



Poverty Reduction Initiative / PRI

Traverse Bay Area

"working to reduce poverty by 25% by 2010
in Antrim, Kalkaska, Grand Traverse, Leelanau and Benzie Counties"

PRI Employer Survey Report: *Skills, Attitudes & Habits for Job Success*

A **full report** from the Internet online questionnaire available at the
Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce (TCACC) home page
March - June 2005



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Introduction

Poverty Reduction Initiative (PRI) Traverse Bay Area - Employer Survey: Background Notes and Acknowledgments

Since February 2004, the Poverty Reduction Initiative (PRI) has had the good fortune to help bring together a dynamic and dedicated group of individuals and organizations in addressing issues of poverty in our five-county northwest Michigan region – spanning Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska and Leelanau Counties. This is a “grassroots” initiative with our goal of reducing poverty by 25 percent by 2010. Our PRI community response to those friends, neighbors and families who are experiencing poverty is organized into a volunteer steering committee and six issue group teams: Education & Training; Employment & Wages; Health Care; Housing; Early Childhood; and Social Attitudes.

In winter 2005, the members of the PRI Education & Training Issue Group and issue group co-chairs Linda Price, from the Grand Traverse Resort & Spa, and Mike Hill, from the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District, met to design an “employability skills” survey for area employers. The survey team was assisted by staff from the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District and the TBA ISD Career-Tech Center staff, including Janie Lesinski, media specialist, and Regis McCord, instructional services and online survey specialist.

In March 2005, the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce (TCACC), a PRI partner organization, placed the PRI Employer Survey online with a link at the TCACC’s Internet home page. Doug Luciani, TCACC President, extended a print and electronic newsletter invitation to Chamber members to preview PRI Employer Survey online *and* to all interested area **employers** to share their responses for

“developing programs that effectively prepare individuals to obtain and retain good jobs in our region.”

PRI Employer Survey Summary

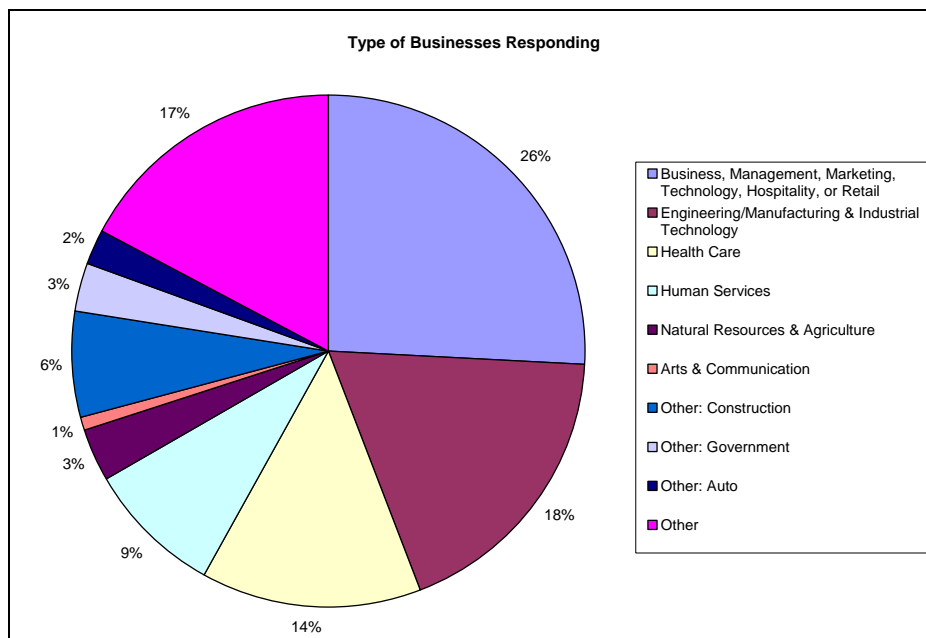
Available from March to June, 2005, the Poverty Reduction Initiative’s online Employer Survey at the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce’s (TCACC) home page was **completed by 93 employers**. The survey included this introduction and invitation:

The Poverty Reduction Initiative is committed to helping people in the five-county area (Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau) to overcome poverty. The inability to secure and keep a job is one of the major factors leading to poverty. We know that education and training are critical aspects in preparing individuals for employment that will move them out of poverty. Your responses to this survey will assist us in developing programs that effectively prepare individuals to obtain and retain good jobs in our region. Please take a few minutes to respond to the following questions.

Question 1 **Please select the type of business you represent.**
 (n = 93 responses / 100%)

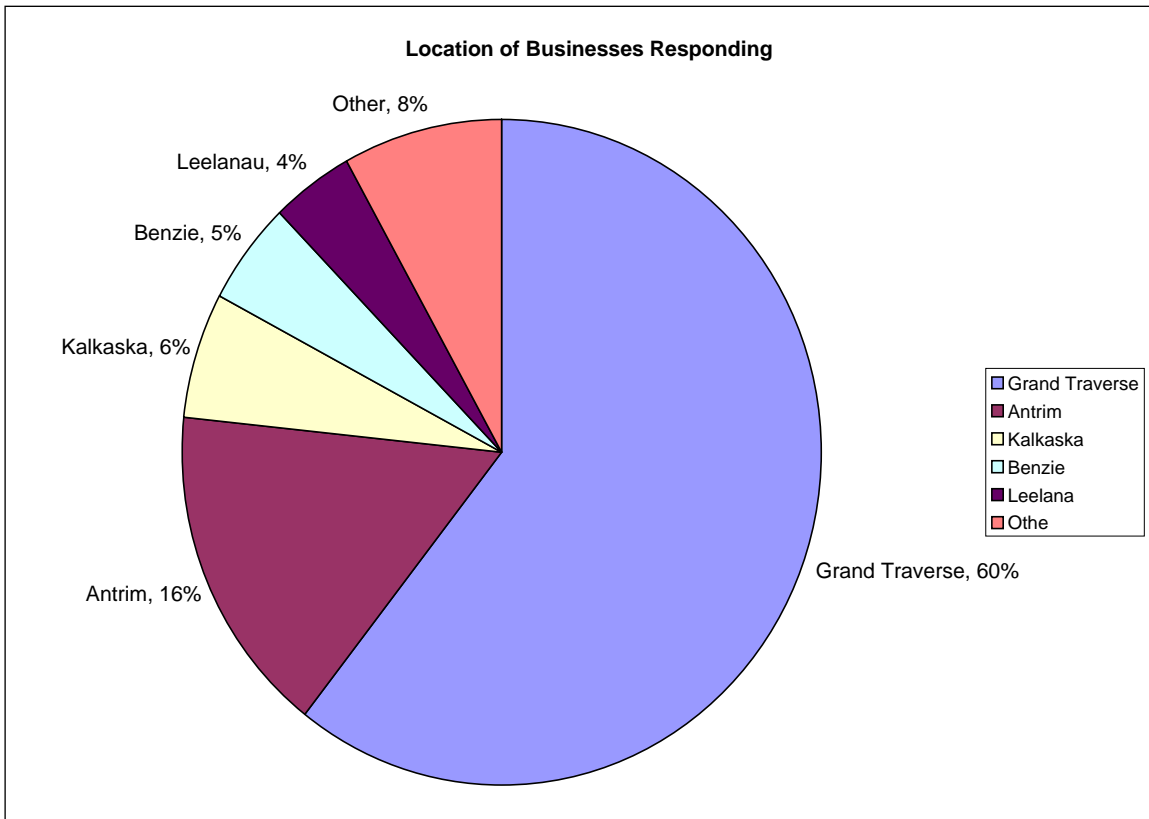
Business, Management, Marketing, Technology, Hospitality, or Retail	26%	(24 responses)
Engineering/Manufacturing & Industrial Technology	18%	(17 responses)
Health Care	14%	(13 responses)
Human Services	9%	(8 responses)
Natural Resources & Agriculture	3%	(3 responses)
Arts & Communication	1%	(1 response)
Other, Please Specify	29%	(27 responses: see list below)

