



PRESENTS

WORKFORCE RESOURCES & EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES SPECIAL SECTION

WE TAKE A DIVE INTO RESOURCES FOR THE WORKFORCE AND JOB SEEKERS, ISSUES FACING EMPLOYERS AND A UNIQUE JOB BOARD

WE ASKED THE BUSINESSES

Many businesses are facing a workforce shortage, is that an issue you're facing as well? What factors do you believe are contributing to any shortage?

Many people got out of the service sector during the pandemic and found other jobs outside of this industry. Maybe not so much in Spring Green, but immigration restrictions, plus people choosing to work fewer hours than in the past also impacts this industry. We have issues, even though we pay staff 30 to 40% more per hour than pre-pandemic pay levels.

—David Owen, Owner, Last Leaf Public House

Yes, we are experiencing a workforce shortage. We have 2 businesses within our store, Rite Way Shell and Pizza Pit. Currently we are looking for a manager and 2-3 additional workers for our PP operation. We have scaled back considerably and are all pitching in to stretch what we can. I think the restaurant industry is one of the industries that is being hit hardest in the last couple of years and believe that the shortage in other higher paying industries has had a trickle down effect as the restaurant/service industry workers are leaving to work in better paying jobs that are becoming easier to qualify for, often with sign on bonuses.

—Karen Baryenbruch-Nelson, General Manager, Rite Way Shell and Pizza Pit

Yes, healthcare is not immune from dealing with workforce shortage issues. Indeed, we likely face it to a greater extent than many industries due to the incredible stresses the pandemic placed on our people. In my opinion, the following items impact us the most:

- Stresses from dealing with the pandemic (personal safety, hostile responses from the public/patients, volume of work, etc.).
- People not wanting to work in healthcare to avoid what they believe would cause greater contact with the virus.
- Inflation – especially at entry level job titles where all their disposable income was going to basics like food, shelter, and gas with wages not keeping up with the rate of inflation.
- Aging workforce members deciding to leave the workforce earlier than planned.

—Robbi Bos, Vice President of Human Resources, Sauk Prairie Healthcare

What do you think is one major problem facing the workforce in the area right now?

Housing, if potential staff want to work in this area, there are plenty of jobs with good pay, just not a lot of places for them to live.

—David Owen, Owner, Last Leaf Public House

The lack of available housing has had an outsized impact on our community and workforce. We can't bring folks here from out of town to work if they have no place to live. I know that is something we're all working on.

—Michael Broh, Owner, Slowpoke Lounge & Cabaret

Lack of childcare.

—Robbi Bos, Vice President of Human Resources, Sauk Prairie Healthcare

What is one major problem facing employers in the area right now?

Housing, especially for young people who normally work in the service industry, plus the shrinking of our local school district.

—David Owen, Owner, Last Leaf Public House

Hiring has never been more challenging. Some of this is undoubtedly a result of the waning pandemic, as well as the lack of housing.

—Michael Broh, Owner, Slowpoke Lounge & Cabaret

Lack of childcare.

—Robbi Bos, Vice President of Human Resources, Sauk Prairie Healthcare

What one thing that stands out more than anything for you on a resume?

Longevity at previous positions and proper spelling/grammar.

—David Owen, Owner, Last Leaf Public House

When applicants don't just share the tasks they've been assigned (e.g., a job description), but share their accomplishments and successes in performing those tasks.

—Robbi Bos, Vice President of Human Resources, Sauk Prairie Healthcare

Slowpoke may be the only hospitality industry business (or is one of few) in the Spring Green area that guarantees a \$15 per hour wage to its employees. Why is that important to your business?

We should clarify that we guarantee that you will never make less than \$15 per hour including wages and tips over the course of your work week. We do think it's important for everyone to have some level of a predictable and living wage. This is especially important for a bartender that might have a run of slow nights where tips are limited.

