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# **The 50+ Workforce: An AARP Wyoming Survey of Businesses**

January 2006



# **The 50+ Workforce: An AARP Wyoming Survey of Businesses**

**Report Prepared by Jennifer H. Sauer**

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## Highlights

- At least eight in ten of the Wyoming businesses surveyed say that retaining skilled employees (95%), providing competitive wages (81%), recruiting skilled employees (80%), and training the current workforce (79%) are extremely or very important issues to them.
- Half (50%) of all businesses view addressing the needs of an aging workforce as an extremely or very important workforce issue.
- More than half (56%) of surveyed businesses say it is harder now than five years ago for them to find qualified applicants for non-management/non-supervisory positions, and almost half say it is harder now than in the past to find qualified applicants for supervisory positions (48%) or management positions (46%).
- Over half of the Wyoming businesses surveyed think a shortage of qualified workers is extremely (29%) or very likely (25%) to occur in the next five years, and another quarter think it is somewhat likely (24%).
- Most businesses say they experience a loss of institutional knowledge when an employee retires or leaves the organization (major loss: 55%; minor loss: 28%), assign a high level of importance to retaining that knowledge (Extremely important: 31%; Very important: 39%), and many have implemented a process to preserve it and pass it on (51%).
- The important qualities that Wyoming businesses want in employees are very similar to the qualities older employees possess: *have a commitment to doing quality work; are someone you can count on in a crisis; are customer service oriented; have a solid, reliable performance record; have the ability to get along with co-workers.*
- Half (50%) of all Wyoming businesses report having at least one of the eight workforce strategies tested *currently* in place to help older employees work past the traditional retirement age. While one-third (33%) *are planning* to implement at least one of those approaches to keep older workers working, most (78%) Wyoming businesses say they *would consider* implementing at least one of the strategies. Seven in ten (70%), however, *would consider* actually implementing up to six of the eight strategies tested in the survey to help older employees continue working longer.
- More than four in ten (45%) businesses report having sought information on at least one of the older worker issues listed in the survey and many have turned to a variety of state and national resources for older worker information.

## Background

For decades now, the Bureau of Labor Statistics has been projecting two major shifts in workforce demographics that would prompt many American businesses to face unique human resource challenges – a substantial aging of the workforce and an ensuing cohort of fewer younger workers. Today, the growth and demographic shifts generated by the Baby Boom population of more than 76 million (those born between 1946 and 1964) is being closely observed by American businesses. While the proportion of workers ages 25 to 44 will decrease by about seven percent between 1998 and 2008, those ages 45 and older will increase from 33 percent to 40 percent during the same time period.<sup>1</sup> Included in this older cohort are baby boomers, who turn 60 in 2006 and now represent 40 percent of the U.S. workforce, and in the next five years, will reach the age of 65.<sup>2,3</sup> However, rather than retire, they show a strong indication of choosing to continue to work. Indeed, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that by 2012, almost two-thirds of Americans ages 55 and older will be working and they will constitute one fifth of the U.S. labor force. Additionally, the growth rate of workers ages 65 to 74 has been increasing since 1982 and is projected to increase another 3.2 percent up to 23.6 percent between 2000 and 2012.<sup>4</sup>

There are many factors contributing to the increasing number of older workers in the United States including the prohibition of mandatory retirement, changes to Social Security, and the erosion of pension and retiree health benefits.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, in a recent national study conducted by AARP, respondents ages 50 and older said they plan to continue working in retirement out of financial necessity, the need for health benefits, enjoyment of the job, staying mentally and physically active, and quite simply, the need to feel productive.<sup>6</sup>

So faced with an abundant potential 50+ workforce and a smaller pool of younger workers following close behind, American businesses, perhaps small firms in particular, could be confronted with the possibility of losing important organizational knowledge with every worker who leaves the company. If steps aren't taken, critical institutional knowledge such as best practices, corporate networks, client relationships, effective working teams, as well as the cultural knowledge of “how things are done” could be lost.<sup>7</sup> Such losses could negatively affect the performance of an organization and possibly make it vulnerable to increased competition.

In response to the national trend, many states are assessing the idiosyncratic effects of an aging workforce on their own local industries and businesses and some are beginning to develop plans to deal with it. Wyoming is one of those states. In 2000, Wyoming ranked 38<sup>th</sup> in the nation for percent of population age 65 and older. However, the U.S. Census Bureau projects

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<sup>1</sup> DeLong, D. (2004) *Lost Knowledge: Confronting the Threat of an Aging Workforce*. Oxford University Press, Inc.

<sup>2</sup> Bell, A. (2005) *To Raise Boomer Retention, Firms May Have To Update Benefits*. National Underwriter Company, Life and Health-Financial Services Edition.

<sup>3</sup> Current Population Survey, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Toosi, M. (February 2004) *Labor Force Projections to 2012: The Graying of the U.S. Workforce*. Monthly Labor Review, p. 37, 43.

<sup>5</sup> Rix, S. *Aging and Work – A View From the United States*. Washington, D.C: AARP (2004), p. 2,3.

<sup>6</sup> Brown, S.K. (2003) *Staying Ahead of the Curve 2003: The AARP Working in Retirement Study*. Washington, DC: AARP, p. 20

<sup>7</sup> DeLong, D. (2004) *Lost Knowledge: Confronting the Threat of an Aging Workforce*. Oxford University Press, Inc. , p. 20-25.

that by 2010 Wyoming will be ranked 17<sup>th</sup> with 14 percent of their population 65 and older, and as the Baby Boom generation ages, it is estimated that by 2030 Wyoming will be ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> only to Florida and Maine with more than 25 percent of its residents age 65 plus.<sup>8</sup> Today, workers age 65 or older already make up one-quarter of the state's workforce and the boomers constitute about one-third of the state's population. Combined with a steady out-migration of young people from the state, the likelihood of future labor shortages in Wyoming becomes more probable.<sup>9,10</sup>

Adding to Wyoming's unique demographic trends has been the dominance of small businesses in the state's economy. In Wyoming, small businesses (defined as those with fewer than 500 employees) account for most employment in the state where nearly two-thirds of this state's businesses employ fewer than 10 workers.<sup>11,12</sup> Unlike their larger counterparts, smaller firms have greater challenges in providing retirement health benefits, productivity incentives, training programs – all important requirements for an organization trying to retain or attract skilled employees.

## **Purpose of Survey**

To better understand the extent to which employers in Wyoming are implementing or considering implementing approaches to recruit or keep older workers and retain organizational knowledge, AARP Wyoming and Governor Dave Freudenthal jointly commissioned a survey of employers in the state. This survey measures the reported likelihood of companies facing a worker shortage, the difficulty filling certain jobs or positions, the relative importance of certain employee qualities, and the degree to which older employees possess those important worker qualities. In addition, the survey asks employers about their approaches to keeping older workers, and where they go for information on issues affecting older workers. This mail survey was conducted from July through October, 2005. A random statewide sample of 5,000 businesses with three or more employees was drawn and 1,075 surveys were returned and useable for analysis. This sample yielded a 31 percent response rate.

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<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Interim State Population Projections, 2005. Ranking of States by Projected Percent of Population age 65 and Older: 2000, 2010, and 2030.

<sup>9</sup> Jones, S.D. (2004) *Age as a Predictor of Workforce Retention*. Wyoming Labor Force Trends, Vol. 41, No. 8, p. 1, 2.

<sup>10</sup> (2004) *Ahead of the Curve, Economic Planning for Wyoming's Retirement Boom*. A Report by Governor Freudenthal and AARP Wyoming. AARP Wyoming (introduction).

<sup>11</sup> (2004) U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy, *Small Business Profile: Wyoming*. p. 1.