digital cartography; education; automotive aftermarket-manufacturing/distributor; business; sustainable, resource conscious construction; food service; construction; employee leasing service; insurance; government agency; local government; computing consulting; cosmetologist; Chinese restaurant; government; construction related; construction; construction; auto repair; mfc, custodial, vending-employment and training; construction; transportation; retirement senior housing; excavation; full service cleaning company; utility; construction.



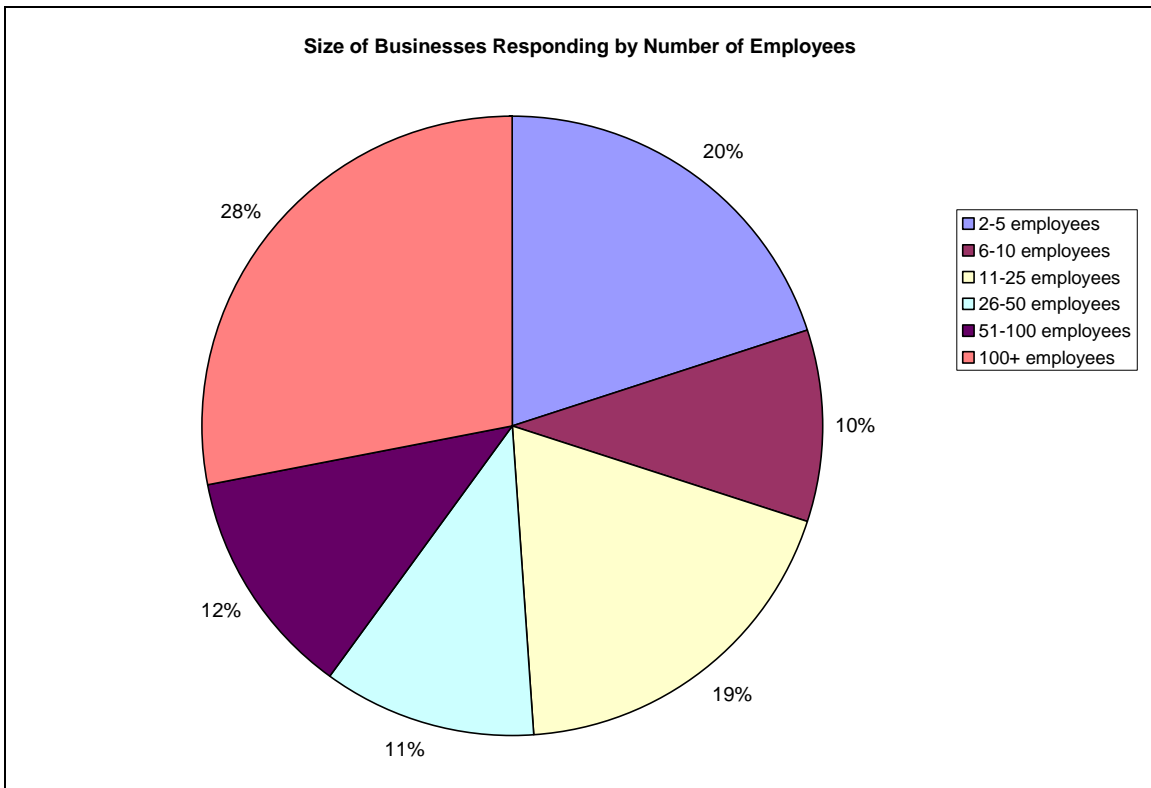
Question 2 **Please indicate the county where your business is located.**
(n = 93 responses / 100%)

Grand Traverse	60%	(56 responses)
Antrim	16%	(15 responses)
Kalkaska	6%	(6 responses)
Benzie	5%	(5 responses)
Leelanau	4%	(4 responses)
Other, Please Specify	8%	(7 responses)



Question 3 **Please indicate the number of people your business employs.**
(n = 93 responses / 100%)

2 - 5 employees	20%	(19 responses)
6 - 10 employees	10%	(9 responses)
11 - 25 employees	19%	(18 responses)
26 - 50 employees	11%	(10 responses)
51 - 100 employees	12%	(11 responses)
100 + employees	28%	(26 responses)

