

## Recruiting for Growing Skill Gaps

By Karen Jennings

According to a recent National Employers Skills Survey (July 2006), One in five workplaces reports 'skill gaps', with an estimated 7% of employees in Canada not fully proficient at their jobs; larger establishments have more problems finding and keeping the skills they need, even though they offer more training on- and off-the-job.

<b>HARDEST SKILLS TO FIND ...</b> (% of employers citing)		<b>... AND WHY</b>	
<b>1 Technical, practical</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>1 Lack required skills</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>2 Communication</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>2 Not interested enough</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>3 Customer handling</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>3 Not enough applicants</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>4 Team working</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>4 Poor terms, conditions</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>5 Problem solving</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>5 Lack work experience</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>6 Literacy</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>6 Lack right qualifications</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>7 Numeracy</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>7 Lack right attitude</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>8 Management ability</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>8 Other hirers compete</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>9 Administration</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9 Won't do shift work</b>	<b>11</b>
Sample: Regionally Representative Sample of 27,127 establishments,			

### KEY FINDINGS

- The plumber premium: skill shortage is a factor in over half of vacancies in skilled trades (like gas and electric), and one-third of machinist vacancies; but only in 25% of managerial, 28% of professional vacancies.
- Can't do, won't do: lack of applicants with required skills is main cause of hard-to-fill vacancies; next biggest is lack of interest among those who do have relevant skills
- Training pays : proportion of vacancies unfilled due to skill shortage fell to 17% in 2004, from 21% in 2001, despite proportion of plants with vacancies rising to 18% from 14%; proportion with hard-to-fill vacancies stable at 8%, as training stepped up