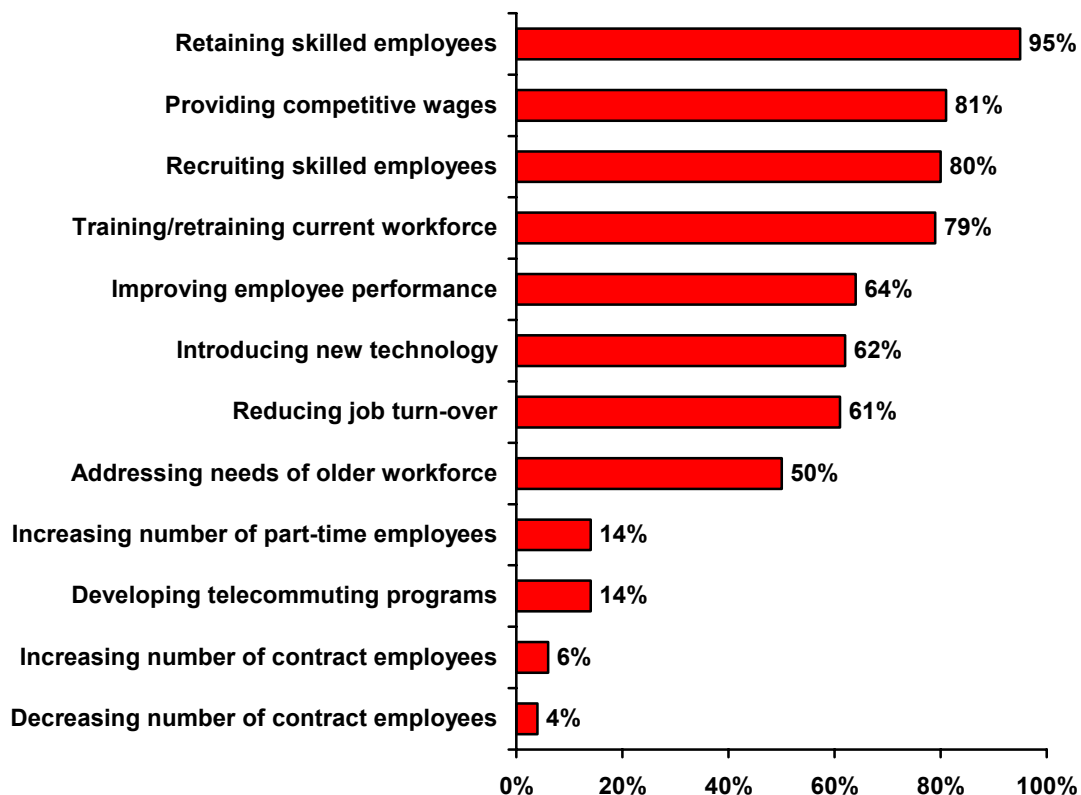
<sup>12</sup> (2005) U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy, *Small Business Profile: Wyoming*. p. 1.

## Survey Findings

### Important Workforce Issues

Data from this survey show that hiring and keeping skilled employees is paramount for businesses in Wyoming – no less than eight in ten respondents say that recruiting and retaining skilled employees is extremely or very important to them as is providing competitive wages and training or retraining opportunities. Roughly six in ten businesses say that other workforce retention strategies such as developing programs to improve employee performance, introducing new technology into the workplace, or keeping job turn-over to a minimum, are very/extremely important organizational issues to them. Particularly noteworthy is that addressing the needs of an aging workforce is vital to many businesses in Wyoming – half of all surveyed say this is an extremely or very important issue. Finally, few businesses in Wyoming consider alternative job arrangements, such as telecommuting or adjusting the number of contract employees, to be extremely or very important organizational issues.

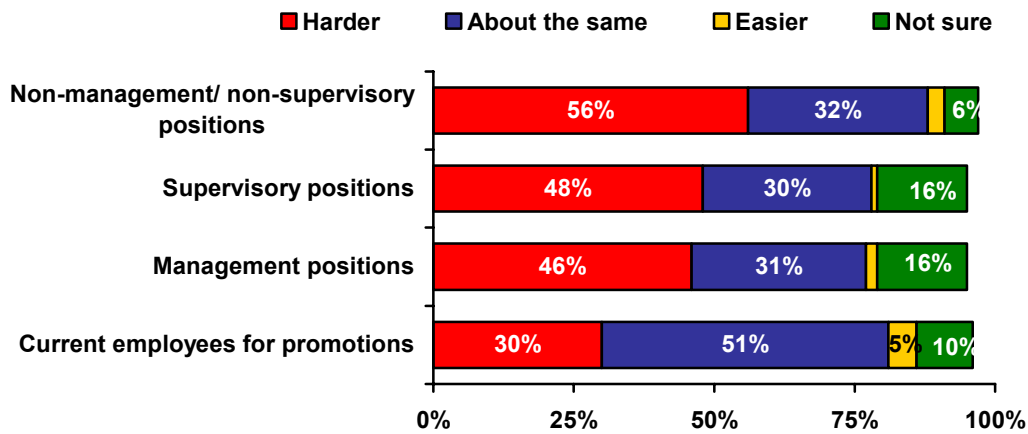
**Extremely/Very Important Organizational Workforce Issues  
(n=1,075)**



## Availability of Qualified Workers

The importance of recruiting and retaining skilled employees becomes more apparent as Wyoming businesses report increasing difficulty finding qualified job applicants today as compared to five years ago. Over half of those surveyed say it is harder for them to find qualified applicants for non-management or non-supervisory positions now than it was five years ago, and just over forty percent say it has become more difficult to find qualified supervisory and management applicants. Moreover, almost a third of the businesses say it is harder now than five years ago to find current employees who would qualify for promotions or more job responsibility. Though many businesses do not think that the search for qualified job applicants has changed much over the past five years, only five percent or less of the businesses surveyed say finding capable workers is actually easier now than a few years ago.

**Finding Qualified Applicants Today Compared to Five Years Ago\***  
(n=1,075)

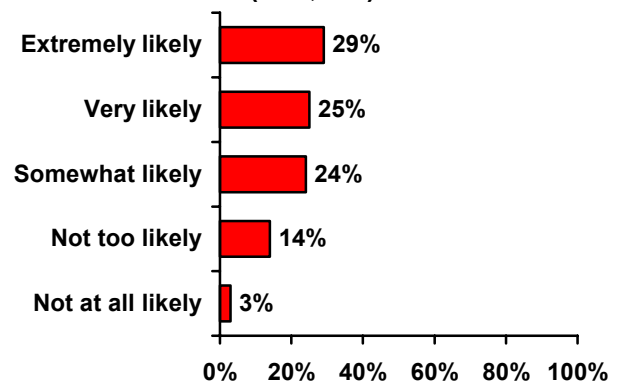


\*Blanks indicate less than 5 percent.

## The Likelihood of a Future Shortage of Qualified Workers

While finding qualified applicants has been an increasing struggle for many Wyoming businesses in the past, the data indicate that this issue may also be a concern for them in the near future. Over half of the businesses surveyed report it is extremely or very likely that their organization will face a shortage of qualified workers in the next five years, and another quarter think it is somewhat likely. Only about one in seven report a labor shortage is not too likely to affect their organization.