—Michael Broh, Owner, Slowpoke Lounge & Cabaret

WE ASKED THE EXPERTS



Matthew T. Hora

Associate Professor, Adult & Higher Education, Depts of Liberal Arts & Applied Studies (DCS) & Educational Policy Studies (SoE)
Co-Director, Center for Research on College-Workforce Transitions (CCWT)
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Many businesses are facing a workforce shortage, what factors do you believe are contributing to any shortage?

The factors that lead to an employer having a hard time finding workers are complex, and can be attributed to a lack of qualified (or any) applicants, uncompetitive wages, geography (e.g., people not wanting to live somewhere), skills mismatches, and so on. Right now, the post pandemic factors most at play that are contributing to worker shortages include wage competition, flexible (or not) work arrangements, and the rapid exit of many workers from the labor pool (e.g. resignations, retirements, etc).

What do you think is the largest problem facing the workforce in Wisconsin right now?

I think that challenges facing the workforce across the nation also are impacting Wisconsin including an extremely tight labor pool and high turnover, but I'm really worried about three sectors and occupations that have been hit hard in the state: teachers, nurses and other health care professionals, and the hospitality industry. Tourism and hospitality were negatively impacted by the pandemic but are slowly recovering, but the burnout and poor working conditions by many teachers and nurses may lead to high attrition and fewer young people choosing these careers. That bodes poorly for the future of the state when it comes to attracting and retaining residents, and also in adequately serving the people who already call Wisconsin home.

What is the single-best thing a job seeker or someone looking to enter the workforce can do right now to find the right position for them?

The best things that a job seeker could do right now really vary depending on the occupation and sector the person is seeking to enter, but there are some key skills that are especially in demand today that would give them an advantage over other applicants. While core technical knowledge in accounting, welding, or logistics is always critical, what some people call the "soft" skills are arguably more so, as you can train an entry-level worker in many tasks. But skills like teamwork, oral communication, and especially problem-solving are hard to come by, and in great demand by employers. These skills are anything but "soft" or "easy" however, and take lots of time and training to master. And perhaps the most in demand skills I've seen in my research in Wisconsin – that of a strong work ethic – is especially hard to train or teach, and I've heard many times that people with farming experience make some of the best workers. So my advice to the younger generation: join 4-H, get a part-time job, and start building your practical experience with the real world of work and responsibility!



Troy Maggied

Executive Director, Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
Secretary/Treasurer, Prosperity Southwest Wisconsin

Many businesses are facing a workforce shortage, what factors do you believe are contributing to any shortage?

In short, every employer we hear from is having workforce issues. I think the key issues are: aging population, increasing retirements, declining population.

These big issues make supply and demand the workforce issue we're facing. There are lots of talking points around why people aren't working, but too much of it is political. It's hard to face the reality that a generation of youth have left rural areas, and birth rates are at all time lows. Due to the drop in birth rates that are historically tied to economic uncertainty, and the older age of our population, it's possible we see birth rates dropping further in the coming years.

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WE ASKED THE EXPERTS
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The issue lately seems to often be reduced to a disagreement between, "no one wants to work" and "no one wants to work for that wage" — which side do you believe has more merit in our current conditions and why?

Employers need to think about the cost of *not* having employees, instead of the cost of paying competitive wages. This will impact their bottom line. Culture is also huge. I've interviewed many people who will work for less if the culture is strong. We need to value the employee, and their life and personal commitments. Failure to take account of the needs of our workforce will ensure they leave us for either better wages, better benefits (healthcare), better culture, or all three. Changing culture is the hardest thing to do, since it requires us to engage in self-reflection and accountability. However, employees want to work for good employers who value them. 80% of our waking lives are spent at work - if we're not happy, and there are other opportunities, we'll seek those opportunities out.

In the past, rural areas have faced the issue of too few jobs in their communities, necessitating commuting (and the fear of becoming the dreaded "bedroom community") — but now we see help wanted signs on most businesses downtown and factory positions available everywhere you look, with most professional, out-of-town positions allowing remote work as well. What changed? What opportunities does this change provide? Why are local, rural small businesses still having a hard time finding workers?