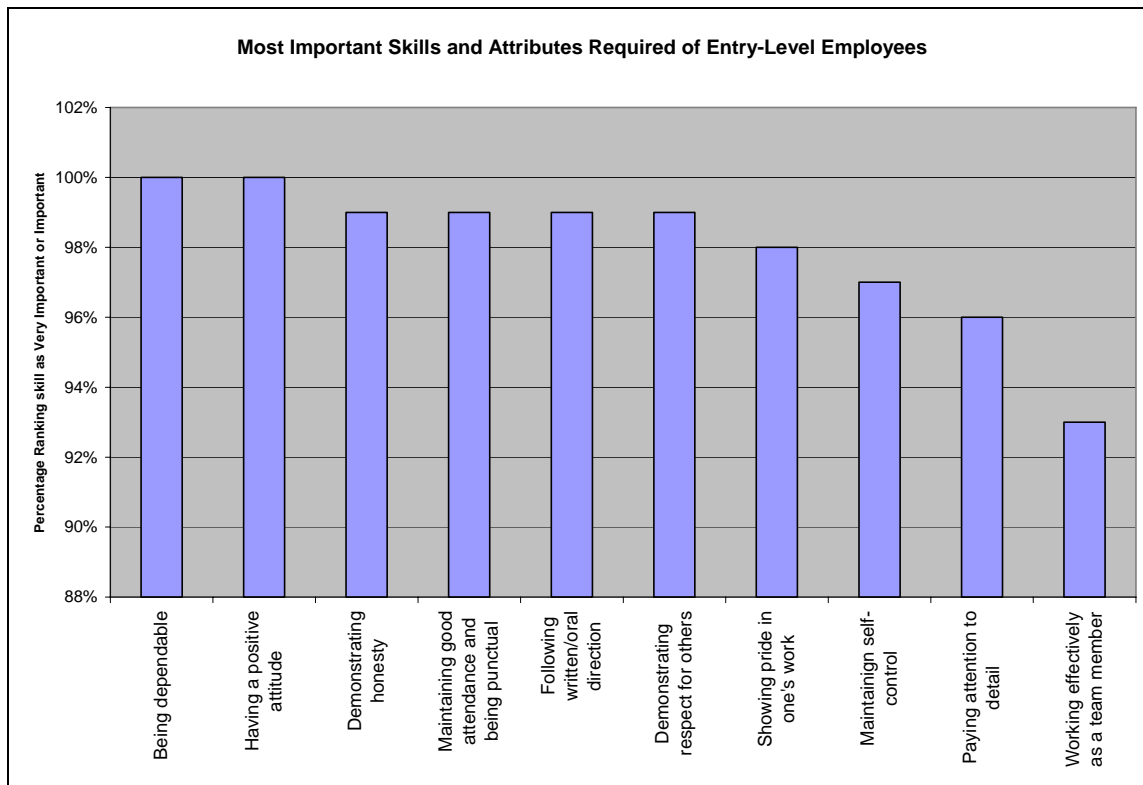


**Most Important Skills and Attributes Required for Entry-Level Employees:
Rating by ALL Employers**

Employer responses (n = 93) to Questions 4 through Question 27 are listed here in **rank order** by combining the **most important** responses: “ ‘5 - Very Important’ together with ‘4 – Important’.”

For example, Question 23 “Being dependable” was rated by *everyone -- all 93 employers (or 100%)* as either 5 - Very Important or 4 – Important.

And Question 24 “Having a positive attitude” was also rated by *everyone -- all 93 employers (or 100%)* as either 5 - Very Important or 4 – Important.



Included on the following pages for the answer to each question (Questions 4 through 27) are notes highlighting employers’ responses in **two ways**:

Type: “Type of business you represent” *

* 66 employers selected their specific **type** of business (27 employers who selected “Other” are *not* included with these highlights).

and

Size: “Number of people your business employs”

Please see the following page for *all* employers’ answers to Questions 4 to 27.

Survey **Questions 4 to 27** began with these instructions:

Please use the rating scale below to indicate the importance of the skills and attributes you require of an *entry-level employee* (**1 - Not Applicable; 2 - Unimportant; 3 - Somewhat Important; 4 - Important; 5 - Very Important**)

All employers' responses to each question are listed here in **order of most important – from highest to lowest**.

Question 23 **Being dependable** **100%** Very Important (83%) + Important

Type: Nearly all types of businesses rated “very important and important” *equally high*.
Size: Smaller employers rated “very important” *higher* than most larger employers.

Question 24 **Having a positive attitude** **100%** Very Important (61%) + Important

Type: Human Services rated “very important” *higher* than others.
Size: Nearly all larger and smaller employers rated “very important and important” *equally high*.

Question 12 **Demonstrating honesty** **99%** Very Important (90%) + Important

Type: *All* Health Care (n = 13) and *all* Natural Resources & Agriculture (n = 3) rated “very important” (100%).
Size: Nearly all smaller and larger employers rated “very important” *equally high*.

Question 13 **Maintaining good attendance and being punctual** **99%** Very Important (83%) + Important

Type: *All* Health Care (n = 13) rated “very important” (100%).
Size: Nearly all smaller and larger employers rated “very important” *equally high*.

Question 14 **Following written / oral direction** **99%** Very Important (82%) + Important

Type: *All* Engineering / Manufacturing & Industrial Technology (n = 17) rated “very important” (100%).
Size: Nearly all smaller and larger employers rated “very important” *equally high*.

Question 27 **Demonstrating respect for others** **99%** Very Important (70%) + Important

Type: Health Care rated “very important” *somewhat higher* than others.
Size: Employers with 11-25 and 26-50 employees rated “very important” *somewhat lower* than smaller and larger employers.

Question 15 **Showing pride in one's work** **98%** Very Important (72%) + Important

Type: Engineering / Manufacturing & Industrial Technology rated “very important” *somewhat higher* than others.
Size: Small employers with 6-10 employees rated “very important” *higher* than the smallest employers with 2-5 employees or larger employers with more than 10 employees.

Question 21 **Maintaining self-control** **97%** Very Important (63%) + Important

Type: Engineering / Manufacturing & Industrial Technology rated “very important” *less high* than others.
Size: Nearly all smaller and larger employers rated “very important” *equally high*.

Question 22 **Paying attention to detail** **96%** Very Important (66%) + Important

Type: Engineering / Manufacturing & Industrial Technology rated “very important” *higher* than others.

Size: Nearly all smaller and larger employers rated “very important” *equally high*.

Question 26 **Working effectively as team member** **93%** Very Important (62%) + Important

Type: Business, Management, Marketing, Technology, Hospitality & Retail rated “very important” *higher* than others.

Size: Employers with 2-5 and 11-25 employees rated “very important” *higher* than others.

Question 17 **Being self-motivated** **93%** Very Important (52%) + Important

Type: Engineering / Manufacturing & Industrial Technology *and* Health Care rated “very important” *less high* than others.

Size: Smaller employers rated “very important” *higher* than larger employers.

Question 19 **Showing flexibility** **91%** Very Important (45%) + Important

Type: Engineering / Manufacturing & Industrial Technology *and* Natural Resources & Agriculture rated “very important” *less high* than others.

Size: Smaller employers rated “very important” *higher* than larger employers.

Question 18 **Demonstrating a willingness to learn new skills** **89%** Very Important (48%) + Important

Type: Health Care rated “very important” *higher* than others.

Size: The smallest employers with 2-5 and 6-10 employees rated “very important” *higher* than larger employers.