**Perceived Likelihood of Qualified Worker Shortage in Next Five Years**  
(n=1,075)

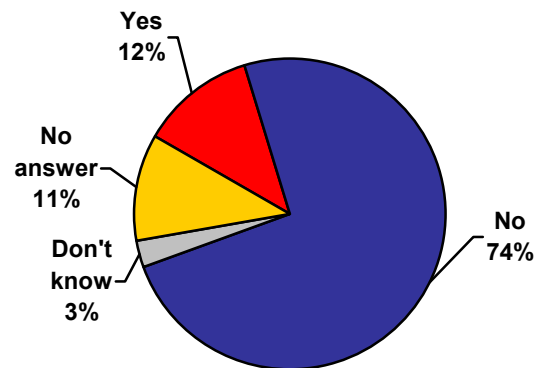


## Preparedness for Potential Labor Shortage Due to Baby Boomer Retirements

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of workers between the ages 25 and 54 will increase by only 5 percent between 2001 and 2010, but the number of workers age 55 and older – primarily the Baby Boom generation – will increase 46.6 percent.<sup>13</sup> This demographic trend has many concerned about the impact of a potential worker shortage on employers and business if boomers actually retire in great numbers at the expected traditional retirement age.

As in other states, few businesses in Wyoming have taken steps to prepare for this possibility.<sup>10,14,15,16</sup> A little more than one in ten responding businesses say they have taken measures to prepare for a potential labor shortage as a result of baby boomers retiring, but two-thirds of them (67%) have taken at least half of the 14 steps tested in the survey.<sup>17</sup> Among those who report they have prepared their organization for a potential labor shortage, roughly one-third say they have indeed hired older employees and rehired retired employees (see Annotated Questionnaire, Question 8).

**Prepared for Baby-Boom Retirements  
(n=1,074)**



<sup>13</sup> Collison, J. (2003) *Older Workers Survey*. SHRM/NOWCC/CED, p. viii.

<sup>14</sup> Cummins, R. (2004) *When the Boom Drops: A Survey of Virginia Businesses on Older Workers*. AARP, p. 11.

<sup>15</sup> Cummins, R. (2005) *Putting Aging Workforce on Employment Planning Radar: Results from an AARP/Florida Trend Survey*. AARP, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> Nelson, B. and Bridges, K. (2005) *New York Businesses and Older Employees: A Focus on New York Employers*. AARP, p. 12.

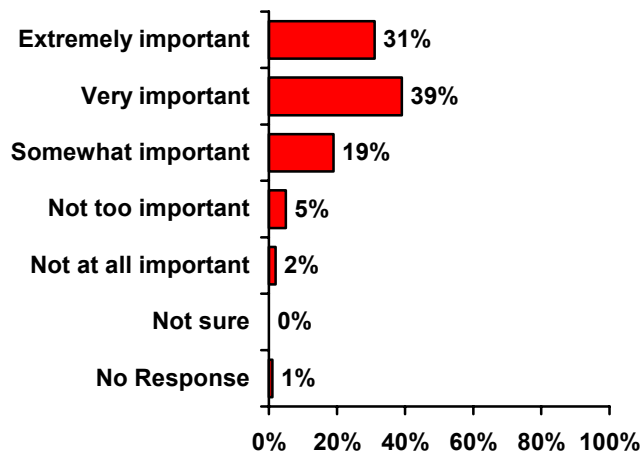
<sup>17</sup> Derived from performing a count of all respondents who said 'yes' to the 14 possible steps tested in survey question 8.

## Value of Organizational Knowledge Retention

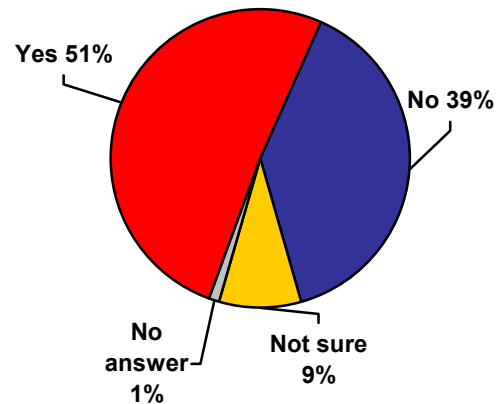
When workers leave or retire from an organization, they take with them valuable knowledge of instruction, experience, and cultural nuances gained while on the job. Unless an organization has a process or strategies in place to preserve worker knowledge, its loss can negatively affect the organization's capacity to innovate and operate efficiently, and may even increase its vulnerability to competition.<sup>18</sup>

Wyoming businesses understand this – most say they experience a loss of knowledge when an employee retires or leaves the organization (major loss: 55%; minor loss: 28%. See Appendix A, Question 9). So it is not surprising that for the majority of them, tapping the institutional knowledge of departing employees is extremely or very important, and that over half have a process in place for employees to contribute their knowledge and experience gained on the job *after* they leave.

**Importance of Retaining Organizational Knowledge**  
(n=1,075)



**Process To Retain Knowledge/Experience of Retired Employees**  
(n=1,075)



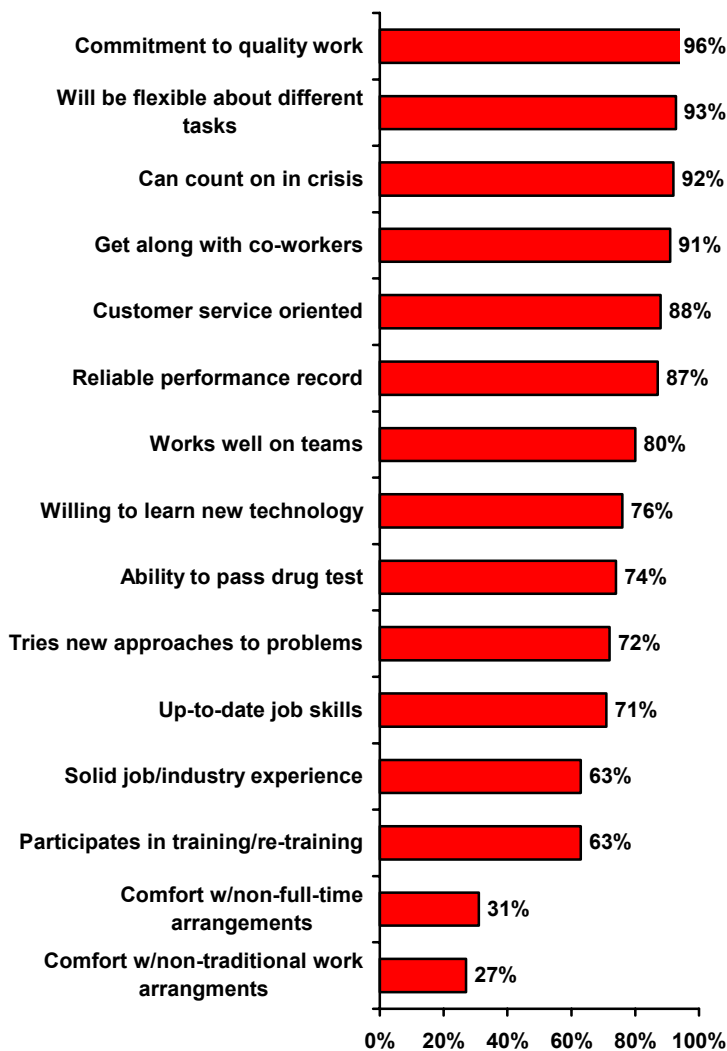
<sup>18</sup> Ibid. DeLong, D. *Lost Knowledge: Confronting the Threat of an Aging Workforce*. Oxford University Press, Inc. (2004).

## Employers in Wyoming Value Older Workers

As the first of the 76 million plus baby boomers reach traditional retirement age in the next 5-6 years, many will opt to stay in the workforce well beyond that.<sup>19</sup> In a recent survey of AARP members in Wyoming, over two-thirds of those currently working (68%) said they were very likely to put off retirement as long as possible or not retire at all.<sup>20</sup> Their continued participation may help employers avert a serious gap of available skilled workers.