There's lots of talk about the opportunity for remote work in rural communities. I think it's a great opportunity, but not a universal one. Communities must have a welcoming culture, in addition to housing and broadband, if they're going to attract and retain new remote workers. Unfortunately, many communities aren't welcoming. If they are, it may not be recognizable to outsiders. Young professionals with kids want to know if they can find community in a city or village they're moving to. Is there a place for someone in their life stage? If so, how do they get involved?



SPRING JOB FAIR

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT VISITOR CENTER

5607 COUNTY ROAD C
SPRING GREEN, WI 53588

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Cedar Grove Cheese is seeking full-time cheesemaker assistants. We have several shift openings. Pay is based upon experience and shift differentials. Email resume to dbyrne@cedargrovecheese.com or complete an application at factory.

Cedar Grove Cheese
www.cedargrovecheese.com
(608) 546-5284

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Cedar Grove Cheese is seeking part-time warehouse employee three days a week 7:00am to 3:00pm. May become full-time. Starting pay \$18.00 hour. Email resume to dbyrne@cedargrovecheese.com or complete an application at factory.

Cedar Grove Cheese
www.cedargrovecheese.com
(608) 546-5284

What is the largest problem facing employers in Wisconsin right now?

To employers struggling to get workers, I'd recommend they look internally. What do their annual reviews and exit interviews say about their culture, and the needs of their employees? How do they compete on total compensation (wages and benefits)? Ultimately, this has to be the path forward. We can blame extended unemployment benefits, we can blame people who "don't want to work," and we can blame young people for "playing video games in their mom's basement." (All excuses I've heard this past year). Ultimately, in a workforce shortage the employer has to compete. The market economy of supply and demand isn't working in their favor, and so they need to recognize this and learn to succeed in the system as it is.

What is the single-best thing a job seeker or someone looking to enter the workforce can do right now to find the right position for them?

As an employer, I look for continued growth on a resume. Not necessarily upward mobility, but someone who can learn and grow as a professional. The future demands critical thinkers and agile workers - those who maintain a curious mindset. I also want employees who know their worth - they make me a better employer and keep me focused on attracting and retaining high quality workers so my organization can deliver value to those we serve. To employees, I'd recommend they make sure they demonstrate how they continue to pursue knowledge or skills that support the organization they hope to work for, and also demonstrate to employers that they have other options if the employer can't compete with the market on either wages, benefits, or culture.

BARTENDER

Seeking bartenders who like to engage with customers and share great drinks. Basic cocktail knowledge and terminology preferred but NOT required. Training will be provided. \$8 per hour plus tips. (Guaranteed \$15 average including tips)

Slowpoke Lounge & Cabaret
www.slowpokelounge.com
(608) 588-0242

PIZZA PIT MANAGER

Duties include overseeing the operations of our fast paced pizza business, customer service and working with our vendors as well as training staff.

Pizza Pit
knelson@wisconsinpetroleum.com
(608) 588-2465

SEASONAL INNKEEPER ASSISTANT

Owners of busy ten room Inn seek assistance 3 days a week, from 9am-2pm, able to work most Sundays. Duties include light housekeeping, with an emphasis on cleaning guest rooms. Relaxed, flexible, friendly environment! Call to inquire, ask for Elise.

Silver Star B&B
www.silverstarinn.com
(608) 935-7297

DISHWASHERS

Last Leaf restaurant is looking for part-time evening dishwashers, \$9.50 hr., with free shift meal and monthly hourly bonus. If capable will also be trained as a busser/runner and pizza maker. Apply at 134 W. Jefferson Street. Spring Green.

Last Leaf Public House
www.lastleafpublichouse.com
(608) 588-0041

BARTENDERS

Last Leaf restaurant is looking for part-time evening bartenders. Excellent tip potential, in a fast past environment, and no late night shifts past 9PM. Fun environment with great customers, and excellent cocktails. Apply at 134 W. Jefferson Street. Spring Green.

Last Leaf Public House
www.lastleafpublichouse.com
(608) 588-0041

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