Question 20 **Demonstrating initiative** **89%** Very Important (40%) + Important

Type: Health Care rated “very important” *somewhat higher* than others.

Size: The smallest employers with 2-5 employees rated “very important” *much higher* than larger employers.

Question 5 **Reading written materials** **88%** Very Important (60%) + Important

Type: Nearly all types of businesses rated “very important and important” *equally high*.

Size: Smaller employers with 2-5 and 6-10 employees rated “very important” *much higher* than larger employers.

Question 7 **Using English as primary language** **87%** Very Important (56%) + Important

Type: Business, Management, Marketing, Technology, Hospitality & Retail and Health Care rated “very important” *much higher* than others.

Size: Small employers with 6-10 employees rated “very important” *higher* than the smallest employers with 2-5 employees or larger employers with more than 10 employees.

Question 11 **Using job-specific skills** **85%** Very Important (41%) + Important

Type: Nearly all types of businesses rated “very important and important” *equally high*.

Size: Smaller employers with 2-5 and 6-10 employees rated “very important” *higher* than most larger employers.

Question 16 **Having appropriate personal appearance** **85%** Very Important (38%) + Important

Type: Health Care rated “very important” *higher* than others.

Size: Nearly all larger and smaller employers rated “very important” *equally high*.

Question 25 **Possessing effective oral communication skills** **83%** Very Important (35%) + Important

Type: Human Services rated “very important” *much higher* than others.

Size: Smaller employers with 2-5 and 6-10 employees rated “very important” *much higher* than larger employers.

Question 4 **Problem solving / trouble shoot skills** **82%** Very Important (45%) + Important

Type: Business, Management, Marketing, Technology, Hospitality & Retail and Arts & Communication rated “very important” *much higher* than others.

Size: The smallest employer with 2-5 employees rated “very important” *much higher* than most larger employers.

Question 8 **Providing clear written communication** **75%** Very Important (40%) + Important

Type: Natural Resources & Agriculture rated “very important” *much higher* than others.

Size: Smaller employers with 2-5 and 6-10 employees rated “very important” *much higher* than larger employers.

Question 6 **Performing basic math calculations** **69%** Very Important (32%) + Important

Type: Business, Management, Marketing, Technology, Hospitality & Retail and Engineering / Manufacturing & Industrial Technology rated “very important” *higher* than others.

Size: Smaller employers with 2-5 and 6-10 employees rated “very important” *much higher* than larger employers.

Question 10 **Using computer-related skills** **57%** Very Important (29%) + Important

Type: Business, Management, Marketing, Technology, Hospitality & Retail and Arts & Communication rated “very important” *much higher* than others.

Size: Smaller employers rated “very important” *much higher* than larger employers.

Question 9 **Using mechanical / hands-on skills** **57%** Very Important (28%) + Important

Type: Engineering / Manufacturing & Industrial Technology rated “very important” *much higher* than others; Natural Resources & Agriculture rated “unimportant” plus “somewhat important” *higher* than others.

Size: Employers with 26-50 employees rated “very important” *higher* than others.

Top Five (5) Skills and Attributes Required of an Entry-Level Employee: Employer Responses by Type of Business and Number of People Employed

Employers are listed here with their **Top Five (5) answers** to Questions 4 to 27 in response to **5 - Very Important** (the highest ranking possible from the survey).

The Top Five (5) employer responses are presented in **two ways**:

- Type:** (Question 1) **“type of business you represent”**
66 responses; not including “Other, Please specify” (n = 27);
- and*
- Size:** (Question 3) **“number of people your business employs”**
66 responses; not including “Other, Please specify” (n = 27).

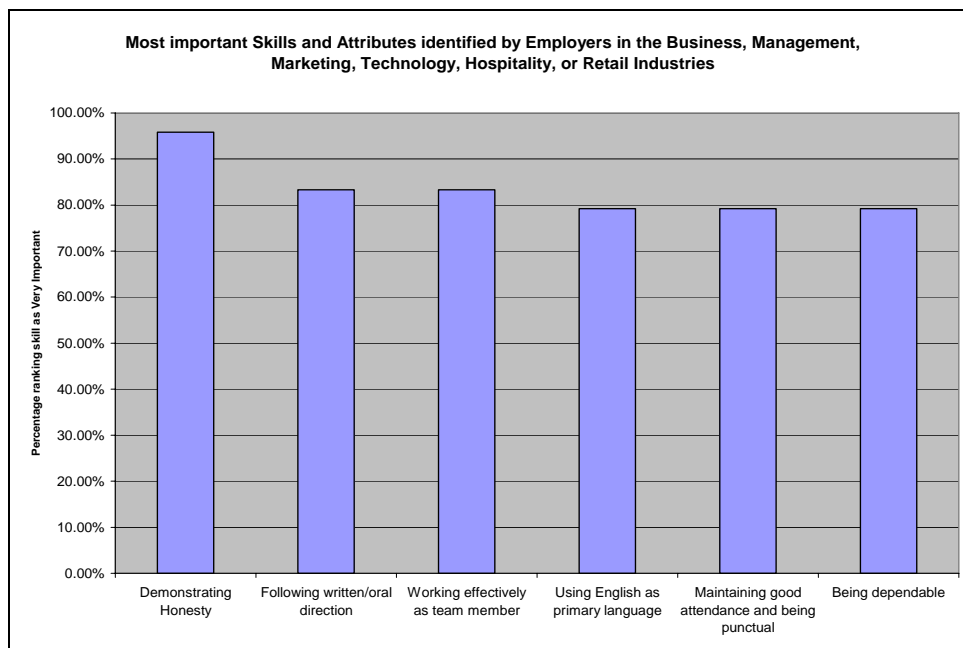
Questions 4 to 27 began with these instructions:

Please use the rating scale below to indicate the importance of the skills and attributes you *require of an entry-level employee* (1 - Not Applicable; 2 - Unimportant; 3 - Somewhat Important; 4 - Important; or **5 - Very Important**)