When comparing the qualities employers want in a worker to those that older employees possess, it becomes apparent that many of the top qualities are shared. Wyoming businesses believe older workers possess five of the top six: *Commitment to doing quality work; Someone you can count on in a crisis; Customer service oriented; A solid, reliable performance record; Ability to get along with co-workers.*

**Top-Rated Employee Qualities:  
Extremely/Very Important to Possess  
(n=1,075)**



**Top-Rated Qualities: Older Workers  
Rated Very Good/Good  
(n=1,075)**



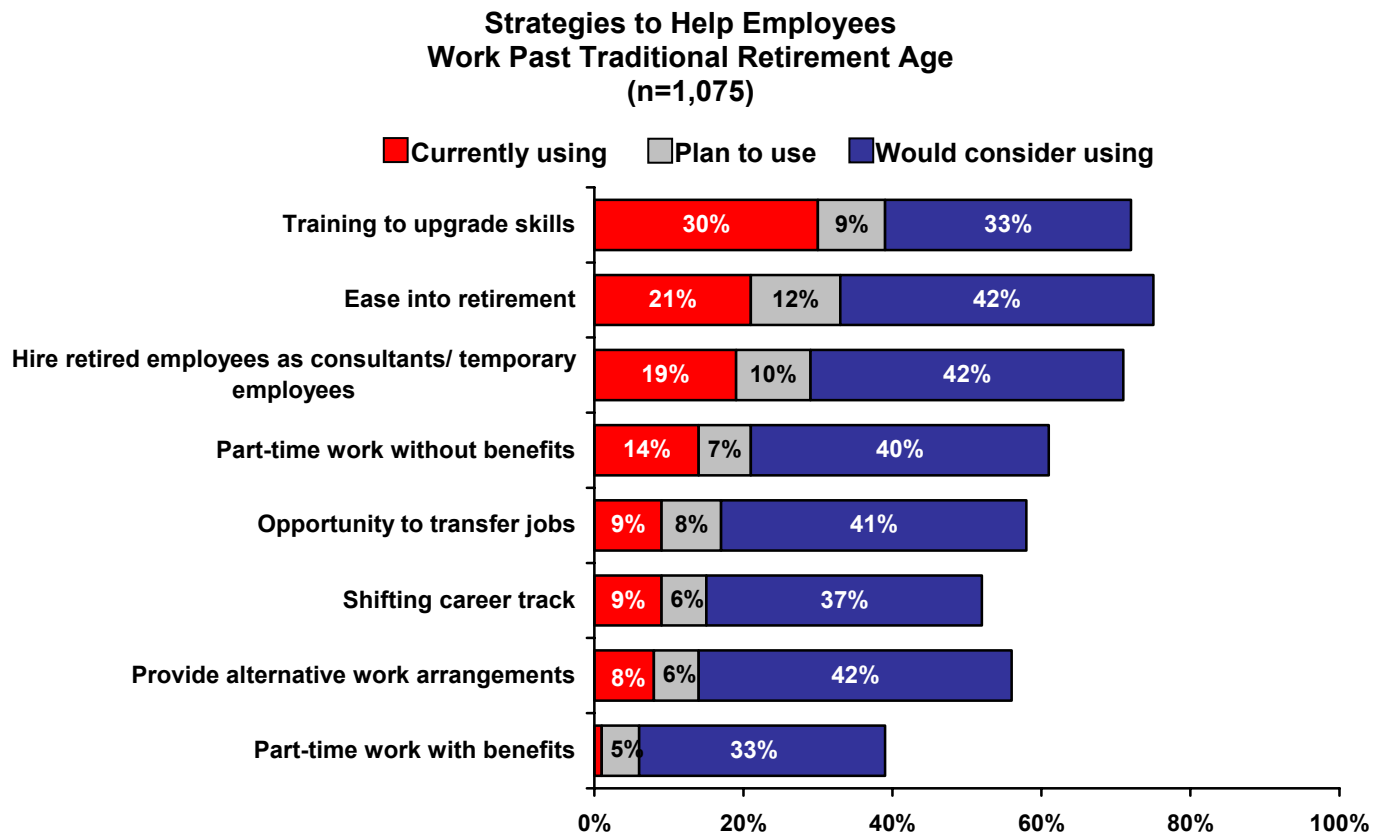
<sup>19</sup> Brown, S.K. (2003) *Staying Ahead of the Curve 2003: The AARP Working in Retirement Study*. Washington, DC: AARP, p. 15.

<sup>20</sup> Dinger, E. (2004) *Wyoming AARP Legislative Issues Survey: Older Workers*. AARP, p.2.

## Strategies of Wyoming Businesses to Keep Older Workers

Many Wyoming businesses are helping older employees stay on the job longer than traditionally expected, and more are either planning or considering ways to help them continue working beyond the conventional retirement age. The most common strategies *currently in use* by some respondents are: providing training to upgrade skills, providing flexible scheduling to allow older workers to ease into retirement, and hiring retired workers as consultants. The most common strategies that businesses *would consider* are: easing workers into retirement, hiring retired employees, and providing alternative work arrangements.

Additional analysis shows that half (50%) of all Wyoming employers surveyed *currently* employ at least one of the eight strategies tested in the survey to allow employees to continue working beyond the traditional retirement age, and four-four percent *currently* employ up to four of the eight strategies.<sup>21</sup> However, three in ten (30%) say they are *planning* to implement up to four of the eight strategies listed in the next five years.<sup>22</sup> Most interesting perhaps is that the majority of Wyoming businesses (78%) say they *would consider* implementing at least one of the eight strategies listed in the survey over the next five years, and nearly six in ten (58%) *would consider* implementing up to five of them.<sup>23</sup>



<sup>21</sup> Derived from performing a count of all respondents who said 'yes' they *currently* utilize any one of the 8 possible strategies tested in survey question 12.

<sup>22</sup> A count of all respondents who said 'yes' they *are planning* to utilize any one of the 8 possible strategies tested in survey question 12.

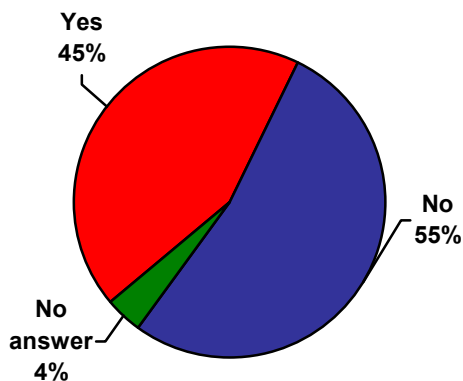
<sup>23</sup> A count of all respondents who said 'yes' they *would consider* utilizing any one of the 8 possible strategies tested in survey question 12.

## Getting Help with Planning

Although many Wyoming businesses are not currently taking action to address the needs of older workers, some are seeking information about issues related to older workers. In fact, over four in ten employers have sought information on at least one of the seven older worker issues tested in the survey.<sup>24</sup> While the majority of responding businesses report they have done no searching for the types of older worker information tested in the survey, a few sought information on retirement planning (32%), knowledge sharing (25%) and part-time work (17%) (see Annotated Questionnaire, Question 13).

When asked where they turned for this type of information, one in five employers surveyed report both the Wyoming Department of Employment or an attorney as their source for older worker information, while roughly one in seven turn to the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, a local community college, or the local Chamber of Commerce. Fourteen percent or less report they turn to a variety of sources for information resources on older workers including the Wyoming Business Council, private employment agencies, the National Federation of Independent Businesses, the Wyoming Business Alliance, as well as AARP.

