoors, increasing the demand for rafting excursions with overnight accommodations.

## **Ripley's Aquarium of Canada, Toronto**

*Ripley's Aquarium of Canada – Located in Downtown Toronto! Open 365, Canada's largest indoor aquarium, features one of the world's most extensive jellyfish exhibits, offers an interactive stingray and bamboo shark touch pools and daily live dive shows. From the heart-pounding experience of Dangerous Lagoon with moving glide-path sidewalk to the hypnotic dance of Pacific sea nettle jellyfish, which are illuminated in an array of breathtaking colours from within the world's largest Kreisel tank at Planet Jellies, Ripley's Aquarium of Canada is a must-see!*



**Employees:** 80 full-time staff (150 pre-COVID). 50 part-time staff (100 pre-COVID).

**Employee Recruitment and retention:**

They use ADP recruiting most of the time, which sends out jobs to various platforms (like LinkedIn). They send it out to multiple groups as well. They are unionized, so they must post all unionized positions internally first for a week.

They had huge retention. Due to their unionization, they promote the chance to move up in the organization. They try to value their employees by giving them a little gift every Christmas or giving free tickets (20) to staff. Every year they host three corporate parties for the team.

During the hiring process, they promote the mission of ‘Work hard, play harder’. They’ll ask applicants quirky questions (like what is your favourite fish and why?). It is a fun place to work and they try to focus on that. They like our staff to feel they have input. It doesn’t matter what area you work in. They want you to feel you are part of it (like marketing tag lines).

**Francophone visitors and bilingual needs:**

Visitors from Quebec were a huge bump the past two summers, with almost 50% of their visitation being from there. Pre-pandemic: 10%

They receive requests for tours/behind-the-scenes tours in multiple languages, so to find someone who could speak a different language is a boon. All their signs currently are in English only.

While bilingual staff would be a bonus, they currently do not actively seek bilingual staff. Front of house especially would benefit from it.

**E-commerce:**

Accesso online, Sirius Ware in-house. 35% online/65% on-site; 90% online during pandemic

**Economic Outlook for their business:**

Wait and see.

## **Santa’s Village, Bracebridge**

*Santa’s Village – Muskoka’s Theme Park – has been a family tradition in Muskoka for over 60 Years! It is an ideal family vacation with something for everyone. With Kid’s Rides and Coasters, a Splash Pad, Live Entertainers, Games, Petting Zoos, Souvenirs and of course, that magical visit with Santa Claus, this one-of-a-kind amusement park has it all.*



**Employees:** 9 full-time staff. 240 part-time seasonal staff.

**Employee Recruitment and retention:**

They offer incentives for existing staff to recruit people they know. Co-ops with universities. Indeed, Facebook posts, etc. Reaching out to older adults/retirees who might want to work a day or two a week. Radio ads. Hosting social events to convince people it will be a fun place to work. On-site accommodations for employees.

As for difficulty attracting employees, last year was not an easy year. If you had a pulse, they hired you. Increased their pay above minimum wage. They offer returning employees a higher salary. This year they are doing ok with recruitment. Their biggest competition comes from resorts and fast-food outlets.

To aid in retention, they offer returning employees a higher wage. They'll hold weekly draws and social events in season, but the pay is the biggest thing to bring people back.

As for skill gaps, they find it difficult to attract the Supervisory lead hand segment. Accommodations in their region are tough to find. If they provided more accommodations on-site to house employees, they might attract more.

**Francophone visitors and bilingual needs:**

Francophone visitation makes up between 8% and 10% of their business. Eastern European and East Indian languages and Mandarin are more of a pressing need. They do not feel hiring French speakers is important but would be open to exploring it. Perhaps an untapped base?

**E-commerce:**

Camping booking system (Camp Life). Moving to Centre Edge and World Pay for online ticketing.

**Economic Outlook for their business:**

They are a bit of an anomaly. They are not feeling the pressure because their new ownership group is looking long term at the property's potential. Under their previous ownership group, the pandemic might have been the end of them.

**Recommendations:**

Two things stood out to Attractions Ontario as we compiled the results. While the number of francophone visitors is deemed low (apart from those areas close to Quebec, like Northeastern Ontario and Southeastern Ontario) and few places purposely hired bilingual employees, most agreed there was a benefit to their business to have bilingual capabilities. Given the number of



potential francophone visitors, this is a potentially untapped market for attractions to take advantage of.

Second, most attractions had not heard of SÉO. Now they have. And 41% of respondents to the survey were willing to be contacted by SÉO.

These two findings provide an opportunity for SÉO. We can make the case that increasing the capacity in French language services may increase visitation. Most attractions likely did not consider francophone tourism because they lacked the capacity to offer French-language services. Suppose they could be shown a way to incorporate more French language capacity (bilingual signage on-site, bilingual staff, etc.) easily and inexpensively. In that case, they could attract a new demographic of visitors and boost the bottom line. It is almost a chicken and egg conundrum; do you wait to hire bilingual staff to satisfy the needs of your visitors, or do you add bilingual staff to position yourself to attract new visitors? Most seem to have taken the position of waiting until there is a need, rather than seeing it as an opportunity to attract new guests.

If SÉO can make the case to these attractions, Ontario would be more welcoming to francophone guests. This opportunity is also a challenge; convincing attractions to invest now for the potential of new guests later.

In conclusion, attractions have an untapped opportunity to attract bilingual guests. There is also an opportunity for SÉO to make the case that they can help attractions grow their francophone capacity to generate higher returns.