Top Five (5) by Type of Business

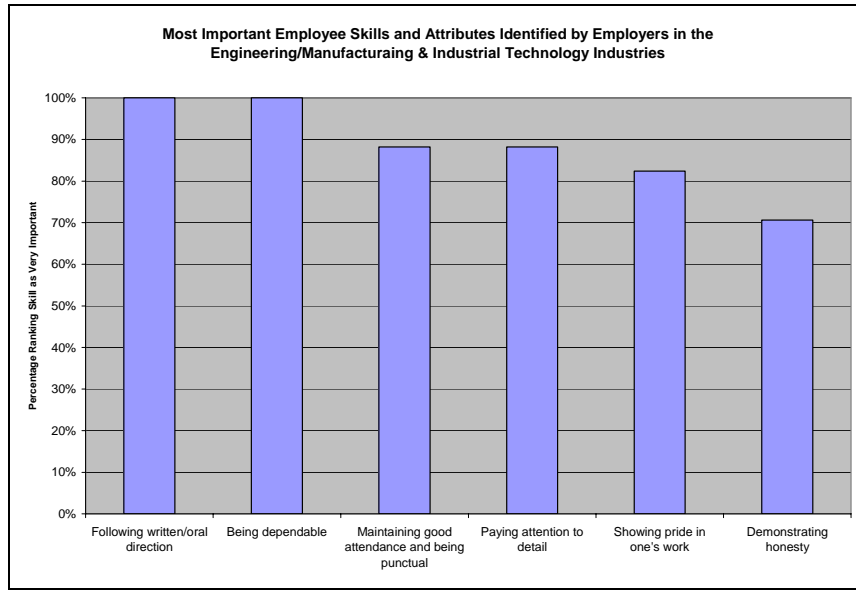
Business, Management, Marketing, Technology, Hospitality, or Retail (n = 24)

- #1** 95.8% **Demonstrating honesty** (Question 12)
- #2** 83.3% (tie) **Following written / oral direction** (Question 14)
Working effectively as team member (Question 26)
- #3** 79.2% (tie) **Using English as primary language** (Question 7)
Maintaining good attendance and being punctual (Question 13)
Being dependable (Question 23)



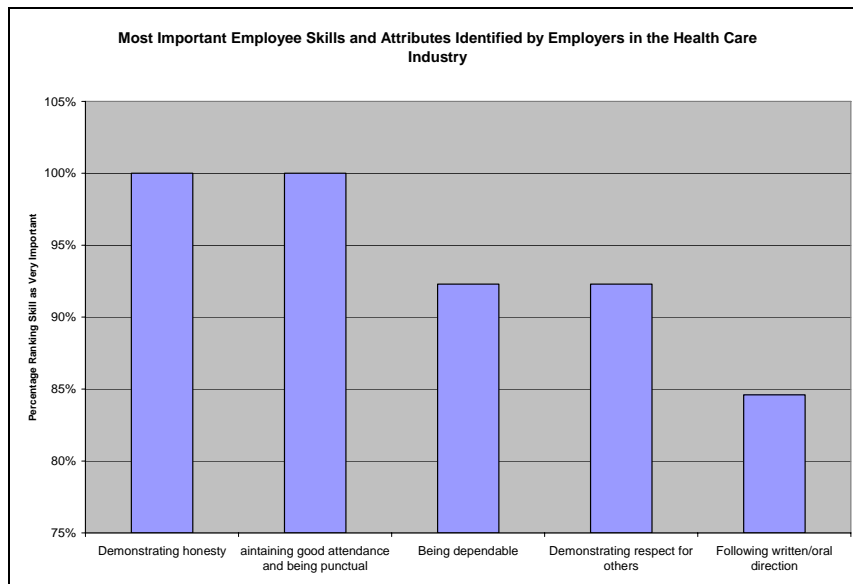
Engineering / Manufacturing & Industrial Technology (n = 17)

- #1** 100% (tie) **Following written / oral direction** (Question 14)
Being dependable (Question 23)
- #2** 88.2% (tie) **Maintaining good attendance and being punctual** (Question 13)
Paying attention to detail (Question 22)
- #3** 82.4% **Showing pride in one's work** (Question 15)
- #4** 70.6% **Demonstrating honesty** (Question 12)



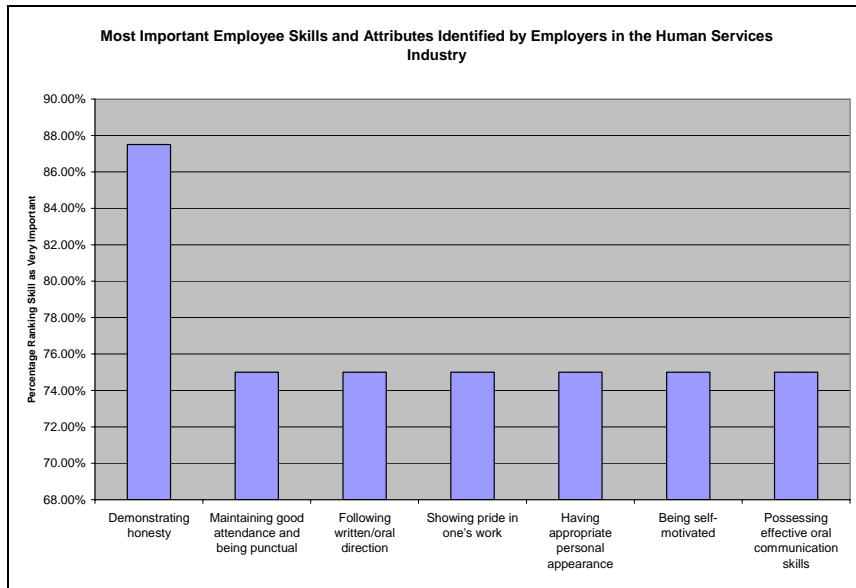
Health Care (n = 13)

- #1** 100% (tie) **Demonstrating honesty** (Question 12)
Maintaining good attendance and being punctual (Question 13)
- #2** 92.3% (tie) **Being dependable** (Question 23)
Demonstrating respect for others (Question 27)
- #3** 84.6% **Following written / oral direction** (Question 14)



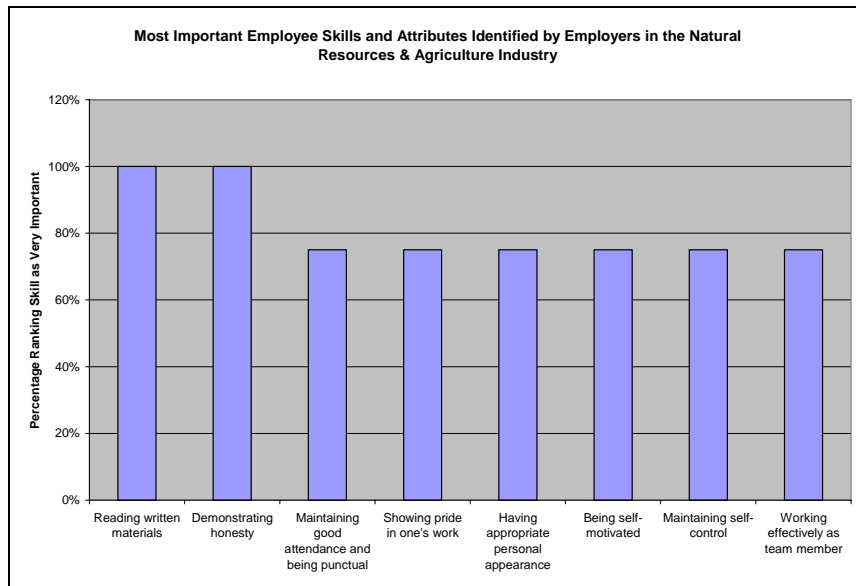
Human Services (n = 8)