**Wyoming Organizations Sought Information on Older Workers**  
(n=1,074)



**Where Wyoming Organizations Sought Older Worker Information**  
(N=162)

Places	Yes
Wyoming Department of Employment	21%
Lawyer or Attorney	21%
Wyoming Department of Workforce Services	16%
Local Community College	15%
State/local Chamber of Commerce	14%
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	12%
Wyoming Business Council	11%
Wyoming Small Business Center, U of WY	9%
Local Economic Development Office	9%
Private employment agencies	9%
Wyoming Senior Citizens Inc.	7%
AARP	7%
Experience Works	5%
National Federation of Independent Businesses	5%
Society of Human Resource Management	5%
Wyoming Association of Municipalities	4%
Wyoming Business Alliance	3%
Service Corp of Retired Executives	2%
Other	1%

<sup>24</sup> Derived from performing a count of respondents who said 'yes' to seeking any one of the 7 possible types of older worker information tested in survey question 13.

## Summary of Survey Findings

Skilled and experienced workers are vital to organizations and most will do what they can to provide incentives to attract or keep them. Wyoming is no exception. The majority of businesses in this survey report that recruiting and retaining skilled employees is a top organizational issue, followed closely by providing competitive wages, training opportunities, new technologies, and reducing turnover. However, many Wyoming businesses report difficulty finding qualified workers for both supervisory and non-supervisory jobs in recent years, and many are apprehensive about the prospect of a shortage of qualified workers in the next five years. Still, when asked to consider a potential shortage of workers due to the retirement of boomers over the next six years, like organizations in most states, few in Wyoming report having taken steps to prepare for this possible future labor deficiency.

A potential labor shortage due to baby boom retirements is still debatable.<sup>25</sup> Demographic trends, on the other hand, are more absolute and it is very clear that the composition of America's workforce is becoming noticeably older than in previous decades. As Delong points out, 50+ workers, including boomers, differ from their younger counterparts in that they are more likely to have remained with one organization longer. Employees who are able to work in organizations for long periods of time are more likely than short-term employees to accumulate job-specific critical knowledge around business operations, organizational culture, best-practices, and technological changes and adaptations – that is, “institutional memory”. It is easy to imagine the negative impact the loss of this type of knowledge could have on an organization or various parts of an organization.

Findings from this survey indicate that Wyoming businesses understand the value of knowledge and experiences employees gain while working for an organization, particularly over long periods of time. Most place a high level of importance on retaining departing employees' wisdom and recommendations, and fifty percent say they have an organizational process in place to preserve such institutional knowledge. The data further shows that most responding businesses do not plan for their employees to retire at a particular age and over half of them expect their employees to retire between the ages of 61 and 65, while another one in ten expect them to retire between the ages of 66 and 70 (see annotated survey, questions 6 and 6a). Combined with the demographic projections and recent studies suggesting many boomers want or plan to work beyond the typical retirement age, organizations should begin (if they haven't already) to consider the 50+ worker as a viable and significant bridge to maintaining organizational knowledge and fostering corporate growth or stability.

Recruiting and retaining the 50+ worker to bridge the labor shortage gap or prevent a loss in significant organizational knowledge or expertise should not be difficult for businesses in Wyoming. Many of the qualities older workers already possess are the top qualities that Wyoming employers believe workers should have to meet the needs and culture of their organizations. And while few businesses in the state currently have a strategy in place to help their employees continue working beyond retirement age, many indicate enthusiasm toward each of the strategies listed in the survey, but especially:

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid. Delong, D. pg. 16

- Enabling employees to ease into retirement by reducing their work schedules
- Hiring retired employees as consultants or temporary employees
- Providing alternative work arrangements

This reflects the earlier view of half the responding businesses that the needs of an older workforce is an extremely or very important organizational issue. Even though four in ten businesses say they have sought information on issues related to 50+ workers, a majority does not rely on any one or two sources but rather they turn to a host of state and national sources. This finding presents a tremendous opportunity for coordinating information sources for both workers and employers on a wide range of employment issues.

## What can Wyoming Businesses Do to Retain or Recruit Older Workers and Possibly Stave Off a Labor Shortage?

A recent report released for AARP by the consulting firm Towers Perrin suggests some steps organizations can take to effectively address their aging workforce.<sup>26</sup> Their suggestions include:

- Inventory current talent and define near and long term organizations goals
- Consider the investment needed and the total compensation costs of attracting 50+ workers
- Pay equal attention to revenue and performance considerations
- Study the available labor pool and define organizational talent strategies
- Align reward programs to support business and talent objectives
- Align workplace policies and culture to make work environment attractive to the 50+ worker

Small businesses are not as exempt from these ideas as they might have been in the past. Indeed, financial services firms like Charles Schwab & Co. and Fidelity Investments are now offering retirement planning services to small businesses to help them set up employee-retirement accounts and 401(k)'s.<sup>27</sup> Other experts point out that adding or extending health and supplementary benefits packages, such as superior dental and vision plans and long-term care plans can be attractive employment incentives to baby boom workers.<sup>28</sup>

Engaging in strategies such as these may help organizations retain and recruit experienced and skilled 50+ workers, but they may also help organizations preserve the important knowledge gained by their retiring employees and enable them to efficiently pass it on to a current or new worker. Moreover, companies that actively address the impact of labor force issues and trends on their business and take the necessary steps to adjust their operations and policies will remain competitive in the marketplace. Turning to 50+ workers as a means of filling the potential labor shortage gap in the near future may actually put a business *ahead* of the competition.

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<sup>26</sup> (2005) *The Business Case for Workers Age 50+*. A report prepared by Towers Perrin for AARP.

<sup>27</sup> Opdyke, J. (2005) *Small Firms Offer More Retirement Options – Wall Street Pitches Plan To Underserved Market*. Wall Street Journal, 11/22/2005, D1.

<sup>28</sup> Bell, A. (2005) *To Raise Boomer Retention, Firms May have to Update Benefits*. National Underwriter Company.

## Methodology

AARP managed and conducted all aspects of the study. Survey Sampling, Inc. provided AARP with three separate samples of businesses with three or more employees. A random statewide sample of 5,000 businesses was drawn and 1,075 surveys were returned and useable for analysis. When undeliverable and ineligible businesses were removed, this sample yielded a 30.5 percent response rate. Two other samples included businesses from the mining, oil, and gas industry and from Goshen County. Responses for these two samples are small and not included in the analysis presented in these highlights.

### Sample Disposition

List	Sample	Undeliverable/ Ineligible <sup>29</sup>	Analyzed Response	Response Rate	Sampling Error
Statewide (3 or more employees)	5,000	1,471	1,075	30.5%	+/- 3.05%

The survey and all related communications from AARP Wyoming were mailed to business leaders between July through October, 2005. First, a pre-notification letter was sent from AARP Wyoming State Director, Rita Inoway. This was followed by a cover letter from Governor Fruedenthal accompanying the survey. Responses as well as undelivered or ineligible mail were tracked. A reminder postcard, a second copy and a then a third copy of the survey were mailed if the business did not respond. Of the 1,857 surveys marked undeliverable by the post-office due to incorrect addresses, 419 were corrected and sent with a letter indicating the problem, along with the Governor's letter. These businesses were then subject to the same mail survey process as the rest of the sample described above.

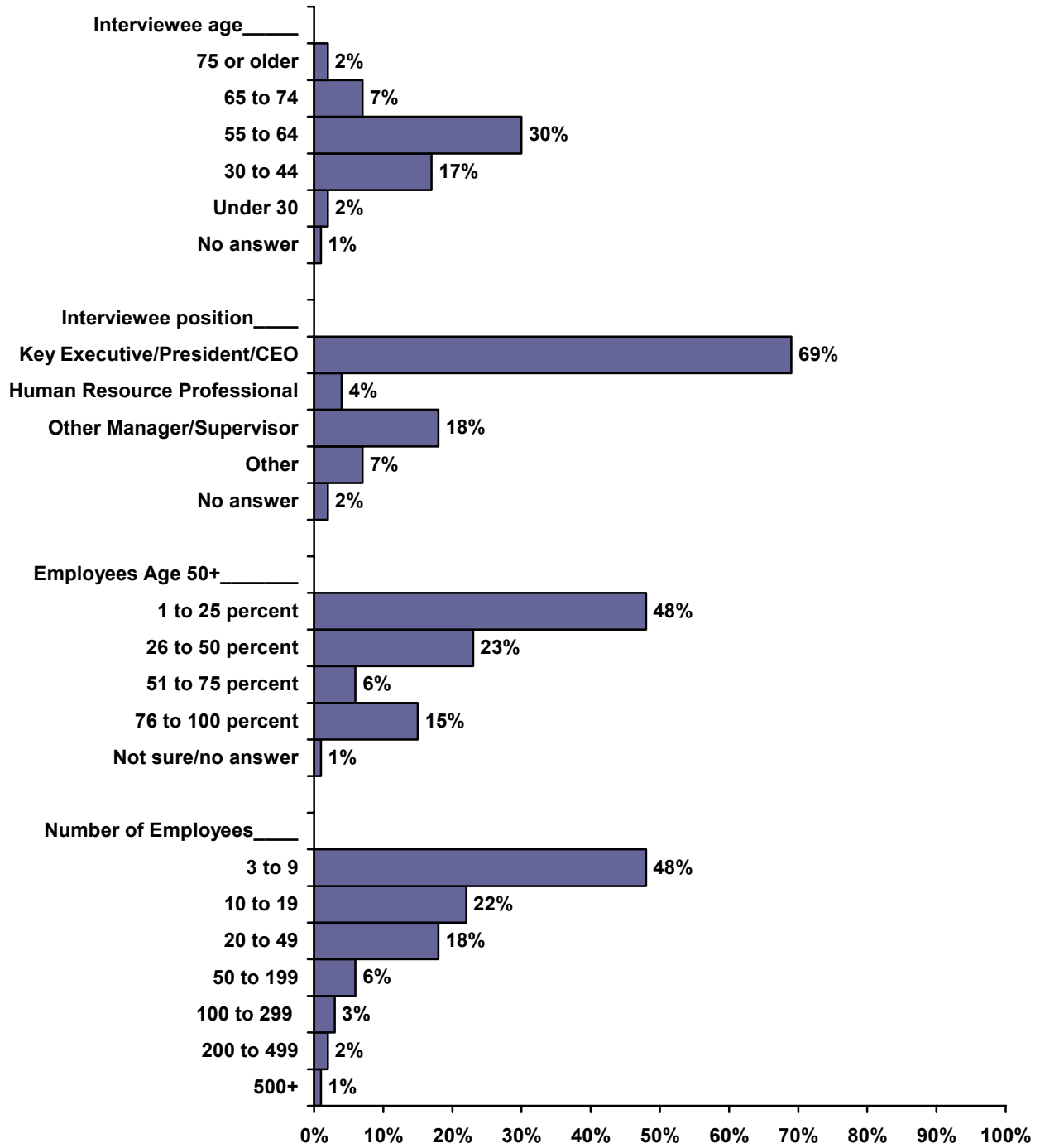
Two census samples were also drawn to capture all businesses within the state's mining industry and all businesses located in Goshen County. A total of 204 surveys were sent to the mining, oil, and gas industry in the state and 148 surveys were sent to businesses located in Goshen County. However, only 20 percent of those surveys sent out to the state mining, oil, and gas companies were returned and only 14 percent of the surveys sent to Goshen County businesses were returned by the due date. Because the number of respondents for each sub-sample is too small for analysis, only statewide findings are reported here.

The following annotated questionnaire discloses all responses for the statewide sample. Percentages may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding or multiple response. Questions about this survey should be directed to Jennifer H. Sauer (202) 434-6207 or [jsauer@aarp.org](mailto:jsauer@aarp.org).

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<sup>29</sup> Business leaders who identified their organization as no longer in business or who said they had no employees in their organization were classified as ineligible.

## RESPONDING ORGANIZATION DEMOGRAPHICS



## **APPENDIX A**

### **ANNOTATED QUESTIONNAIRE**

# Wyoming Workforce Survey

**Business n=1,075, Response Rate = 30.5%, Sampling Error = +/- 3.05%**

## 1. In your opinion, how important are the following issues to your organization?

	<b>Extremely Important</b> ▼	<b>Very Important</b> ▼	<b>Somewhat Important</b> ▼	<b>Not Very Important</b> ▼	<b>Not At All Important</b> ▼	<b>No Answer</b> ▼
a. Recruiting skilled employees .....	44%	36%	17%	2%	1%	<.5%
b. Retaining skilled employees .....	63%	33%	3%	1%	1%	1%
c. Training/retraining your current workforce .....	29%	50%	17%	3%	1%	1%
d. Introducing new technology into your workplace .....	21%	41%	29%	7%	1%	1%
e. Developing programs to improve employee performance .....	19%	45%	28%	6%	2%	<.5%
f. Addressing the needs of your aging workforce .....	13%	36%	31%	15%	3%	1%
g. Increasing the number of part-time employees .....	3%	11%	29%	38%	19%	1%
h. Developing programs for telecommuting .....	2%	12%	21%	34%	30%	1%
i. Increasing the number of contract employees .....	2%	4%	13%	35%	44%	1%
j. Decreasing the number of contract employees .....	1%	3%	9%	35%	51%	2%
k. Reducing rates of job turn-over .....	25%	36%	21%	10%	7%	1%
l. Providing competitive wages .....	31%	50%	14%	2%	2%	1%

**2. Thinking about the needs and culture of your organization, how important are each of the qualities listed below for employees to have?**

	<b>Extremely Important</b> ▼	<b>Very Important</b> ▼	<b>Somewhat Important</b> ▼	<b>Not Very Important</b> ▼	<b>Not At All Important</b> ▼	<b>No Answer</b> ▼
a. Commitment to doing quality work .....	75%	21%	1%	<1%	<1%	3%
b. Ability to get along with co-workers .....	51%	40%	5%	<1%	<1%	3%
c. Willingness to be flexible about doing different tasks .....	48%	44%	5%	<1%	<1%	3%
d. Someone you can count on in a crisis.....	57%	35%	3%	1%	<1%	3%
e. Solid experience in the job or industry.....	25%	38%	30%	3%	1%	4%
f. Ability to work well on teams.....	37%	43%	13%	3%	1%	4%
g. A reliable performance record.....	39%	48%	8%	1%	<1%	4%
h. Having up-to-date job skills ...	26%	45%	23%	2%	1%	4%
i. Willingness to learn new technology .....	31%	45%	17%	3%	1%	4%
j. Comfort with non-traditional work arrangements like flex-time or telecommuting.....	9%	18%	29%	24%	16%	4%
k. Willingness to try new approaches to problems .....	23%	49%	21%	2%	1%	4%
l. Comfort with non full-time employment arrangements like part-time, contract, consultant or project-by-project work.....	8%	23%	31%	20%	14%	4%
m. Willingness to participate in training or retraining programs .....	20%	43%	24%	7%	3%	4%
n. Ability to pass drug testing.....	55%	19%	11%	5%	6%	4%
o. Is customer service oriented ...	62%	26%	6%	2%	1%	4%

**3. For the following, please indicate whether finding qualified applicants is easier, harder, or about the same as it was five years ago.**