- #1 87.5% Demonstrating honesty (Question 12)**
- #2 75.0% (tie) Maintaining good attendance and being punctual (Question 13)**
- Following written / oral direction (Question 14)**
- Showing pride in one's work (Question 15)**
- Having appropriate personal appearance (Question 16)**
- Being self-motivated (Question 17)**
- Possessing effective oral communication skills (Question 25)**



Natural Resources & Agriculture (n = 3)

- #1** 100% (tie) **Reading written materials** (Question 5)
Demonstrating honesty (Question 12)
- #2** 75.0% (tie) **Maintaining good attendance and being punctual** (Question 13)
Showing pride in one’s work (Question 15)
Having appropriate personal appearance (Question 16)
Being self-motivated (Question 17)
Maintaining self-control (Question 21)
Working effectively as team member (Question 26)



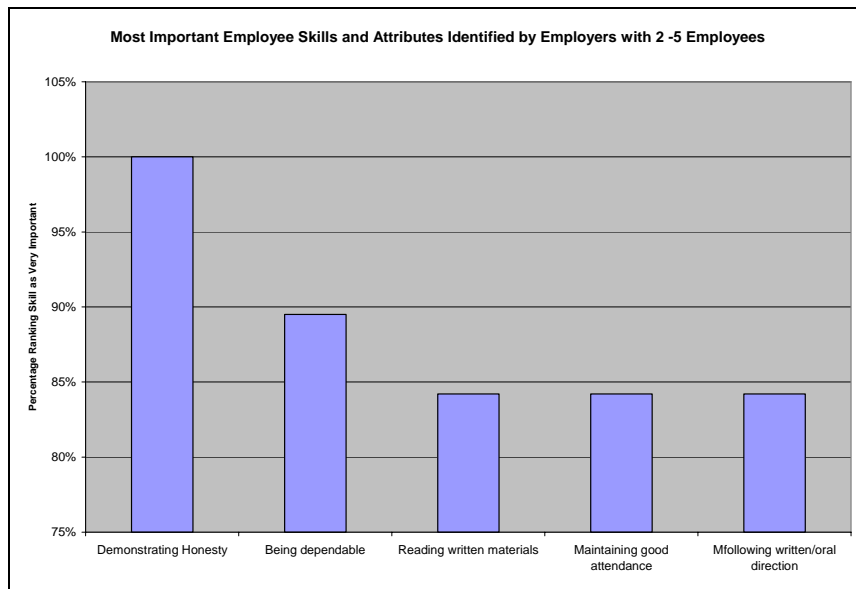
Arts & Communication (n = 1)

- #1** 100% (tie) **Problem solving / trouble shoot skills** (Question 4)
Reading written materials (Question 5)
Performing basic math calculations (Question 6)
Using English as primary language (Question 7)
Providing clear written communication (Question 8)
Using computer-related skills (Question 10)
Demonstrating honesty (Question 12)
Maintaining good attendance and being punctual (Question 13)
Following written / oral direction (Question 14)
Showing pride in one’s work (Question 15)
Being self-motivated (Question 17)
Demonstrating initiative (Question 20)
Being dependable (Question 23)
Having a positive attitude (Question 24)

Top Five (5) by Number of People Employed

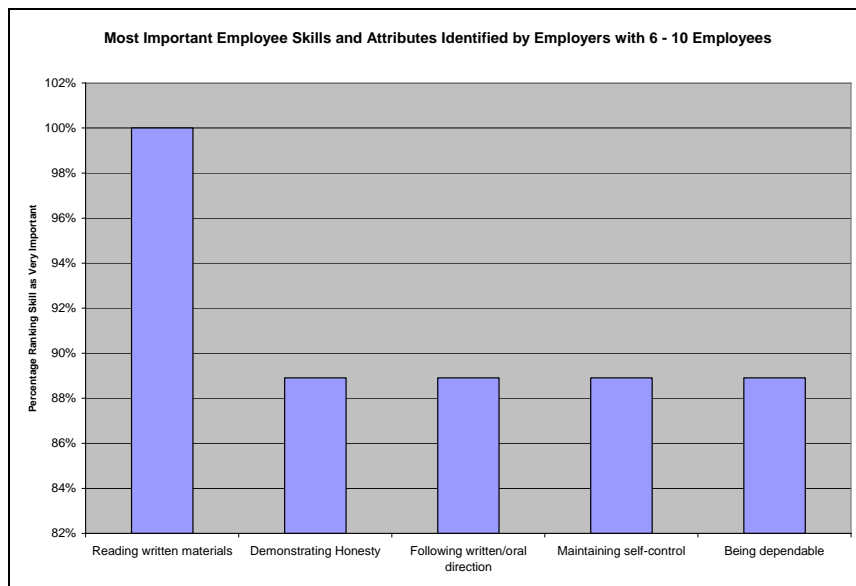
2 - 5 employees (n = 19)

- #1 100% **Demonstrating honesty** (Question 12)
- #2 89.5% **Being dependable** (Question 23)
- #3 84.2% (tie) **Reading written materials** (Question 5)
- Maintaining good attendance and being punctual** (Question 13)
- Following written / oral direction** (Question 14)