	<b>Easier</b> ▼	<b>About the Same</b> ▼	<b>Harder</b> ▼	<b>Not Sure</b> ▼	<b>No Answer</b>
a. Qualified applicants for management positions .....	2%	31%	46%	16%	5%
b. Qualified applicants for supervisory positions .....	1%	30%	48%	16%	5%
c. Qualified applicants for non-management and non-supervisory positions.....	3%	32%	56%	6%	4%
d. Current employees qualified for promotion to jobs of higher grade or responsibility.....	5%	51%	30%	10%	5%

**4. In your opinion, within the next five years, how likely is it that your organization will face a shortage of qualified workers?**

<u>%</u>	
29	Extremely likely
25	Very likely
24	Somewhat likely
14	Not too likely
3	Not at all likely
5	No answer

**5. Based on your knowledge and experience, how would you generally evaluate employees age 50 or older on each of the qualities listed below?**

	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Very Poor</b>	<b>No Answer</b>
	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
a. Commitment to doing quality work...	51%	37%	5%	<1%	0%	7%
b. Ability to get along with co-workers.	36%	43%	13%	1%	0%	7%
c. Willingness to be flexible about doing different tasks .....	26%	35%	29%	3%	0%	8%
d. Someone you can count on in a crisis.....	43%	39%	10%	1%	<1%	7%
e. Solid experience in the job or industry .....	34%	41%	16%	1%	<1%	7%
f. Ability to work well on teams .....	26%	44%	21%	2%	<1%	8%
g. A reliable performance record.....	39%	44%	9%	1%	<1%	7%
h. Having up-to-date job skills .....	15%	37%	36%	5%	<1%	7%
i. Willingness to learn new technology.	14%	33%	38%	6%	1%	8%
j. Comfort with non-traditional work arrangements like flex-time or telecommuting .....	10%	27%	40%	10%	3%	12%
k. Willingness to try new approaches to problems .....	13%	34%	37%	8%	1%	7%
l. Comfort with non full-time employment arrangements like part-time, contract, consultant or project-by-project work.....	12%	34%	34%	8%	2%	11%
m. Willingness to participate in training or retraining programs .....	15%	41%	30%	5%	1%	8%
n. Ability to pass drug testing.....	60%	24%	4%	1%	<1%	10%
o. Is customer service oriented .....	41%	41%	10%	1%	<.5%	7%

**6. Does your organization plan for employees to retire at a particular age?**

<u>%</u>	
9	Yes
78	No ► <b>GO TO QUESTION 7</b>
3	Not sure
11	Does not apply to my organization ► <b>GO TO QUESTION 7</b>

**6a. IF YES, for planning purposes, at what age do you expect that your employees will retire? (n=122)**

<u>%</u>	
9	45-60
58	61-65
12	66-70
1	70 or older
20	No answer

**7. Baby boomers born between 1946 and 1964 are approaching retirement. Their retirement may create a shortage of employees since the generation following them is much smaller. Has your organization taken any steps to prepare for the potential shortage of workers as a result of Baby boomers retiring? (N=1,075)**

<u>%</u>	
12	Yes
74	No ► <b>GO TO QUESTION 9</b>
3	Not sure
11	Does not apply to my organization ► <b>GO TO QUESTION 9</b>

**8. Has your organization done any of the following to prepare for the potential shortage of workers as a result of Baby boomers retiring? (n=162)**

	Yes	No	Not Sure	No answer
	▼	▼	▼	▼
a. Hire younger employees .....	75%	15%	4%	6%
b. Hire older employees .....	38%	43%	10%	9%
c. Increase training programs .....	62%	27%	4%	6%
d. Change recruitment efforts.....	59%	32%	6%	4%
e. Conduct workforce planning.....	44%	43	8%	6%
f. Improve technology .....	79%	14%	1%	6%
g. Rehire our retired employees .....	32%	56%	7%	6%
h. Offer incentives to delay retirement.....	17%	72%	6%	5%

**8. (continued) Has your organization done any of the following to prepare for the potential shortage of workers as a result of Baby boomers retiring? (n=162)**

	Yes ▼	No ▼	Not Sure ▼	No Answer ▼
i. Revise benefits packages.....	35%	57%	4%	4%
j. Implement programs to retain institutional knowledge when employees retire .....	40%	52%	6%	3%
k. Offer alternative work arrangements such as part-time work, job sharing, or telecommuting .....	43%	48%	6%	3%
l. Increase the number of part-time employees .....	33%	62%	2%	3%
m. Increase the frequency of utilizing temporary help.....	27%	68%	3%	3%
n. Increase use of contract workers .....	19%	73%	5%	4%
o. Other [SPECIFY]_____ .....	3%	6%	6%	85%

**9. In your opinion, how much knowledge-loss occurs when an employee retires or otherwise leave your organization?**

<u>%</u>	
55	A major amount
28	A minor amount
5	None
11	Not sure
1	No answer

**10. In your opinion, how important it is for an organization to retain the knowledge and experience of employees or retirees after they leave?**

<u>%</u>	
31	Extremely important
39	Very important
19	Somewhat important
5	Not too important
2	Not at all important
1	No answer

**11. Does your organization have a process in place that makes it possible for employees to contribute their job knowledge and experience with others before they retire or otherwise leave the organization?**

<u>%</u>	
51	Yes
39	No
9	Not sure
1	No answer

**12. Organizations use different approaches to accommodate employees who want to work past traditional retirement age. For EACH of the following approaches, please indicate to what extent your company or agency is using and planning to use in the next five years.**

	Currently and Planning to Use ▼	Not Currently But Planning to Use ▼	Not Currently But Would Consider Use ▼	Not Currently and Would Not Consider Use ▼	Not Sure ▼	No Response ▼
a. Enabling employees to ease into retirement by reducing their work schedules .....	21%	12%	42%	11%	11%	3%
b. Shifting employees from one career track to another career track .....	9%	6%	37%	27%	17%	4%
c. Providing training to upgrade skills of employees.....	30%	9%	33%	12%	11%	5%
d. Hiring retired employees as consultants or temporary employees .....	19%	10%	42%	14%	12%	4%
e. Providing opportunities for employees to transfer to jobs with reduced pay and responsibilities .....	9%	8%	41%	22%	16%	5%
f. Providing part-time work arrangements <u>without</u> continuation of benefits ...	14%	7%	40%	18%	16%	5%
g. Providing part-time work arrangements <u>with</u> continuation of benefits ...	5%	5%	33%	32%	20%	5%
h. Providing alternative work arrangements like job sharing .....	8%	6%	42%	22%	18%	5%
i. Other [SPECIFY].....	<.5%	1%	1%	2%	7%	89%

**13. Have you ever sought any information on the following issues for employees age 50 or older?**

	<b>Yes</b> ▼	<b>No</b> ▼	<b>No answer</b> ▼
a. Phased retirement.....	7%	88%	4%
b. Alternative career tracks.....	5%	90%	4%
c. Retraining.....	15%	81%	5%
d. Age discrimination.....	15%	80%	5%
e. Retirement planning.....	32%	64%	5%
f. Part-time work with benefits.....	17%	79%	4%
g. Knowledge sharing.....	25%	70%	5%
h. Other [SPECIFY] _____.....	<1%	29%	70%

**14. Has your organization sought information on any of the issues listed above from the following:**

	<b>Yes</b> ▼	<b>No</b> ▼	<b>No Answer</b> ▼
a. Wyoming Department of Workforce Services.....	16%	79%	5%
b. Experience Works.....	5%	89%	6%
c. Wyoming Business Council.....	11%	83%	6%
d. Wyoming Small Business Development Center, University of Wyoming.....	9%	85%	6%
e. Local Community College.....	15%	79%	6%
f. Service Corp or Retired Executives (SCORE).....	2%	92%	6%
g. Local Economic Development Office.....	9%	85%	6%
h. Wyoming Business Alliance.....	3%	91%	6%
i. Wyoming Senior Citizens Inc. ....	7%	88%	6%
j. Wyoming Association of Municipalities.....	4%	90%	6%
k. Wyoming Department of Employment.....	21%	73%	5%
l. State or local Chamber of Commerce.....	14%	81%	6%
m. National Federation of Independent Businesses.....	5%	89%	6%
n. AARP.....	7%	84%	9%
o. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).....	12%	83%	5%
p. Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).....	5%	89%	6%
q. Private employment agencies.....	9%	85%	6%
r. Lawyer or attorney.....	21%	74%	6%
s. Other [SPECIFY] _____.....	1%	37%	62%

## About Your Organization

The following questions are for classification purposes only and will be kept entirely confidential.

### 15. Which of the following best describes the primary nature of your company or agency's business in Wyoming?

12%	Business/Professional Services	2%	Transportation/Warehousing
1%	Telecommunications	2%	Arts/Recreation/Entertainment
<1%	High Tech/Computers	5%	Federal/State/Local Government
5%	Financial/Insurance/Real Estate	3%	Agriculture
7%	Healthcare and Social Assistance	3%	Education
1%	Utilities	1%	Publishing
14%	Retail/Wholesale	5%	Nonprofit
2%	Manufacturing	4%	Accommodation/Food Services
2%	Oil/Gas	9%	Construction
1%	Mining	1%	Other [SPECIFY] _____

### 16. Is your company or agency headquartered in Wyoming?

%

95 Yes

3 No ► **16a. IF NO, please specify headquarters location:**

Boise, ID  
Columbus, OH  
Anderson, IN  
Vancouver, WA  
Philadelphia, PA  
Salt Lake City, UT

Billings, MT  
California  
Idaho  
Connecticut  
Louisville, KY

**17. Where in Wyoming are you personally located: [Write in CITY and COUNTY]**

Rawlins	Torrington	Baggs
Cheyenne	Laramie	Bondurant
Sundance	Lyman	Medicine Bow
Gillette	Kemmerer	Pavillion
Saratoga	Guernsey	Hyattville
Greybull	Lingle	Deaver
Parrington	Freedom	Clearmont
Casper	Power	LaBarge
Riverton	Lander	Shoshoni
Sheridan	Cody	Hanna
Worland	Glenrock	Burns
Afton	Jackson	LeBarge
Wheatland	Rock Springs	Saint Stephens
Fort Laramie	Green River	Ethete
Thayne	Mountain View	Moorcroft
Buffalo	Banner	Manderson
Douglas	Linch	Arvada
Evansville	Huntley	Albin
Urie	Bear River	Points of Rocks
Basin	Encampment	Alpine
Lusk	Carlile	Jackson Hole
Ranchester	Thermopolis	Powder River
Ten Sleep	Newcastle	Boulder
Glendo	Dubois	Burlington
Rock River	Lagrange	Natrona Mills
Etna	Wright	Diamondville
Farson	Pine Bluffs	Evanston
Fort Washakie	Centennial	Penedale
Lovell	Teton	Carpenter
Alcova	Moran	Shell
Edgerton	Kinnear	Lysite

**18. Does your company or agency have more than one location in Wyoming?**

<u>%</u>	
23	Yes
75	No
2	No answer

**19. Is your company or agency a member of the local Chamber of Commerce?**

<u>%</u>	
54	Yes,
45	No
1	No answer

20. In the past year, about how many people worked permanently, either full-time or part-time, and temporarily as seasonal or contract employees for all locations of your organization in the state of Wyoming only?

	Grand Total	Full-Time Permanent	Part-Time Permanent	Temporary, Seasonal, or Contract
	▼	▼	▼	▼
a. 1-49 .....	88%	87%	67%	40%
b. 50-99 .....	6%	4%	1%	1%
c. 100-499 .....	5%	4%	1%	1%
d. 500+ .....	1%	1%	--	<1%
e. 0 Employees.....	0	5%	37%	58%
f. No response	--	--	--	--

21. In the past year, about what percentage of your workforce was age 50 years or older for all locations of your organization in the state of Wyoming?

<u>%</u>	
11	0%
48	1% - 25%
23	26% - 50%
10	51% - 75%
5	76% - 100%
1	Not sure
2	No answer

22. In the past year, about what percentage of your employees age 50 years or older worked full-time, permanent for all locations of your organization in the state of Wyoming?

<u>%</u>	
20	0%
40	1% - 25%
16	26% - 50%
6	51% - 75%
15	76% - 100%
2	Not sure
2	No answer

23. In the past year, about what percentage of your employees age 50 years or older worked part-time, permanent for all locations of your organization in the state of Wyoming?

<u>%</u>	
48	0%
34	1% - 25%
7	26% - 50%
3	51% - 75%
4	76% - 100%
2	Not sure
3	No answer

**24. In the past year, about what percentage of your employees age 50 years or older worked temporary, seasonal or contract work for all locations of your organization in the state of Wyoming?**

<u>%</u>	
68	0%
20	1% - 25%
3	26% - 50%
2	51% - 75%
2	76% - 100%
2	Not sure
2	No answer

**25. As a percentage of your permanent workforce, what was your organization's approximate turnover rate in 2004 for all locations of your organization in the state of Wyoming?**

<u>%</u>	
26	0%
44	1%-20%
15	21%-40%
5	41%-60%
2	61%-80%
2	81%-100%
1	More than 100%
3	Not sure
2	No answer

**26. Does your organization offer any of the following retirement benefits?**

	<b>Yes</b> ▼	<b>No</b> ▼	<b>No Answer</b> ▼
a. Retiree health benefits .....	12%	85%	4%
b. Defined benefit pension.....	18%	78%	5%
c. 401K investment plan.....	33%	63%	4%
d. Prescription drug coverage .....	20%	75%	5%
e. Long-term care insurance .....	8%	86%	6%

**27. Does your company offer some type of health care coverage to full-time employees?**

<u>%</u>	
60	Yes,
39	No
1	No answer

**28. Does your company offer some type of health care coverage to part-time employees?**

<u>%</u>	
11	Yes
88	No
1	No answer

**29. What percentage of your workforce age 50 years or older is accessing any type of health coverage through your business or agency?**

<u>%</u>	
48	0%
20	1% - 25%
6	26% - 50%
4	51% - 75%
17	76% - 100%
2	Not sure
2	No answer

### **About You**

**The following questions are for classification purposes only and will be kept entirely confidential.**

**30. Which of the following best describes your position in the organization?**

<u>%</u>	
69	Key Executive/President/CEO/Chairman/Owner
4	Human Resources Professional/ Human Resources Manager/Human Resources Director
18	Other Manager/Director/Officer
7	Other [SPECIFY] _____
2	No answer

**31. What is your age?**

<u>%</u>	
2	Under 30
17	30-44
40	45-54
30	55-64
7	65-74
2	75 or older
1	No answer

**32. AARP Wyoming would like to be a resource for employers seeking information on older worker issues. Please let us know which of the following kinds of information would be most helpful to you and your business or agency.**

<u>%</u>	
23	Current research on older worker issue
31	Newsletter on older worker issues
12	Workshops/forums on older work issues
22	Continued advocacy for older worker issues
4	Other: _____
2	No answer

**Thank you for completing this survey. Please use the postage-paid envelope and return it to State Member Research, AARP, 601 E St., NW, Washington, DC 20049, September 1, 2005**

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