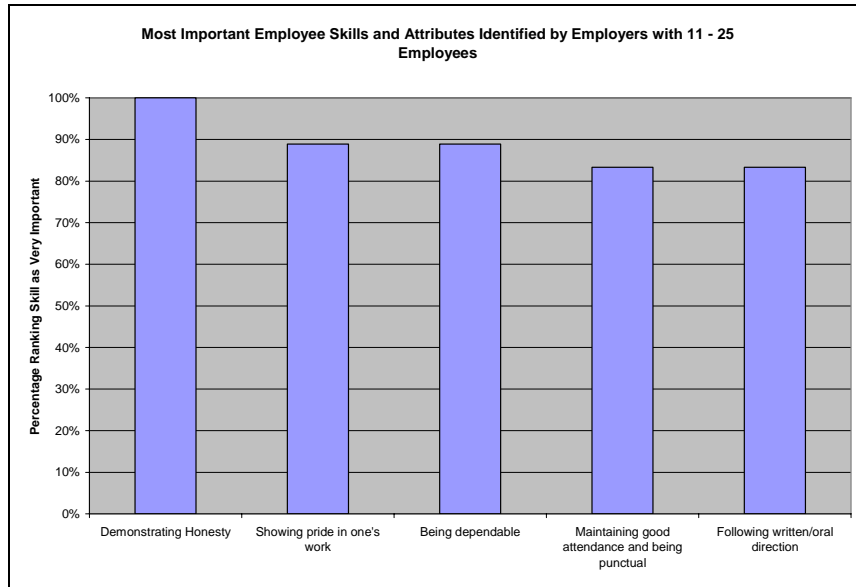
6 - 10 employees (n = 9)

- #1 100% **Reading written materials** (Question 5)
- #2 88.9% (tie) **Demonstrating honesty** (Question 12)
- Following written / oral direction** (Question 14)
- Maintaining self-control** (Question 21)
- Being dependable** (Question 23)



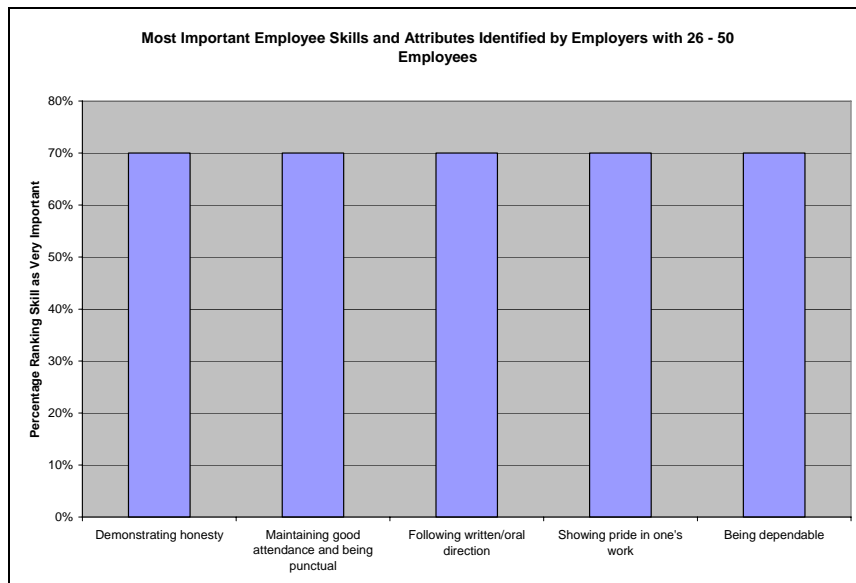
11 - 25 employees (n = 18)

- #1** 100% **Demonstrating honesty** (Question 12)
- #2** 88.9% (tie) **Showing pride in one's work** (Question 15)
Being dependable (Question 23)
- #3** 83.3% (tie) **Maintaining good attendance and being punctual** (Question 13)
Following written / oral direction (Question 14)



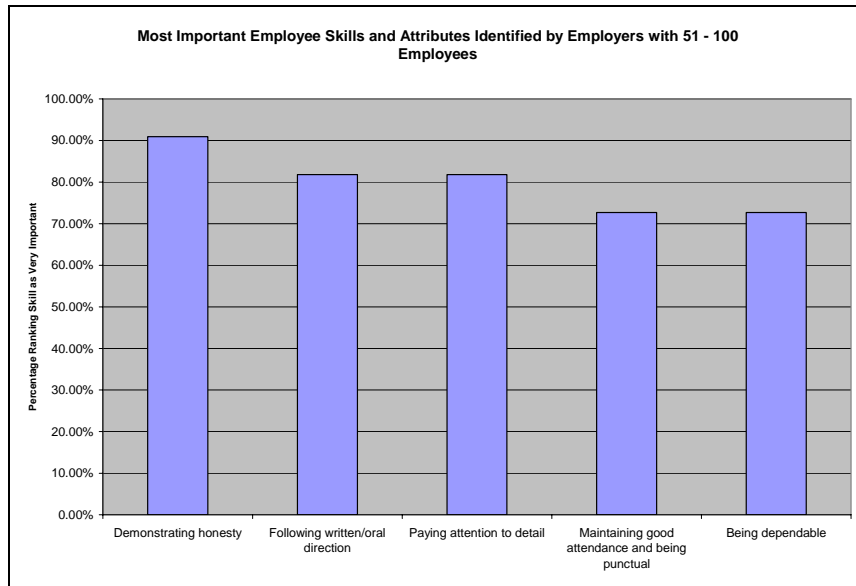
26 - 50 employees (n = 10)

- #1** 70.0% (tie) **Demonstrating honesty** (Question 12)
Maintaining good attendance and being punctual (Question 13)
Following written / oral direction (Question 14)
Showing pride in one's work (Question 15)
Being dependable (Question 23)



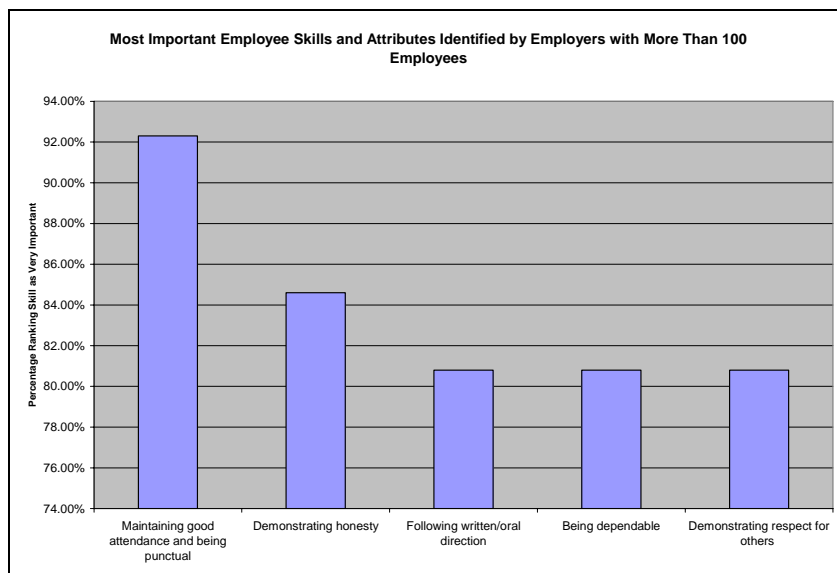
51 - 100 employees (n = 11)

- #1** 90.9% **Demonstrating honesty** (Question 12)
- #2** 81.8% (tie) **Following written / oral direction** (Question 14)
Paying attention to detail (Question 22)
- #3** 72.7% (tie) **Maintaining good attendance and being punctual** (Question 13)
Being dependable (Question 23)



100 + employees (n = 26)

- #1** 92.3% **Maintaining good attendance and being punctual** (Question 13)
- #2** 84.6% **Demonstrating honesty** (Question 12)
- #3** 80.8% (tie) **Following written / oral direction** (Question 14)
Being dependable (Question 23)
Demonstrating respect for others (Question 27)



Question 28 Reasons for Terminating Employees During the Probationary Period

The survey's concluding question included these instructions and answer sets (common reasons):

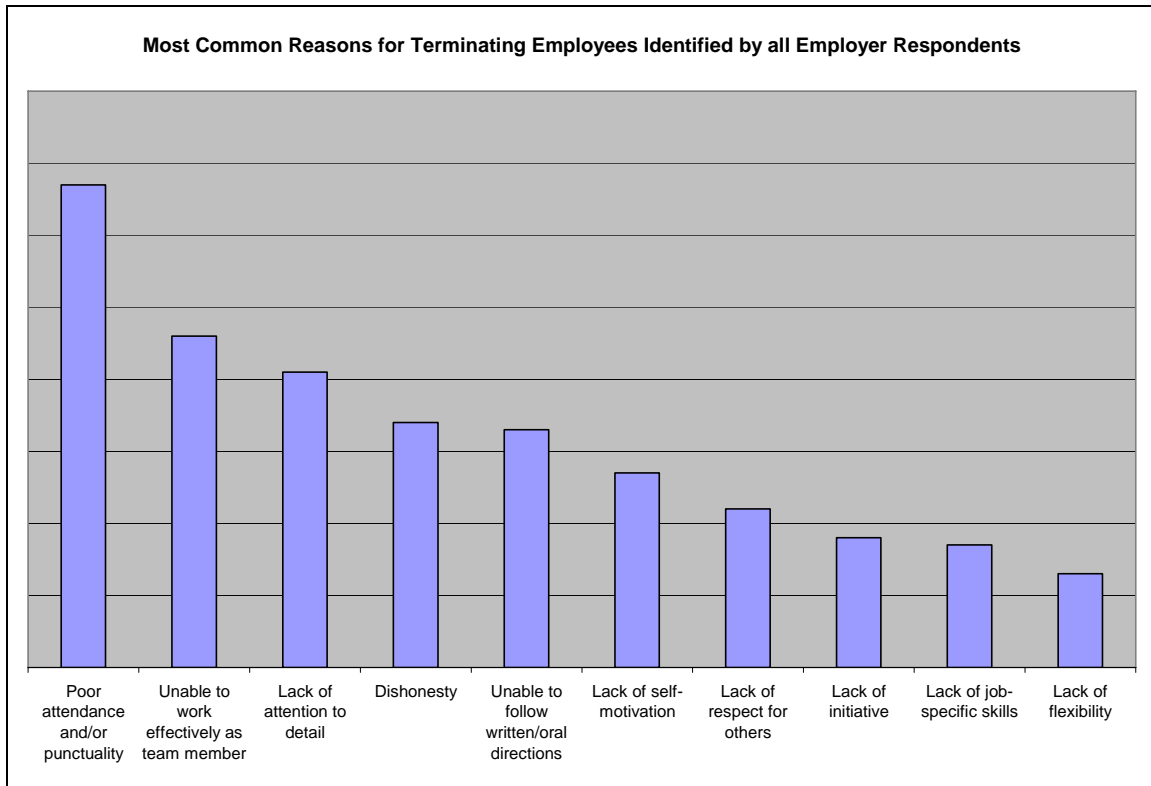
From the following list please indicate the 5 most common reasons for terminating employees from your company during the probationary period. (Lack of critical thinking skills; Unable to read written materials at level required; Unable to perform required basic math calculations; Lack of English proficiency; Lack of written communication skills; Lack of mechanical ability; Lack of computer related skills; Lack of job specific skills; Dishonesty; Poor attendance and/or punctuality; Unable to follow written/oral directions; Lacking pride in work; Inappropriate personal appearance; Lack of self-motivation; Unwilling to learn new skills; Lack of flexibility; Lack of initiative; Lack of self-control; Poor attention to detail; Lack of oral communication skills; Unable to work effectively as team member; Lack of respect for others)

Employer responses (n = 93 responses with 91 usable answers / 98%) to Question 28 are listed here in **rank order** by the number of times each “reasons for terminating employees” was stated:

Poor attendance and/or punctuality	n = 67
Unable to work effectively as team member	n = 46
Lack of attention to detail	n = 41
Dishonesty	n = 34
Unable to follow written/oral directions	n = 33
Lack of self-motivation	n = 27
Lack of respect for others	n = 22
Lack of initiative	n = 18
Lack of job specific skills	n = 17
Lack of flexibility	n = 13
Lack of pride in work	n = 12
Unwilling to learn new skills	n = 9
Inappropriate personal appearance	n = 8
Lack of oral communication skills	n = 8
Unable to perform required basic math calculations	n = 7
Lack of critical thinking skills	n = 7
Lack of written communication skills	n = 7
Lack of mechanical ability	n = 7
Lack of computer related skills	n = 7
Lack of self-control	n = 6
Unable to read written materials at level required	n = 5
Poor attention to detail	n = 3
Lack of English proficiency	n = 2

Additional reasons (not from common reasons question set):

Not willing to help business to grow	n = 1
No work ethic	n = 1
Unfocused	n = 1
Alcohol and drug use	n = 1
We've never terminated an employee	n = 4



Acknowledgements: The data tables and graphs included in this report were specially prepared by the staff at the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments. Additional editorial review and report suggestions were contributed by the staff at the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments, and Karen Anderson and Jim Rowlett, on behalf of the Traverse Bay Area Poverty Reduction Initiative.

We invite you to take the *next step...*

Whether you are a job seeker, already employed, or an employer, learn more about the many Traverse Bay area resources, services, and training opportunities available for job success.

For up-to-date information, please visit us on the web at:

www.TraverseBayPRI.org

The Poverty Reduction Initiative **thanks you** for taking time to review this report *and* for your interest in our community partnerships in Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska and Leelanau Counties.